

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Recent and upcoming activities

7th Contact Point Network Meeting

09 - 10 September 2026, Bucharest, Romania

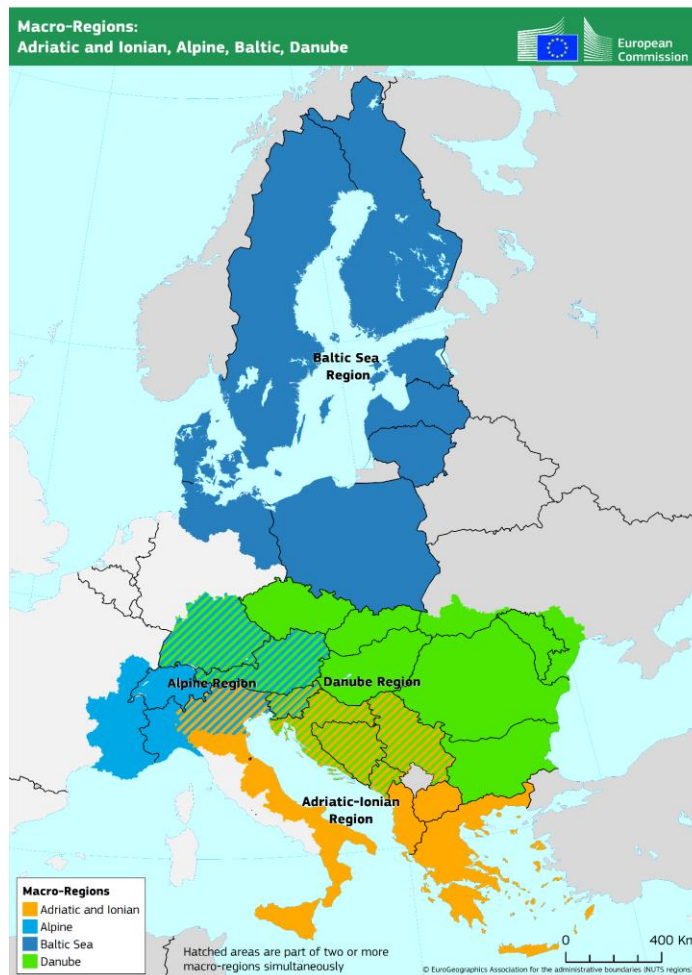
EU Macro-Regional Strategies

The EU Strategy
for the Baltic Sea
Region (2009)

The EU Strategy
for the Danube
Region (2010)

The EU Strategy
for the Adriatic
and Ionian
Region (2014)

The EU Strategy
for the Alpine
Region (2015)



- ❖ serve as open and agile platforms for strategic networking
- ❖ help coordinate joint policies and actions beyond physical or psychological barriers
- ❖ stakeholders work together on thematic platforms and processes
- ❖ make macro-regions stronger, more resilient, and more attractive places to live in, for everyone

Annual EU Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days

Further read → [EU MRS](#)

What is the EUSDR and how does it work?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ledydRYICj>

- One of the EU's four **Macro-Regional Strategies**, endorsed in 2011
- A framework to address common challenges through cooperation
- 14 participating states – EU member states and EU candidate countries, which all cooperate on equal footing
- Four pillars / 12 Priority Areas
- In each country: National Coordinators
- Each year, one country holds the (TRIO) Presidency of the EUSDR (2025: Bosnia and Herzegovina, **2026: Bulgaria**, 2027: Croatia)
- DE and UA: only certain regions of the country participate in the EUSDR

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

The EUSDR addresses a wide range of issues and topics divided among four Pillars and 12 thematic Priority Areas (PA):

[PA 1a Waterway Mobility](#)

[PA 1b Rail-Road-Air Mobility](#)

[PA 2 Sustainable Energy](#)

[PA 3 Culture and Tourism](#)

[PA 4 Water quality](#)

[PA 5 Environmental Risks](#)

[PA 6 Biodiversity and landscapes, quality of air and soils](#)

[PA 7 Knowledge society](#)

[PA 8 Competitiveness](#)

[PA 9 People and Skills](#)

[PA 10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation](#)

[PA 11 Security](#)

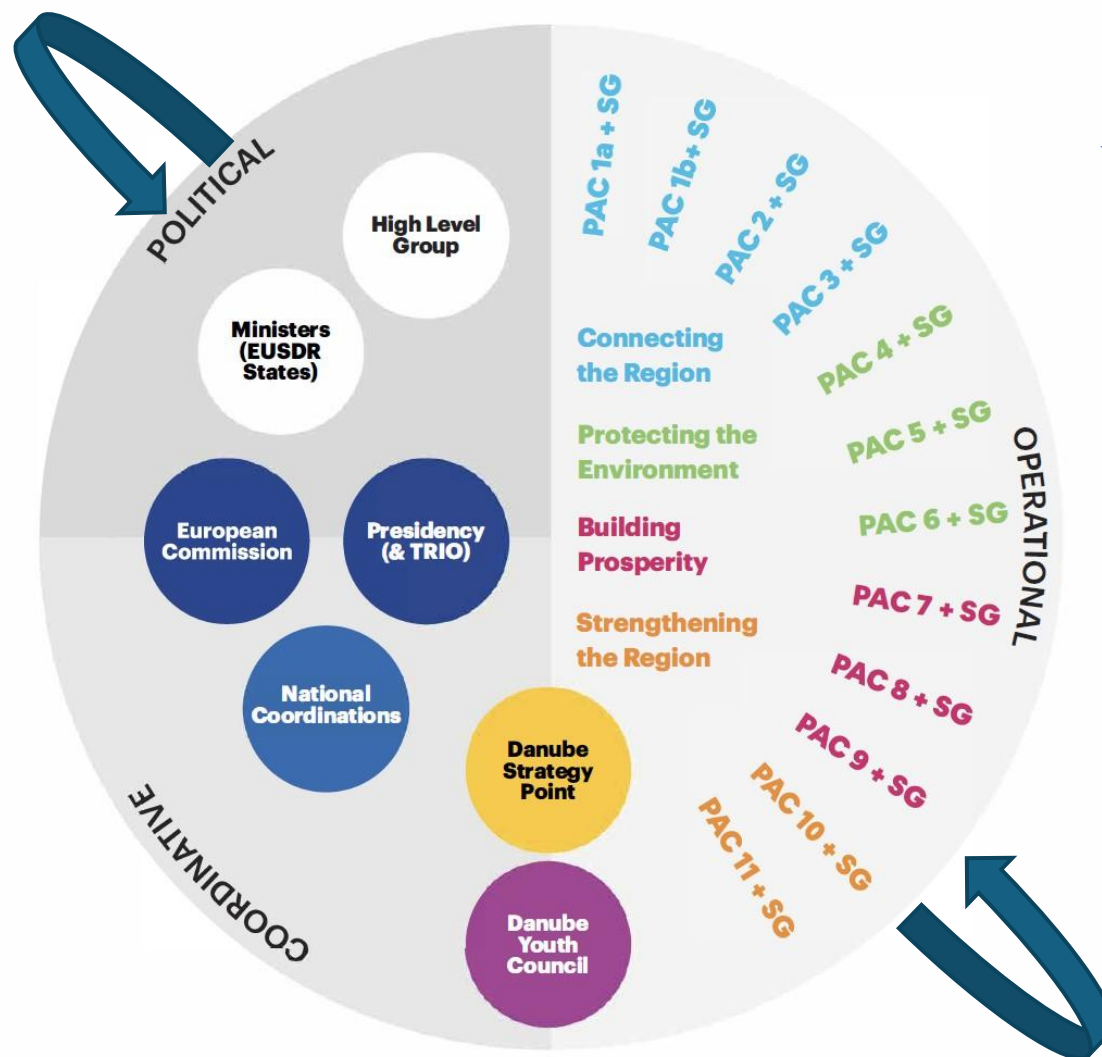


Structure and governance

[Multilevel Governance
\(MLG\)](#)

[Agenda of the \(TRIO\)
Presidency](#)

[NCs Rules of Procedure
\(RoP, revision 2023\)](#)



[EUSDR Governance Architecture
Paper \(revision 2026\)](#)

[EUSDR Action Plan
\(revision 2021\)](#)

[PACs Rules of Procedure
\(RoP, revision 2023\)](#)

[PAs and SG Rules of
Procedure \(RoP, revision
2023\)](#)

DSP support frame

Support for EUSDR core-stakeholders

Embedding & Funding

Monitoring & Evaluation

Communication

Capacity Building

Youth involvement



Main documents of the EUSDR

2026 – [EUSDR Governance Architecture Paper](#)

2012/24 – [EUSDR Implementation Reports 2012-2016 | 2016-2018 | 2019 | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023](#)

2022 – [The ABC of Macro Regional Strategies – An EUSDR Implementation Toolkit](#)

2019 – [EUSDR Operational evaluation](#)

2017 – [Study \(COWI\) Macro-regional strategies and their links with cohesion policy](#)

Further read → [Key documents](#)

ABOUT EUSDR	IMPLEMENTATION, FUNDING AND INITIATIVES	COMMUNICATION	CONTACT US
KEY DOCUMENTS			
2026			
EUSDR Governance Architecture Paper (updated as per May 2026)			
2025			
- Sarajevo Danube Declaration – Joint Statement (November 2025) of the Foreign Ministers of the EUSDR states - Council Conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (September 2025) - Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (13 May 2025) - EUSDR Process/Implementation Evaluation – Final Report (03 April 2025)			
2024			
- EUSDR Implementation Report 2022-2023 (December 2024) - Vienna Danube Declaration – Joint Statement (June 2024) of the Foreign Ministers of the EUSDR states			
2023			
- EUSDR Governance Architecture Paper (updated as per November 2023) - Joint Statement (2023) of the Ministers Responsible for the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - Final EUSDR Evaluation Plan 2023-2028 (September 2023) - Rules of Procedure of the EUSDR National Coordinators (updated as per August 2023) - Rules of Procedure of the EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators (updated as per August 2023) - Council Conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (June 2023)			
2022			
- Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (2022) - The ABC of Macro Regional Strategies – An EUSDR Implementation Toolkit The tool kit focuses on enhancing capabilities for the implementation of the EUSDR in the non-EU participating countries, with the intention to increase the capacity of stakeholders from these countries to develop and implement relevant projects for the Danube Strategy. - Joint Statement (2022) of the Ministers responsible for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - EUSDR Policy/Impact Evaluation - Proposal for the establishment of the EUSDR Danube Youth Council (DYC) & Danube Youth Organisations Network (DYON) (endorsed as per March 2022) - EUSDR Needs Assessment for closer cooperation between PACs and relevant stakeholders including Annex I-III - EUSDR Implementation Report 2020-2021			
2021			
- Joint Statement (2021) of Ministers responsible for Innovation and Digitalisation of the participating countries of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - EUSDR Needs Assessment on the engagement in Steering Groups including Annex I-IV			
2020			
- Joint Statement (2020) of the Ministers responsible for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - Council conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies - Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (COM/2020/578 final) and the accompanying Annex (SWD/2020/186 final) - EUSDR Governance Architecture Paper (July 2020 – for the updated version from November 2023, please see above) - COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT ACTION PLAN - EUSDR Implementation Report 2019			
2019			
EUSDR Consolidated Input Document AP Revision 2019			

EUSDR Alignment with the 2028-2034 EU Budget



What it Means



Aligning **EUSDR objectives** with EU political priorities & budget logic.



Translating EU priorities into **territorial, transnational action**.



Maintaining EUSDR relevance through **strategic, policy-driven impact**.



Why it Matters



EU Budget 2028-2034 reshapes how Europe delivers **strategic priorities**.



Alignment as opportunity to **reinforce macro-regional added value** in shaping policy & funding.



EUSDR as a **practical framework** for translating EU priorities into coordinated action across the Danube Region.



How it Works



Recognising **key role of PAs** (translate EU strategic priorities into **concrete transnational action**).



Early engagement with EU and national programming cycles (**upstream positioning**).



Focus on a limited number of **high-impact strategic topics** per PA.

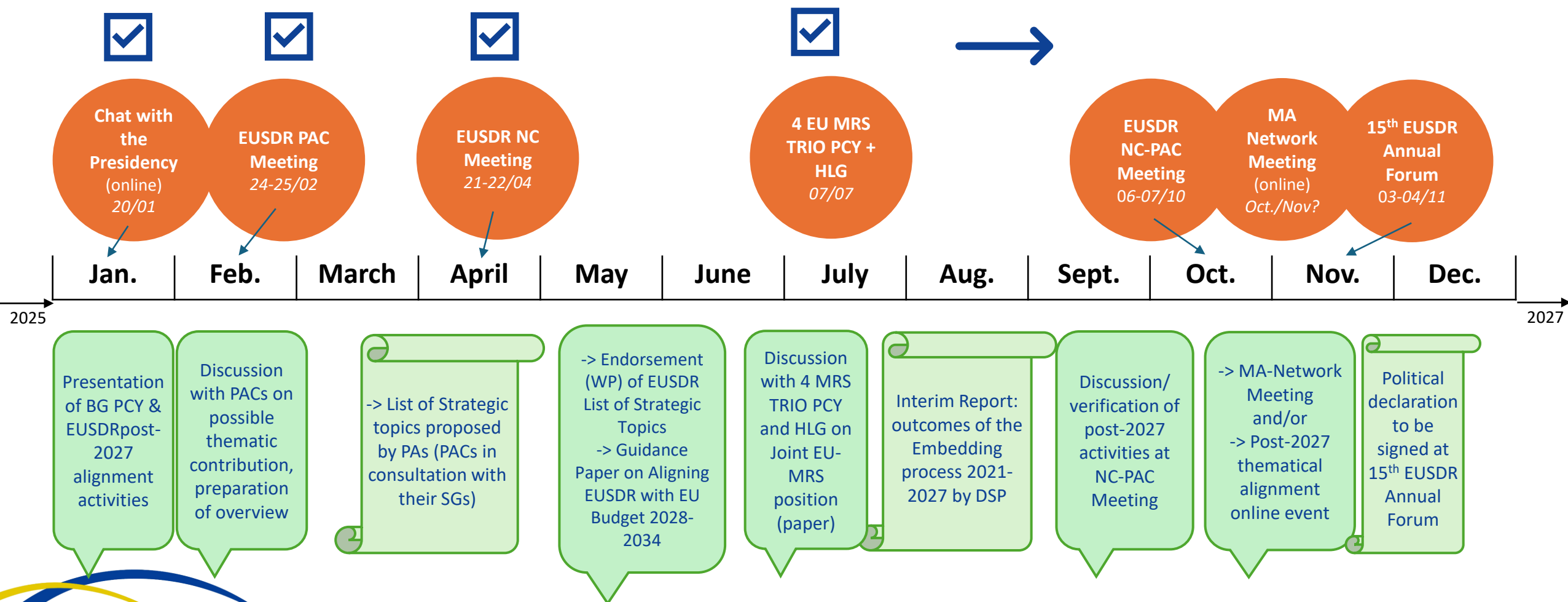


Use of already existing **EUSDR tools** (EUSDR Embedding Weeks, Managing Authorities Network, Matchmaking, Funding Pathways).

Thematic

Advocacy

4 MRS Messages



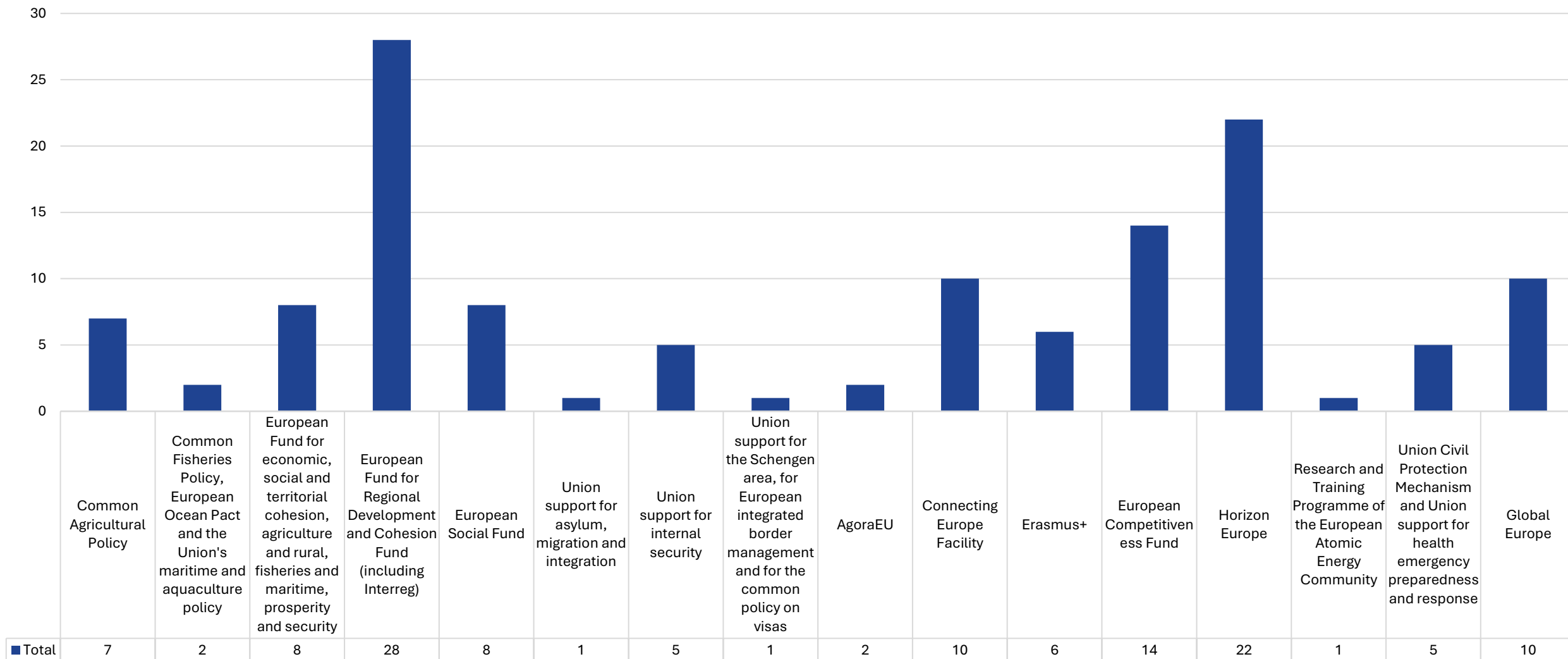
Thematic Contributions from EUSDR Priority Areas

Total: 28 thematic contributions

EUSDR PA	Thematic contribution #1	Thematic contribution #2	Thematic contribution #3
PA 1a	Dual-use infrastructure development	Nature-based solutions to increase climate resilience of waterway infrastructure on the Danube and its navigable tributaries	
PA 1b	Enhanced cross-border mobility and corridor performance	Green and digitally optimised multimodal transport	Resilient and secure transport connectivity
PA 2	Energy security and resilience	Renewable energy deployment and local energy communities	
PA 3	Tourism, cultural routes, cultural heritage, blue economy and youth as interconnected territorial development pillars	Cultural heritage and landscapes as territorial resilience assets	Youth, skills and cultural and creative sectors (CCS)
PA 4	Prevention and reduction of water pollution and protection of water resources		
PA 5	Integrated flood risk management	Proactive drought management	Strengthened disaster risk management
PA 6	Environment and nature restoration	Protection of migratory and particularly endangered Danube species	Strengthened disaster risk management
PA 7	Strengthening an inclusive, high-performing and secure research and innovation ecosystem		
PA 8	Security and resilience, including resilient economies and dual-use technologies	Circular economy, bioeconomy	Health, health industry
PA 9	Socially fair transition – Integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market	Closing the skills gap for improved competitiveness	
PA 10	Smart territorial development	Digitalisation in public service	Capacity building for civic participation/multi-level governance

Thematic Contributions from EUSDR Priority Areas

EUSDR Alignment with EU MFF 2028-2034: Possible funding sources for PAs (in line with the European Commission proposals)



Guidance Paper 2026: Aligning EUSDR with the EU Budget 2028-2034

Purpose

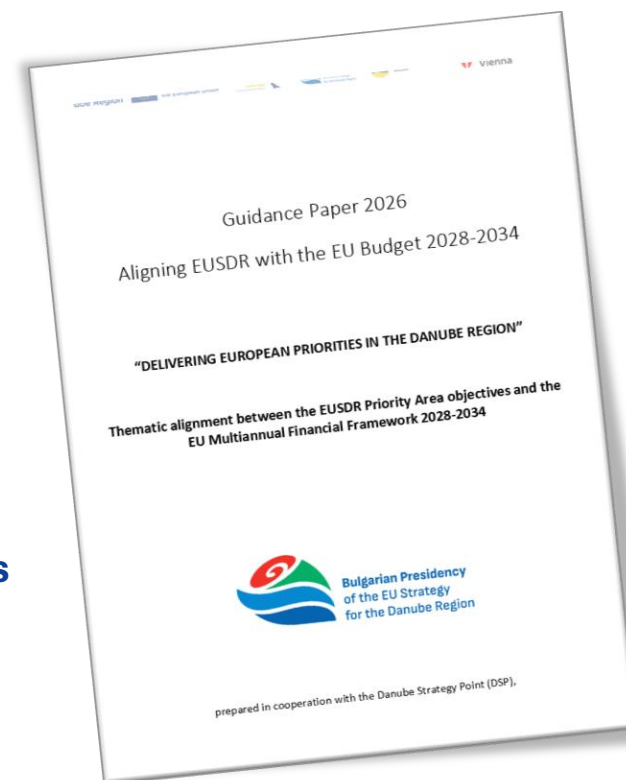
- **Strategic guidance** on aligning EUSDR with the priorities and framework of the proposed EU MFF 2028-2034
- **Common reference for stakeholders** to shape post-27 priorities and maximise macro-regional contribution to EU objectives and changing policy environment

Objectives

- **Ensure continued relevance** and impact of the EUSDR beyond 2027
- **Align EUSDR PAs with emerging EU priorities** (such as competitiveness, resilience, enlargement, clean transition)
- Support effective engagement with **future EU funding instruments and NRPPs**

Implications

- **Strong thematic convergence** exists between EUSDR objectives and post-27 priorities
- EUSDR is well positioned to act as a **practical implementation framework** for delivering EU priorities at macro-regional level
- EUSDR can strengthen **policy coordination, capacity building, and transnational cooperation** among EU member states and EU candidate countries



Guidance Paper endorsed by EUSDR
National Coordinators

4 EU MRS Joint Advocacy Guidance and Strategic Orientations within the framework of the 4 EU MRS TRIO PCY

Consolidated Guidance based on the strategic proposals submitted by the four EU MRS (EUSBSR, EUSDR, EUSAIR, EUSALP) in May 2026 → **Guidance aims to highlight areas where a coordinated approach across EU MRS can provide added value**

Joint Advocacy messages

- Keep **EU MRS aligned with EU priorities** and recognised in key regulatory frameworks, e.g. ERDF regulation Art 7(1b), Art 8(1b)
- Use **national and regional programming frameworks to integrate territorial, transnational, and cross-border perspectives**, where relevant and appropriate, building on EU MRS as established cooperation frameworks
- Ensure **governance structures are supported** sufficiently through INTERREG and other programmes to deliver coordination and implementation effectively
- Highlight **EU MRS contributions to EU enlargement** and cooperation with candidate and neighbouring countries
- Recognise the **strategic importance of territories with specific geographical characteristics** such as mountain, maritime, riverine, and sparsely populated areas for Europe's cohesion, sustainability and prosperity
- Strengthen **EU MRS as platforms for knowledge exchange, policy alignment, project scaling, and transnational cooperation**
- Emphasise that stronger integration of EU MRS **improves policy coherence, increases the impact and visibility of EU investments, and supports scalable, sustainable solutions**

EUSDR Support for EU Enlargement

Why?	Role of MRS	MRS support	EUSDR support
Renewed enlargement momentum	Gradual EU integration	Territorial cohesion	Capacity Building
Geostrategic relevance for stability	Complementary to EU acquis in concrete policy areas	Crisis cooperation	Early EU programming participation
MRS as EU integration instruments	Equal-footing learning and cooperation	Connecting institutions and people	Good practice exchange
		Enabling transnational networks	

EUSDR & EUSAIR supporting enlargement

Keep cooperation structured & informal

Use existing meetings, Annual Fora, networks and Trio Presidencies rather than new bodies.

Target participation support

Strengthen participation, ownership and continuity of engagement of thematic groups/priority areas members.

Focus on practical strategic project ecosystems

Move from isolated actions to visible cross-MRS strategic project pipelines and thematic matchmaking.

Communicate results politically

Show macro-regional achievements as concrete European added value for enlargement.

EUSDR & EUSAIR supporting enlargement

Joint meeting
of EUSAIR and
EUSDR NCs

1st TF meeting

Jan

Feb

March

Apr

May

June

July

Aug

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec

- Report on EUSAIR support to Enlargement
- Enlargement Summary paper of Current and Future Activities of EUSDR PAs Supporting EU Enlargement

Exploration of possible cooperation topics between
EUSAIR Pillars and EUSDR Priority Areas

Preparation of the guidance for
establishment and operation of Joint
EUSAIR & EUSDR Task Force for
Enlargement

Establishment of the
Joint Task Force

Endorsement of the
Guidance Paper

15 years of EUSDR – selection of milestones



Communication

Danube Strategy Flagships



- The Danube Strategy Flagships 2025 - 2026 will be promoted in 2026 (articles on EUSDR social media channels, **video campaigns**)
- Next selection will be in autumn/winter 2026 (Danube Strategy Flagships 2027)
- New layout Certificates, with PA logos upon request

Impact analysis on communication tools



- Will be carried out in 2026 and will cover
 - ✓ Degree of awareness and information on EUSDR
 - ✓ Needs Assessment of Target Audiences
 - ✓ Impact of Online Communication Campaigns
- Aiming at improving the EUSDR Communication Strategy, enhancing awareness, engagement, accessibility, and stakeholder participation.

EUSDR Website and Social Media Channels

- Creation of digital brochure of 2025 highlights
- Communication of all content related to the implementation of the EUSDR

Danube Youth Council

Onboarding of 18 new DYC members with PA matchmaking calls in January – March 2026

5th Danube Youth Camp, 15-17 March 2026, Sofia (BG)

Main outcomes/achievements:

- Exchange with BG EUSDR PCY and DG REGIO
- Cross-MRS Youth Council outreach
- DYC Position Paper: Transport and Rural Areas, Inclusion of Disadvantaged Youth, Security
- PA-related work on Recommendation Papers, Danube Youth Survey and Danube Youth Map

Selection of new members in Autumn 2026



Danube Youth Organisations Network (DYON)

- Open network / 50 Youth Organisations
- Established in 2024, under the coordination of AT PCY
- DYON Boot Camp 2025 – Sarajevo, BA
- Participation in a youth panel and 12th Danube Participation Day organised by PA 10 as part of the 14th EUSDR Annual Forum in 2025, Sarajevo, BA
- DYON Camp 2026 – 13 – 17 May , Baden Württemberg, DE
- DYON Boot Camp 2026 – Sofia, BG (tbd)
- Rules of Procedure under preparation



Further read → [DYON](#)

EUSDR Contacts



<https://danube-region.eu/contact-us/>

<https://danube-region.eu/eusdr-event-directory>



Thank you for your attention!

Cristina Cuc
Danube Strategy Point
Pillar Officer (Pillars 2 and 3)
cristina.cuc@eusdr-dsp.eu



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