Interreg Danube Region

Co-funded by the European Union

HARMONMISSIONS

MISSION 1

JULY 2025

NEWSLETTER

Word of the editor

Dear Climate Community,

Welcome to the seventh edition of the HARMONMISSIONS newsletter! As we continue our collective journey toward a climate-resilient Danube Region, we are excited to share impactful stories, project updates, and strategic developments that support the EU Missions on climate adaptation and sustainable cities.

This issue highlights the critical role of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) in empowering municipalities to strengthen their climate resilience, and provides practical insights into how EU Mission 1 is shaping local adaptation strategies across Europe. We also showcase the ESINERGY project, which promotes energy efficiency and grid stability through pilot actions in 12 countries. In addition, we bring you urgent climate-related insights from Montenegro, where rising Adriatic temperatures threaten biodiversity and coastal communities, and updates on the upcoming Danube Region Programme's 3rd targeted call for proposals.

Together, these contributions reflect our shared commitment to sustainable development, collaboration, and innovation. We hope the stories in this edition will inform, inspire, and energize your climate action efforts.

Warm regards,

Digital Innovation hub Slovenia

Announcements

Danube Region Programme - 3rd targeted call for proposals pre-announcement

Danube Region Programme has announced the 3rd targeted call for proposals pre-announcement, through which will found only proposals addressing the thematic focus defined in the call pre-announcement.

The call will officially be open in mid-September, with a deadline for submission 15th December 2025. The starting date of the projects is planned for 1st July 2026, while the maximum project duration is 30 months. The programme rules compared to the previous calls for proposals will not be changed therefore the applicants can consult the Applicants Manual of the 2nd call until the official launch.

For more information about the 3rd call and for detailed explanation of the thematic focus, partnership requirements and available budget please visit the folowing adress and consult the call pre-announcement:
https://interreg-danube.eu/calls-for-proposals/third-call-for-proposals-pre-announcement

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date: September 9–10, 2025 – join the Harmonmissions online training!
The training supports the implementation of the EU Climate Missions – adaptation to climate change (Mission 1) and mitigation (Mission 4) – through strong project design and implementation within the Horizon Europe programme.
Invitation with details coming in early August!

Gain up-to-date knowledge and practical tools for your project activities.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
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Author: : Institute of Modern Technologies Montenegro

Adriatic Sea Facing Alarming Temperature Rise, Threatening Marine Life and Coastal Communities

Recent data reveals that the average surface temperature of the Adriatic Sea has increased by more than 1.5°C since 1980, surpassing the critical threshold for biodiversity risk. According to the Hydrometeorological and Seismological Institute of Montenegro, in the last five years, average sea surface temperatures have reached or exceeded 19°C, with summer temperatures now commonly rising above 27°C.

Experts warn this warming trend, estimated at 0.03°C per year, could raise sea temperatures by another 3°C over the next century. Dr. Ivana Vojinović, director of the Climate Change Centre at UDG, emphasizes that such changes are already altering marine ecosystems. Warmer waters have led to oxygen depletion in deeper layers, increased algal blooms, and the spread of invasive species like the blue crab and lionfish, which are displacing native species.

In addition to rising temperatures, the Adriatic is experiencing sea level rise, with projections estimating a 35 cm increase by the end of the century. Coastal erosion, habitat loss, and saltwater intrusion threaten biodiversity and freshwater supplies. Despite this, Montenegro lacks adequate coastal protection measures, as noted in the country's National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

Shallow coastal areas like Ulcinj, Ada Bojana, and the Bay of Kotor are particularly vulnerable. Changes in the upper sea layers, which are most biologically active, are disrupting entire ecosystems, with likely repercussions for the local tourism and fishing industries.

Climate change is also shrinking water availability in river basins. Hydrological studies show a 27% decrease in river discharge is possible by century's end due to reduced rainfall. Episodes of severe drought have already dried up parts of rivers like the Ibar and lowered water levels in Morača and Zeta, affecting agriculture and energy sectors.

As Montenegro faces more frequent floods and prolonged dry spells, experts call for urgent action to adapt to the climate crisis and protect both marine and freshwater ecosystems, which are critical to the country's environmental and economic health.

Source:
Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro -
https://www.cin-cg.me/klimatske-promjene-znacajno-uticu-na-vode-crne-gore-more-raste-rijeke-nestaju-drzava-ne-reaguje/

Author: LIR Evolution

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan and EU Mission 1: Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation in Cities

The European Union's Mission 1, "Adaptation to Climate Change," is a cornerstone of the EU's strategy to build resilient communities capable of withstanding the escalating impacts of climate change. With cities facing increasing risks from heatwaves, flooding, and other climate-related challenges, Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP), developed under the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, are essential tools for cities to enhance urban resilience. SECAPs provide a structured framework for municipalities to assess vulnerabilities, implement adaptation measures, and engage stakeholders, directly supporting the EU's goal of enabling cities to tackle climate adaptation.

The Role of SECAP in Climate Adaptation

SECAPs are comprehensive plans that combine climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, with a strong emphasis on preparing cities for current and future climate risks. These plans integrate mitigation and adaptation strategies, requiring cities to set ambitious targets, such as reducing CO_2 emissions by at least 55% by 2030 (with many aiming for climate neutrality), while addressing vulnerabilities like heatwaves, flooding, or energy poverty. Unlike their predecessor, Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs), SECAPs explicitly include a Climate Risks and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) to identify local climate hazards such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, or urban heat islands. This assessment forms the basis for tailored adaptation measures, ensuring cities can protect infrastructure, ecosystems, and vulnerable populations. SECAPs also integrate mitigation efforts, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to address the root causes of climate change while building resilience.

The Covenant of Mayors, with over 10,000 signatories across 54 countries and 6,221 submitted action plans as of 2023, supports municipalities in developing SECAPs that align with the EU's adaptation goals. These plans require cities to set clear adaptation objectives, assign responsibilities, and establish monitoring frameworks, fostering a proactive approach to climate resilience. By addressing both immediate and long-term risks, SECAPs empower cities to contribute to Mission 1's target of enhancing adaptive capacity across Europe.

Synergies with EU Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change

EU Mission 1 aims to accelerate climate adaptation by supporting at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate-resilient by 2030. It emphasizes systemic solutions, stakeholder collaboration, and innovative financing to address climate risks. SECAPs align seamlessly with these objectives by providing a practical methodology for assessing vulnerabilities and implementing adaptation actions. For instance, the CRVA within a SECAP helps cities identify specific risks—such as flooding in coastal areas or heat stress in urban centers—and develop targeted strategies, which can be integrated into the Mission's Climate Resilience Strategies.

The Mission's focus on co-creating solutions with local stakeholders mirrors the participatory approach of SECAPs. Projects like OwnYourSECAP demonstrate how municipalities can engage citizens, businesses, and local organizations to develop adaptation plans that reflect community needs. By aligning SECAPs with Mission 1's tools, such as the Climate-ADAPT platform, cities can access scientific knowledge, risk assessment frameworks, and best practices to enhance their adaptation efforts.

Practical Contributions of SECAPs to Adaptation Goals

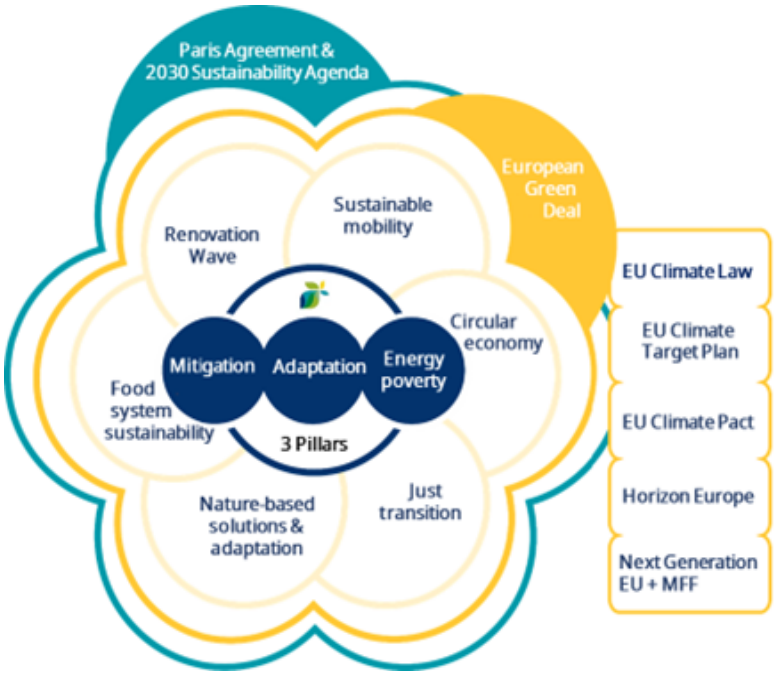
SECAPs contribute to Mission 1 in several practical ways. First, they enable cities to conduct detailed risk assessments that inform adaptation priorities. For example, the city of Lisbon, Portugal, used its SECAP to map flood-prone areas and implement green infrastructure, such as urban parks and permeable surfaces, to mitigate flood risks. These actions align with Mission 1's emphasis on nature-based solutions to enhance resilience.

Second, SECAPs promote inclusive adaptation strategies that protect vulnerable populations. In the Italian municipalities near Mount Vesuvius, a joint SECAP incorporated measures to address heatwaves, including cooling centers and public awareness campaigns targeting elderly residents. Such initiatives support Mission 1's goal of ensuring equitable adaptation, reducing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized groups.

Third, SECAPs facilitate access to funding for adaptation projects. The EU Mission Label, awarded to communities with robust adaptation strategies, unlocks financing from EU programs, national funds, and private investors. SECAPs, when validated by the Covenant of Mayors, enhance a city's credibility, making it more attractive to funders. The Mission's Deep Demonstration projects, which test systemic adaptation approaches, can further support cities in scaling up SECAP initiatives through funding and technical assistance.

Conclusion

SECAPs are essential tools for advancing the objectives of EU Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change. By providing a structured approach to risk assessment, stakeholder engagement, and adaptation planning, SECAPs empower cities to build resilience against climate impacts. Through practical measures like green infrastructure, inclusive strategies, and access to funding, SECAPs enable municipalities to address local vulnerabilities while contributing to Europe's broader adaptation goals. As cities like Lisbon and Copenhagen demonstrate, integrating SECAPs with Mission 1's frameworks can accelerate progress toward climate resilience, creating a blueprint for communities across Europe to thrive in a changing climate.



Project ESINERGY - Empowerment of the stakeholders in the implementation of the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources in term of energy storages and energy networks stability

Short description of the project

ESINERGY helps to solve one of the key issues in modern energy technology - to manage the imbalance between the generated power and the load into the electrical network, which is not adequate for the forthcoming needs such as rising consumption, energy demand etc. Partners from 12 Danube countries are working together to reduce peak loads, support local energy use (heat pumps, storage, EV charging), and ease pressure on the grid.
By combining local action with coordinated planning, the project brings together public authorities, energy providers, and research institutions. Pilot solutions will be followed by a transnational strategy to help replicate results across the region—improving energy use, reducing costs and enabling future energy growth.

Objectives:

- Reducing the peak loads by pilot actions
- Transnational strategy for reduction of peak loads and the correct implementation of the Directive
- Transferring of the results and policy support activities

Pilot Investments:

1. Smart concept for solar electricity flow and use - Martjanci, SI
2. Battery system in Administrative building of MED - Čakovec, HR
3. Monitoring Equipment Campus Innovation Centre WEIZ - Weiz, AT
4. Monitoring&control of decentralized plants/assets - Bad Hindelang, DE
5. Smart battery management - Beloslav, BG
6. Installation of the PVPP with a battery system - Goražde, BA
7. Heat pumps for local hospital - Khotyn, UA

Call: Interreg Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 (First Call for Proposals
Priority 2: A greener, low-carbon Danube Region, Specific Objective 2.1: Support greening the energy and transport sectors in the Danube Region by enhancing the integration of renewable energy sources)

Duration: January 1st 2024 – June 30th 2026

Total project budget: 2.508.094,99 EUR
Total EU funding: 2.006.475,99 EUR
Co-financing rate: 80%

Partnership: 16 partners from 12 Danube programme countries:
1. Local energy agency Pomurje, LEA Pomurje - Slovenia
2. Smart house, institution for research and sustainable development Martjanci, SMART HOUSE - Slovenia
3. Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd., MENEA – Croatia
4. Medjimurje County, MED – Croatia
5. Energy and Innovation Centre of Weiz, WEIZ - Austria
6. B.A.U.M. Consult GmbH, BAUM - Germany
7. Electricity Company Hindelang, EWH - Germany

8. IMRO-DDKK Nonprofit Ltd., IMRO - Hungary
9. Zala County Self-Government, ZALA - Hungary
10. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, STU - Slovakia
11. Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities, UBBSLA - Bulgaria
12. Romanian Association for Technology Transfer and Innovation, ARoTT - Romania
13. Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia, RARIS - Serbia
14. Sarajevo economic regional development agency, SERDA – Bosnia and Herzegovina
15. Environmental Protection Fund of Montenegro, Eco-fund - Montenegro
16. Association “Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine”, EECU - Ukraine