



An initiative of the European Union

# CLUSTERS MEET REGIONS

# ZAGREB

CROATIA | 29 · 30  
NOVEMBER 22

AGORADA+ DISCUSSES CROATIAN  
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND  
INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION



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## CLUSTERS MEET REGIONS: AGORADA+ DISCUSSES CROATIAN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

Zagreb Innovation Centre – Accelerator Hall  
Pav. 12, Avenija Dubrovnik 15, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia

**The European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA) and the European Commission (EC), in collaboration with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, organise a workshop to explore how regional development agencies, clusters and other actors could foster stronger collaboration in the implementation of regional and national economic development policies, specifically with the purpose to further promote digital transformation and interregional cooperation in Croatia.**

The workshop takes place within the framework of **AGORADA+**, one of EURADA's four main annual events, which is usually held in autumn in the region of one of the association's members. For the first time since its foundation, all EURADA members in one country will host this year's event under the leadership of **SIMORA** – Development Agency of Sisak-Moslavina County. The event is co-organised by **DURA** – Dubrovnik Development Agency, **ZARA** – Zagorje Development Agency, the Entrepreneurial Centre of Krapina-Zagorje County, **ZADRA NOVA** – Zadar County Development Agency, with the support of **ZICER** – Zagreb Innovation Centre.

The objective of the event will be to facilitate the implementation of good practices where clusters play an active role in regional economies and are drivers for economic transition, and to create and promote collaborations between clusters and regional stakeholders for the industrial development of the regions.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

The event aims to bring together around 100 representatives of regional development agencies, part of or outside EURADA's network, cluster organisations, national public authorities, companies, the Enterprise Europe Network, and other business support organisations from EU Member States and regions. Participation from a wide range of economic development actors is expected, including financial intermediaries, clusters, innovation hubs, industrial associations, investors, business angels, crowdfunding platforms, and others.

### CONTEXT

Croatia is experiencing increased economic growth in the last few years, starting in 2015 stimulated by the increase in exports. The benefits of this growth have portrayed themselves through improved living standards which reached 65.2 % in comparison to the EU average in 2019. In 2021, GDP grew by 5.7% and is projected to grow by 3.7% in 2022 albeit growth numbers reveal an increasing disparity between the Capital region and the rest of the country.

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia predicts that the country will base its development on an increase of productivity in the private and public sectors, on creation and implementation of knowledge and investment stimulation, as well as on the use of innovation and new technologies. The manufacturing industry, for instance, has shown an increase of 6.2% in 2021, with the biggest impact seen in the production of electric energy, metal processing industry, and food industry. Other strong sectors include tourism, commerce, agriculture, textiles, wood processing,



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construction, and ICT. Due to this, the Ministry of Economy has started an initiative of Croatian competitiveness clusters in sectors such as: wood, automotive, food, textile, leather and shoe, ICT, defence, construction, CCI, and science.

The strategic location of Croatia has allowed collaboration with all neighbouring countries on many cross-border, interregional and transnational projects. These initiatives tend to lower cross-border barriers for businesses, solve common challenges, stimulate research and innovation, reduce environmental pollution, exploit unused growth potential, create the integration of cross-border labour markets that foster cooperation between educational institutions, and much more. There are established collaboration actions with Italy and Slovenia, as well as with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (that are not part of the EU).

There are many examples of cross-border cooperations in which Croatia participates, such as the Interreg Italy-Croatia CBC Programme and the Interreg Slovenia-Croatia CBC Programme. Croatia also takes part in transnational projects such as the Interreg Central Europe, Interreg Danube and Interreg EURO-Med, as well as the interregional programmes Interreg Europe and URBACT. Topics that are covered include, amongst others, biodiversity preservation, zero-carbon urban-mobility, industrial transition & entrepreneurship, SME competitiveness, climate change, culture and sustainable tourism, circular economy, research and innovation capacities.

## THE CLUSTERS MEET REGIONS SERIES

EU regions need to be able to compete with other more advanced and emerging economies in the fast changing economic and social environment, in particular in the post-Covid-19 recovery period. Location matters particularly for clusters. They develop more easily in urban and regional ecosystems with a favourable administrative and regulatory environment and access to skilled labour, markets, financial and business support services.

**What really matters is the involvement of clusters in regional economic governance, in policy design and implementation at regional level.**

Regional authorities need to know their clusters and understand how they can shape, improve and effectively help in the design and the implementation of regional development policies. On the other hand, cluster organisations and their members should take actions and implement projects that are relevant for the economic development of their local communities. They should engage in collaboration with other European clusters in the same or related economic activities and thus complement regional assets and reinforce capacities to lead green transition, accelerate digital transition and build resilience.

**15 regional workshops will be organised in the EU regions, which express their interest to host the events in 2022-23 as part of the “Clusters meet Regions” cycle.**

These workshops will bring together clusters and policymakers of the EU, national, regional and local level to learn from each other on how to better use clusters to strengthen industrial ecosystems, serve national/regional economic development and liaise with other regions with similar transition challenges.

**The “Clusters meet Regions” in Zagreb is the 4th of the series and is structured in line with the priorities established by Croatia.**

# AGENDA

## 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

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### **09:30 REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS AND WELCOME COFFEE**

### **10:00 OPENING SESSION**

This opening session will present the objectives of the workshop and thoughts on the general advantages and challenges of clusters' involvement in regional economic governance and policies.

- **Nataša Tramišak**, Croatian Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds
- **Bogdan Chelariu**, President, EURADA
- Zagreb local government representative (tbc)
- Peter Czaga, European Commission (DG GROW) **OR** EISMEA representative

**Moderator: Frane Šesnić**, CEO, ZICER

### **10:40 How Regional Development Agencies facilitate cluster development through S3 priorities**

- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development representative (tbc)
- Croatian Chamber of Commerce representative (tbc)
- **EURADA member (tbc)**

**Moderator: JRC representative (tbc)**

### **11:20 COFFEE BREAK**

### **11:50 Improving Collaboration between Clusters and National & Regional Authorities**

This session will explore and compare policy approaches, practices and initiatives for cluster development and for their involvement in the design and implementation of national regional economic policies in Croatia and in other countries.

- Input Paper by ECCP representative (**tbc**)
- **Ekaterina Travinka**, Coordinator Culture, Creative Industries and Local Development, OECD Paris (**tbc**)
- ZADRA NOVA
- EURADA Member Cluster

**Moderator: Teodora Jilkova**, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

### **12:30 LUNCH BREAK**

### **14:00 Pitching Session for Collaborative Opportunities**

The Clusters meet Regions series provides a space for the clusters and regions to present themselves and their collaboration proposals with the purpose to look for new partners for networking. Each participant will have 5 minutes to present their project idea and explain what type of partners and collaboration projects they are looking for.

**Moderator: Giacomo Frisanco**, EURADA Secretariat

### **15:00 Health and Welfare Innovation Ecosystems and Clusters: Challenges and solutions through cross-border cooperation**

The health sector has been put on the spotlight in the previous years. This session

will elaborate on how various stakeholders have developed solutions to the challenges encountered and explore how collaboration has made these solutions possible.

- EU policy representative
- Croatian policy representative
- Croatian health cluster representatives
- Croatian stakeholder in the health sector
- **Sauro Vicini**, Cluster Manager, Clust-ER Health & Wellbeing (Italy)
- **Alina Capitanu**, Project Manager, MEDIC-NEST (Romania) **(tbc)**

**Moderator: Helena Matuša, ZARA**

## **16:15** COFFEE BREAK

### **16:45** Clusters Driving the Digitalisation in Croatian Key Sectors

This session will highlight the development of clusters in the selected sectors with a strong digitalization component, namely Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, Artificial Intelligence, and Gaming. The discussion will explore how these actors and ecosystems collaborate for innovation and for the deployment of digital solutions.

- **Krešimir Partl**, State Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Media
- Croatian tourism cluster representative
- **Aleksandar Gavrilović**, Secretary General, Croatian Game Development Alliance
- **Andreja Šeperac**, SMŽ Regional Coordinator, SIMORA
- **Goran Basarac**, President, Croatian Defence and Security Industry Cluster
- Cluster representative from outside Croatia

**Moderator: DURA**

## **18:00** NETWORKING COCKTAIL

# AGENDA

## 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

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**09:00**      **REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS AND WELCOME COFFEE**

**09:30**      **Challenges and Promises of Cross-Border Cooperation**

What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of Croatia in international cooperation? This session will showcase cross-border projects and demonstrate how cross-border collaboration can facilitate innovation among territories involved.

- Croatia: Ministry of Regional Development **OR** CBC Managing Authority
- **Goran Rodić**, PREDA (Bosnia & Herzegovina)
- Serbia
- Hungary
- Slovenia
- **Ivan Curzolo**, Executive Director, Informest (Italy)
- **Sergio Calò**, Cluster Director, Venetian Cluster (Italy) **(tbc)**
- **Yanis Kalogiannidis**, Project Coordinator, MeDryDive (Greece) **(tbc)**

**Moderator: IPA-Adrion**

**10:45**      **COFFEE BREAK**

**11:15**      **Main Challenges to Regional Development and Potential Solutions through Funding Opportunities for Clusters and Ecosystems**

- **Slađana Ćosić**, Head of the EIB Group Office in Croatia **(confirmed)**
- **EEN Croatia representative – FINNO platform (tbc)**

**11:30**      **Closing Remarks**

- **Roberta Dall’Olio**, Director, EURADA
- **Andreja Šeperac**, SMŽ Regional Coordinator, SIMORA
- **EISMEA OR DG GROW representative**

**12:00**      **Departure for the site visit**

**13:30**      **LUNCH BREAK**

(at the site venue)

**14:30-17:30**      **Site Visit of Gaming Incubator: PISMO**

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