

ForeDanube

ForeDanube

Foresight for Danube Region's future-oriented Competitive Planning

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT







Hotel Astoria, 10th & 11th JUNE 2025 Bled, Slovenija













Faculty of Organizational Sciences

ForeDanube

Foresight for Danube Region's futureoriented Competitive Planning

Foresight has become an increasingly needed element of strategic planning and competitiveness in many fields. The project partners plan to establish research and education in foresight activities in the Danube region.

124.880,00 €

Project budget

99.904,00 €

Interreg f unds

9/20249/2025

Project duration

This project is supported by the Interreg Danube Region Programme co-funded by the European Union.

https://www.fov.um.si/raziskovalna -dejavnost/projekti/

Leading partner: University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences Contact person: Tomaž Kern

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ForeDanube Project; Plan & Implementation Report

Tomaz Kern

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June 10 – 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

AGENDA

ForeDanube Project

Project plan & Implamentation Concluding Remarks











ForeDanube Project

- ForeDanube is the "Seed Money Facility" project!
- It was designed to create the conditions and obtain the resources to continue research and educational efforts in Danube area (main project).
- The "main project's" purpose is to develop foresight in research and education in the Danube region to provide knowledge and skills for foresight experts needed for the competitiveness of Danube economic subjects.

AGENDA

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

ForeDanube Project

Project plan & Implamentation

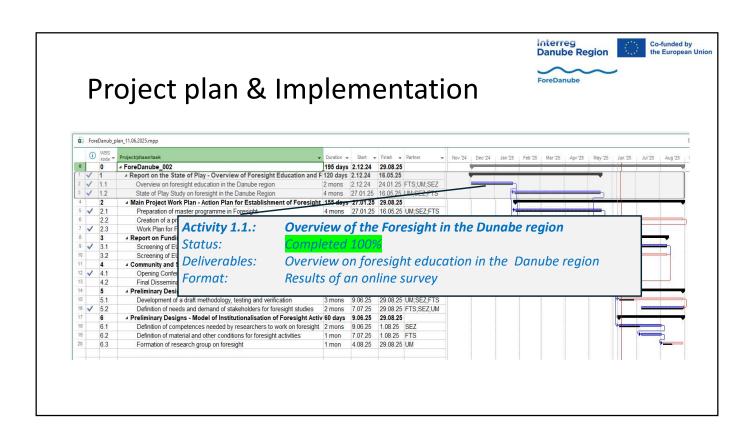
Concluding Remarks

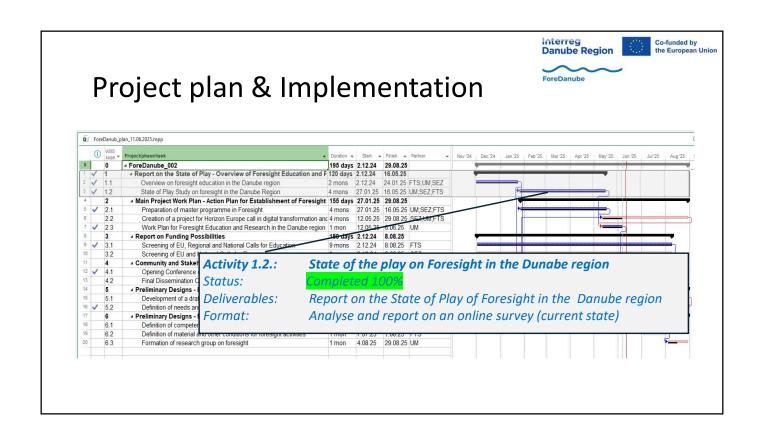








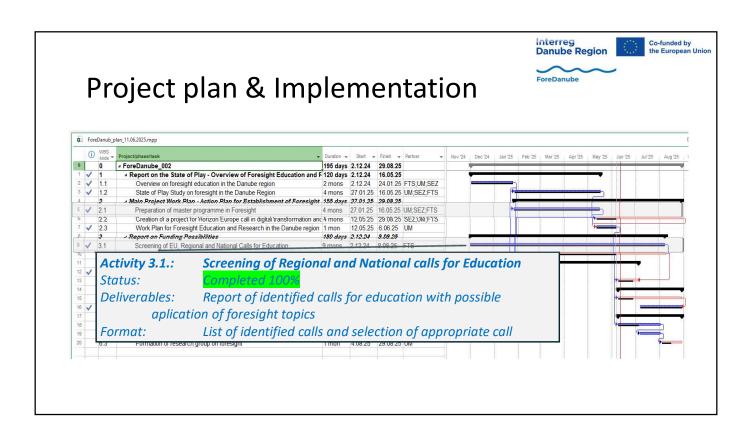


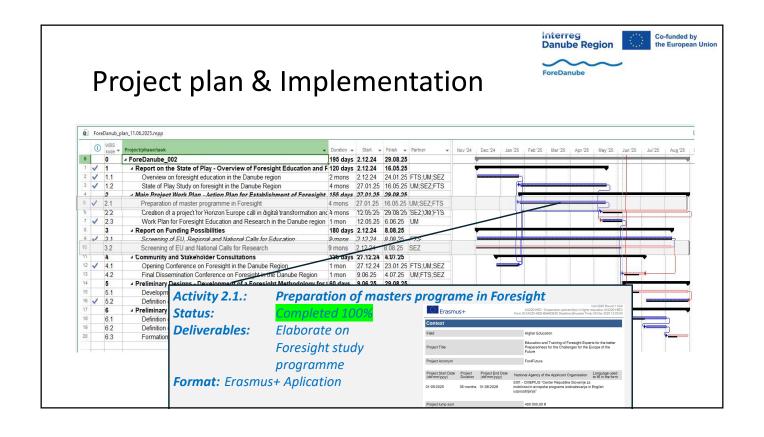










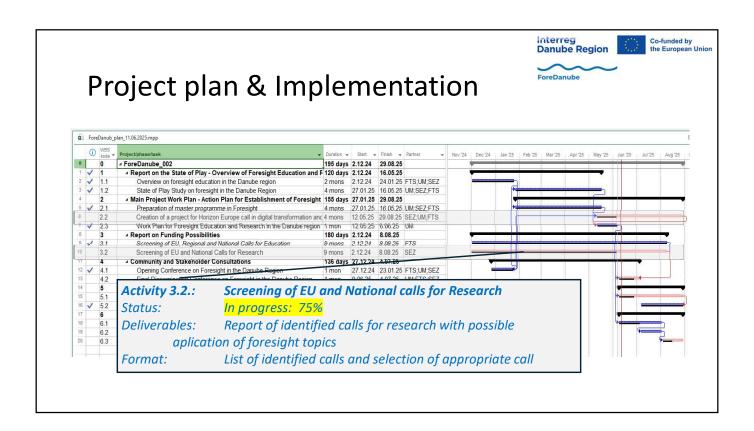


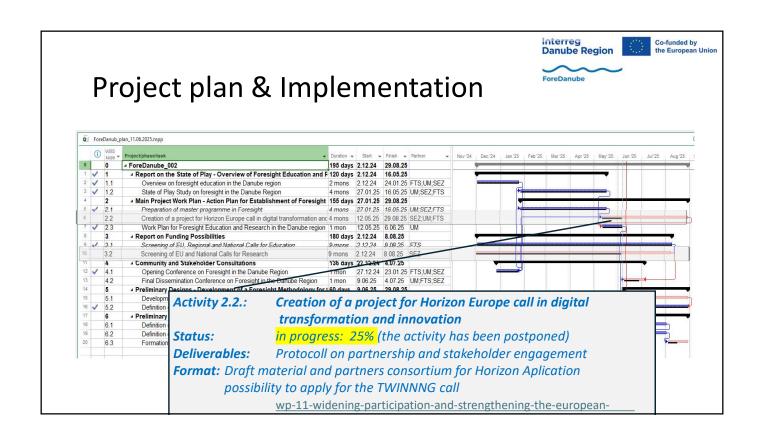










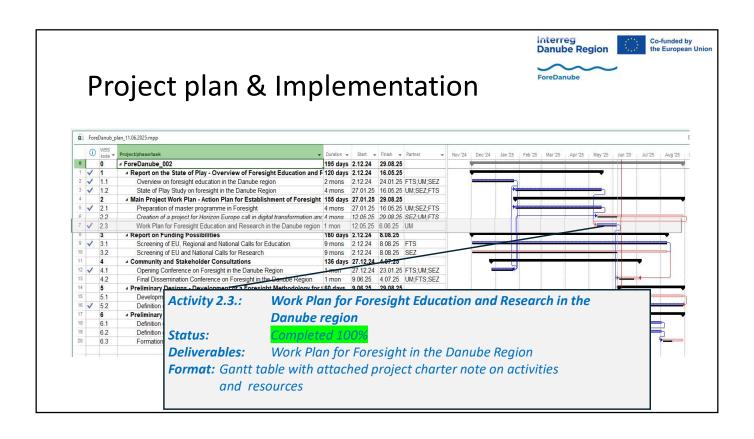


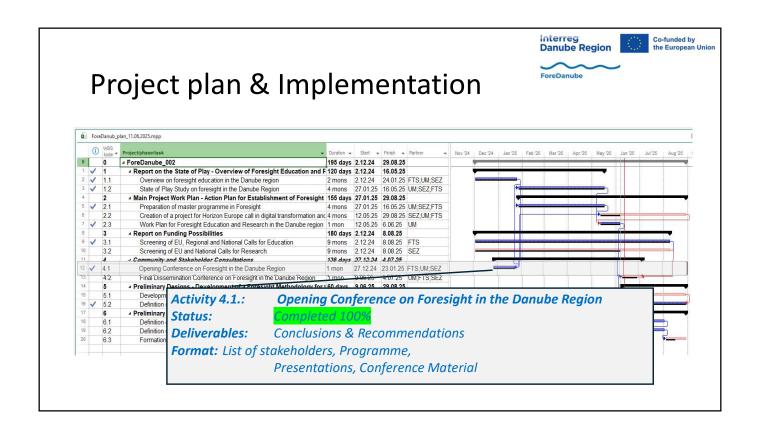










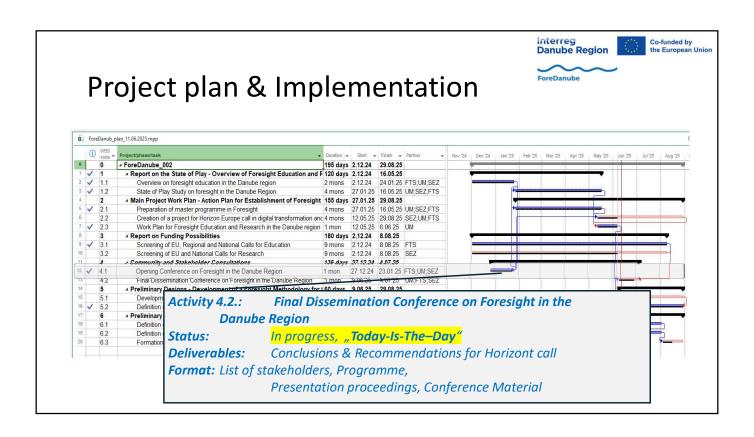


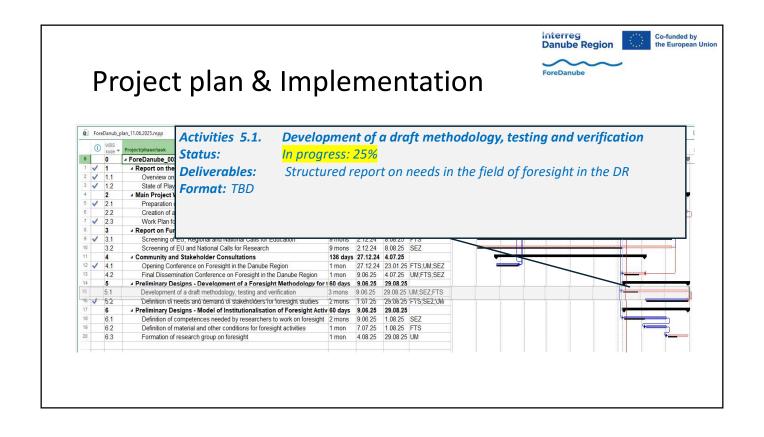








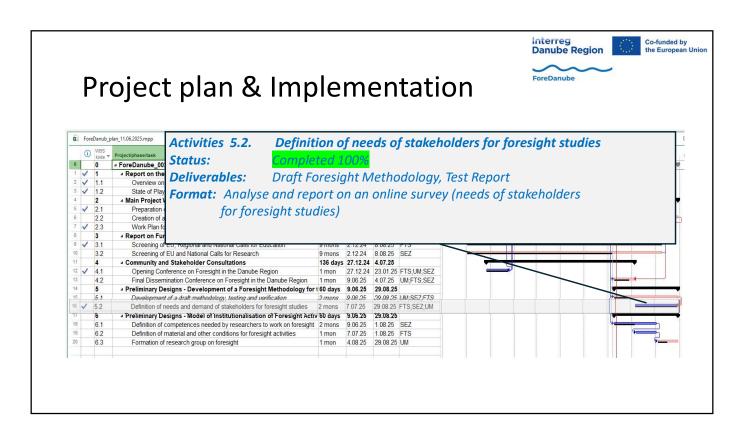


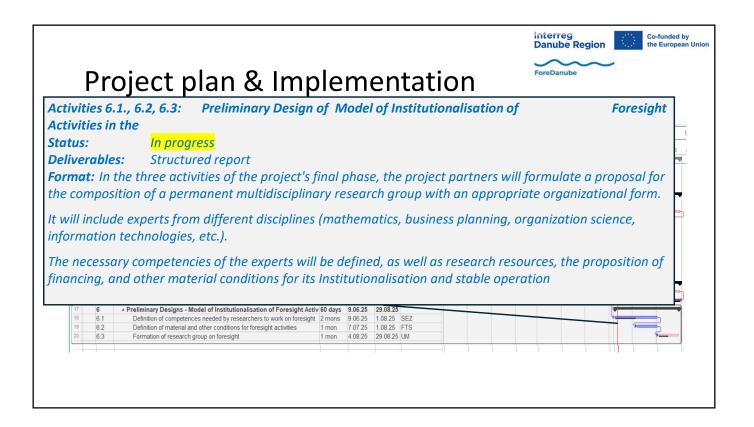
















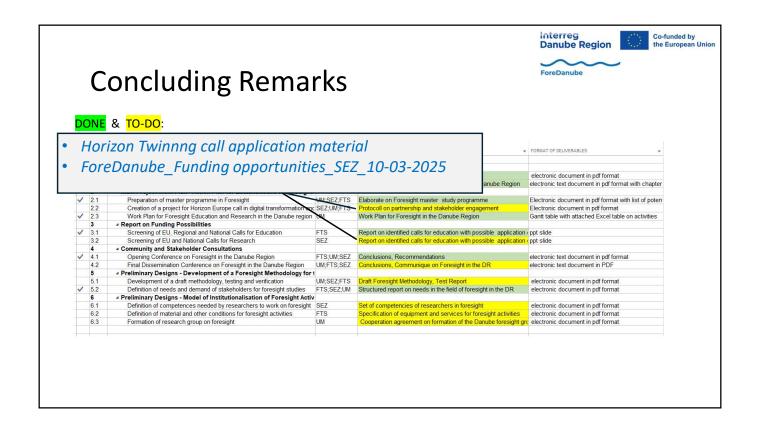


AGENDA

ForeDanube Project Project plan & Implamentation

Concluding Remarks



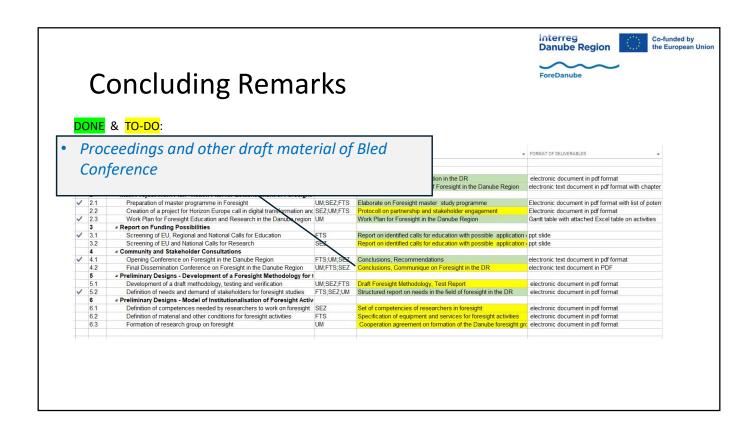


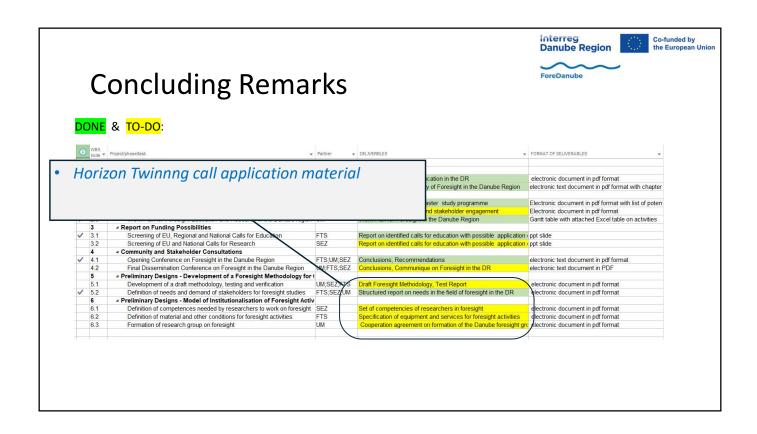


















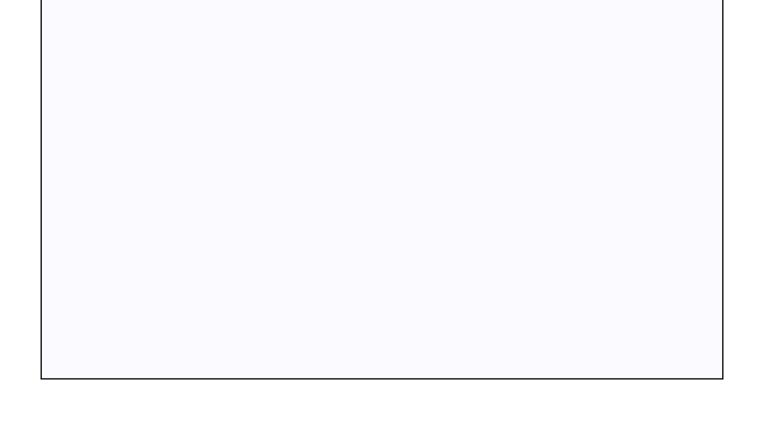


Concluding Remarks

The core idea is to establish a form of **Foresight Competence Centre**, one that is **data-driven and artificial intelligence - supported**, located at the Danube macro-regional level, with the potential to grow across the Europe and interconnect with other macro-regions.

Foresight Competence Center should link Danube macro-region to other macro-regions in the following way:

- Foresight could explore the ability of the EU macro-regional strategies to bridge wider EU-level policies on the one hand and local policies on the other;
- Danube macro-region (EUSDR) could act as a test-poligon for EU foresight by offering practical
 insights into regional policy implementation, governance, and collaboration, paving the way for
 more effective and inclusive strategies across Europe.











Artificial Intelligence and Foresight!

Navigating Uncertainty in the Age of Intelligent Systems

Prof. Dr. Bojan Cestnik

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

Introduction



- The growing role of AI is shaping the future
- The need for foresight in uncertain environments
- This talk: uncertainty, prediction, and decision-making

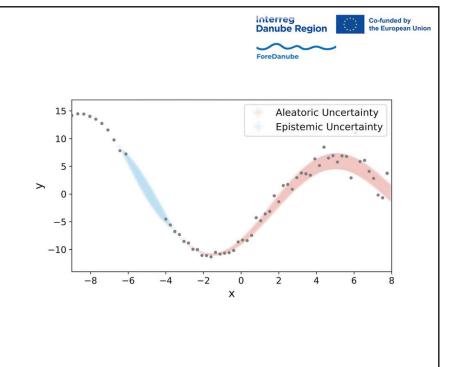






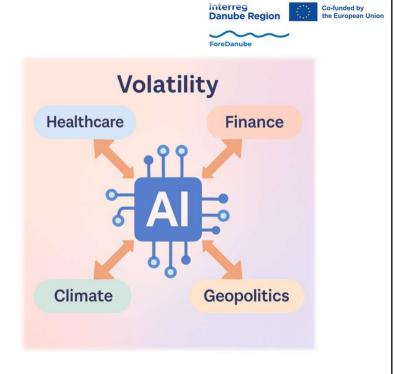
Understanding uncertainty

- Uncertainty is personal and contextual
- Distinction:
 - aleatory (randomness) vs.
 - epistemic (ignorance) uncertainty
- Importance for AI systems design and evaluation



Why AI needs foresight

- From predictive models to scenario-based reasoning
- Limitations of deterministic outputs
- The value of planning for multiple futures









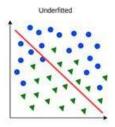


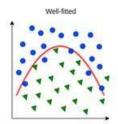
The limits of prediction

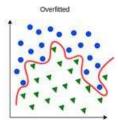
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- Probabilistic models ≠ certainty
- Role of randomness, noise, and complexity in forecasts
- Examples: financial crises, pandemics







The art of quantifying uncertainty

- Replacing vague words with probabilities
- Role of numerical estimates in Al systems
- Importance of calibration and communication

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Mandated interpretation as a

Agency using 'likely'	probability range	
NATO	60-90%	
Canadian Intelligence Assessment Secretariat (also 'probable', 'probably')	70–80%	
US Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203 (also 'probable', 'probably')	55–80%	
UK Defence Intelligence Assessment Probability Yardstick (also 'probable')	55–75%	
Norwegian Intelligence Doctrine (also 'probable')	60-90%	
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	66-100%	
European Food Standards Authority	66-90%	

Table 2.2

Examples of different agencies' mandated interpretations of the word 'likely'.

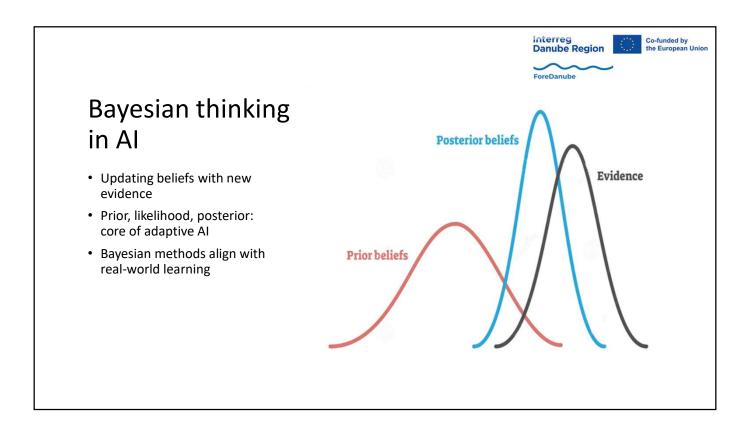
Source: D. Spiegelhalter (2025): The art of uncertainty

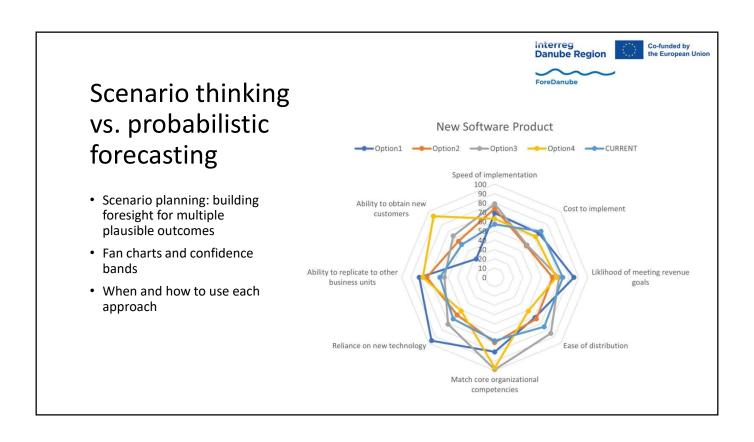




















Deep uncertainty and AI strategy

- When we don't know what we don't know
- Black swans and unknown unknowns
- Resilience and robustness over optimization

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Embracing randomness in AI models

- Stochasticity in learning and sampling
- Role of randomness in model generalization
- Accepting unpredictability as a feature, not a bug







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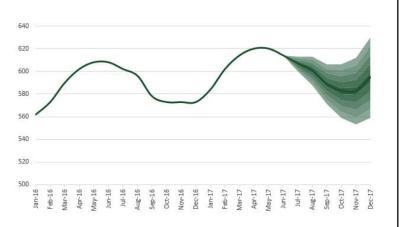
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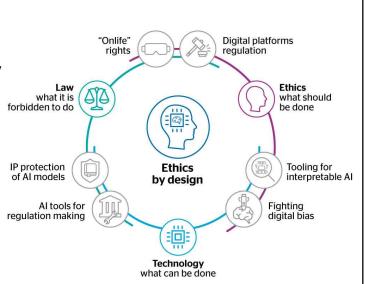
Communication of uncertainty

- Risks of false precision in Al outputs
- Examples: weather apps, health diagnostics
- Visualizations (fan charts, prediction intervals) for building trust



Al ethics and responsible foresight

- Transparency and humility in AI predictions
- Explainability under uncertainty
- Ethical implications of overconfident models









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Lessons from forecast failures

- Trump 2016, COVID spread models, economic predictions
- Misinterpretation of probabilities by public and leaders
- What AI can learn from probabilistic communication mistakes

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Risk perception in humans and machines

- Risk as feeling vs. risk as analysis
- Human cognitive biases in decision-making
- Aligning AI decision support with human psychology









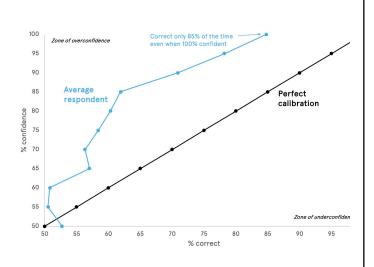
AI in high-stakes environments

- Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union
- Health, climate, criminal justice: risk of overconfident AI
- Demand for reliable foresight over precise prediction
- Al as an advisor, not an oracle



Expert judgment and probabilities

- Eliciting and aggregating expert beliefs
- Subjectivity and calibration of domain experts
- Integrating expert uncertainty into AI forecasting



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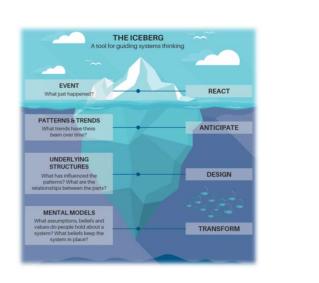
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The foresight mindset

- From optimization to adaptation
- Strategies: scenario analysis, red teaming, horizon scanning



Practical tools for AI & foresight



- Bayesian networks, Monte Carlo simulations, ensemble models
- Scenario-building frameworks
- Visualization libraries for uncertainty communication









Future challenges

- Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union
- Navigating hype vs. realistic expectations
- Keeping foresight flexible in rapidly evolving fields
- Bridging technical modeling and strategic planning



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Key takeaways

- Uncertainty is fundamental, not a flaw
- Al systems must be built with uncertainty in mind
- Foresight ≠ prediction it includes resilience and adaptability









Awareness, Application, and Training Needs in the Field of Foresight in the Danube Region

Outcomes of the Foresight Questionnaire

Janja Jerebic, Alenka Brezavšček

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June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

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Agenda

- Background & Objectives
- Methodology
- Part 1: Survey sample overview
- Part 2: Knowing and using foresight
- Part 3: Importance of foresight methods for organizations
- Part 4: Interest in additional training/education in the field of foresight
- Conclusion









Background & Objectives



ForeDanube The main objective of the survey What level of To what extent How well interest exists for organizations foresight further training understand the methods are or education in concept of currently being the field of foresight used foresight

Methodology



• Languages available: English, Slovene, German

- Tool used: 1KA online survey platform, https://www.1ka.si/
- Distribution: Sent to over 1,000 email addresses across the Danube Region
- Target audience: Representatives from public and private organizations of various sizes and sectors
- Response overview:
 - 422 clicks on the survey link
 - 68 valid responses (51 fully completed, 17 partially completed)



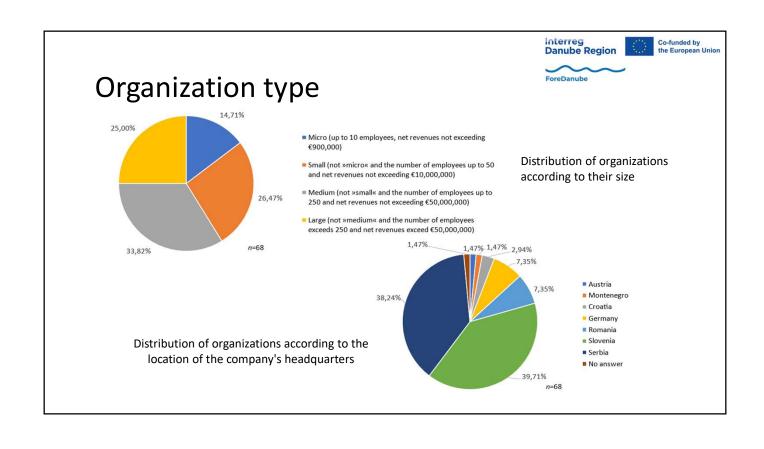








Part 1 Survey sample overview





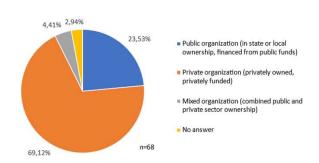








Organization type

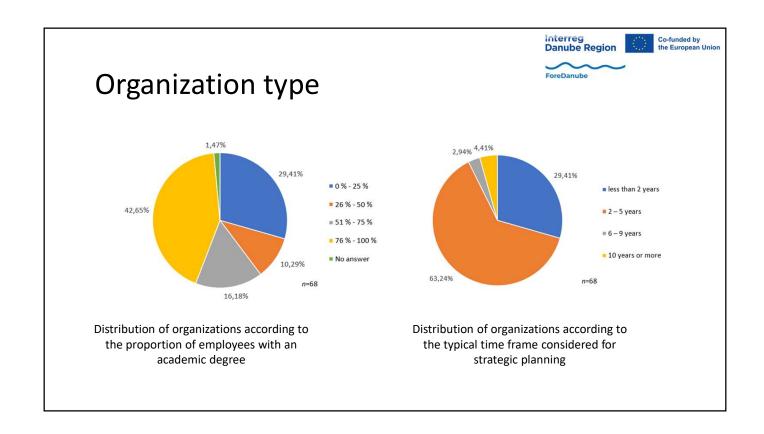


Distribution of organizations according to the ownership and funding structure

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Distribution of organizations according to their economic activities

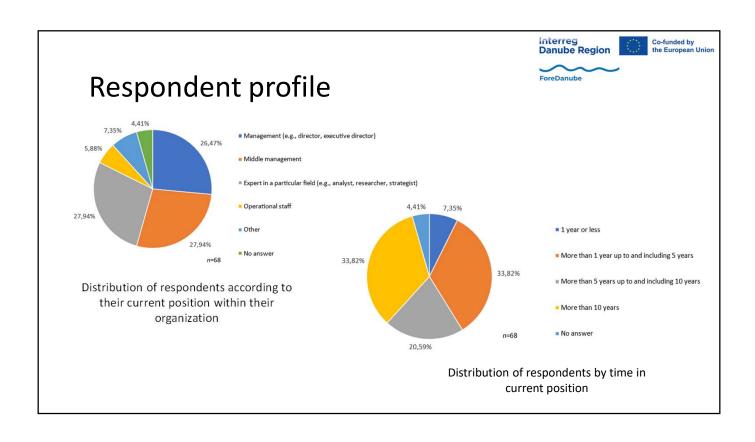
Economic activity of the organization	%
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	7,2%
Mining	1,0%
Manufacturing	18,6%
Electricity, gas, steam, and hot water supply	1,0%
Water supply, sewage, and waste management, environmental remediation	2,1%
Construction	1,0%
Trade	3,1%
Transport and storage	3,1%
Information and communication activities	20,6%
Financial and insurance activities	4,1%
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	19,6%
Education	13,4%
Health and social care	2,1%
Other activities	3,1%

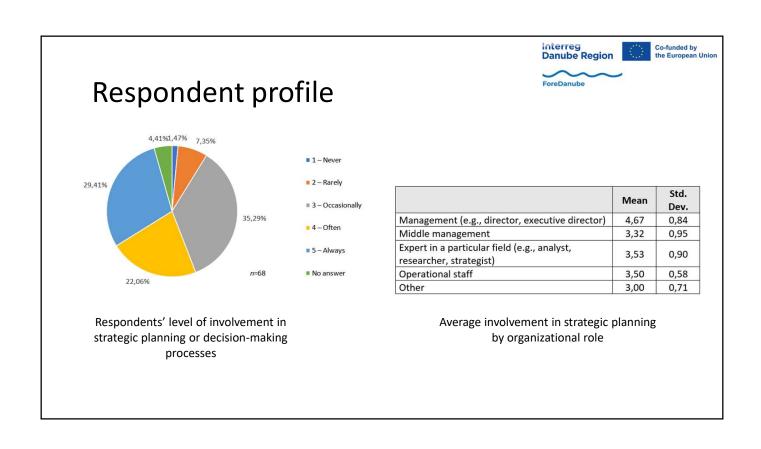
















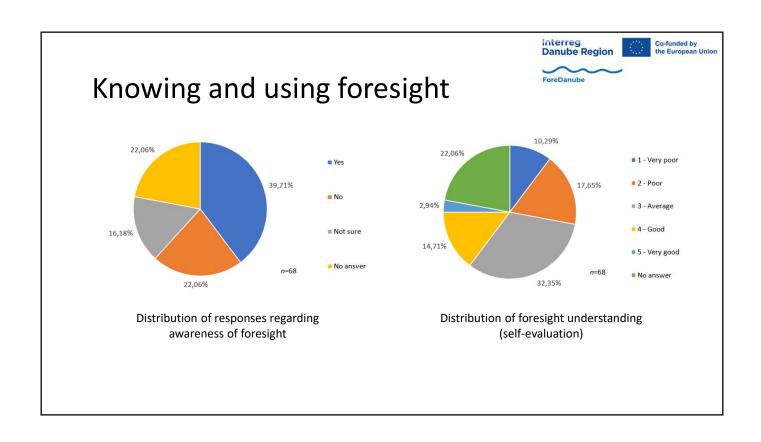






Part 2

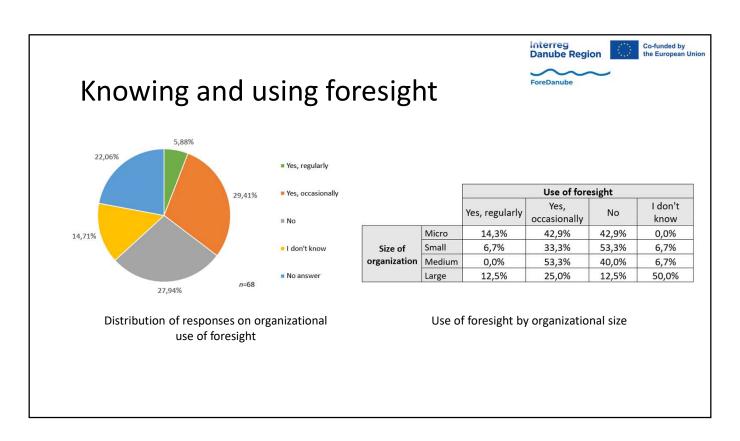
Knowing and using foresight

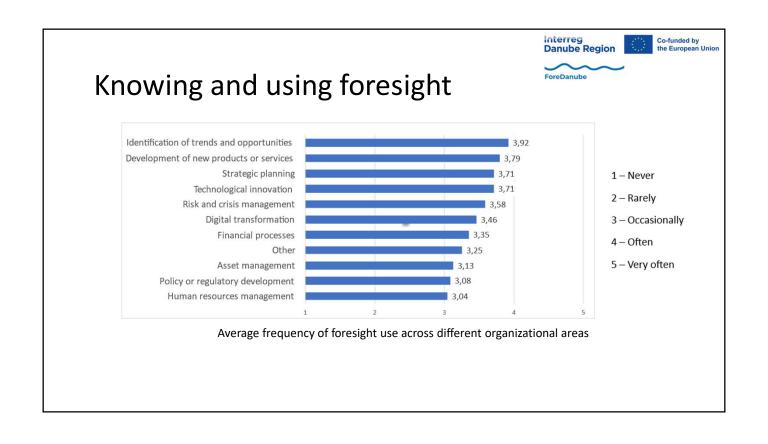






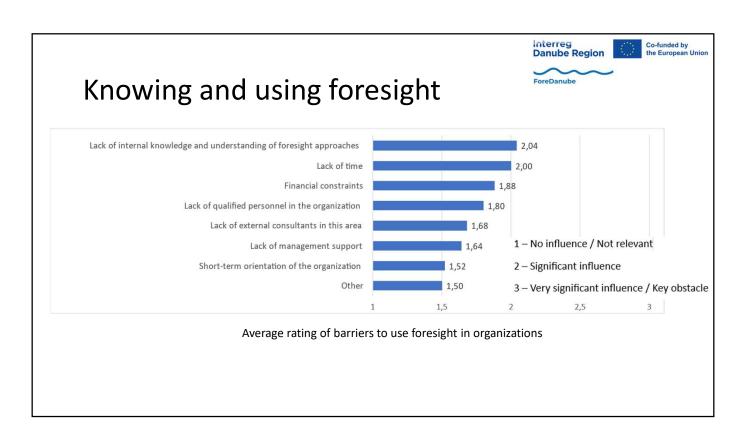


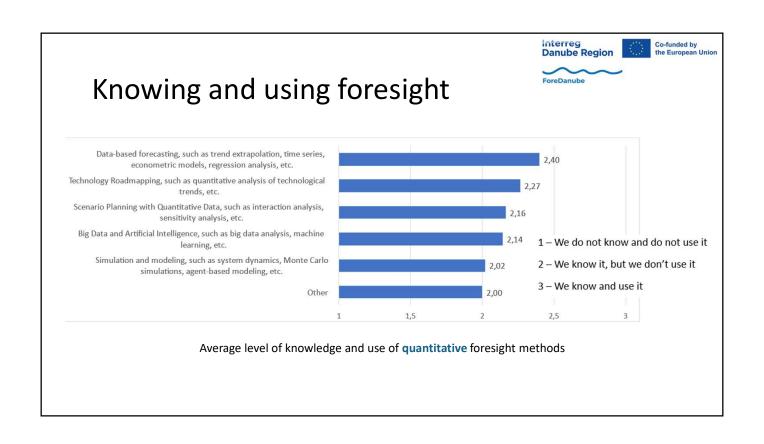








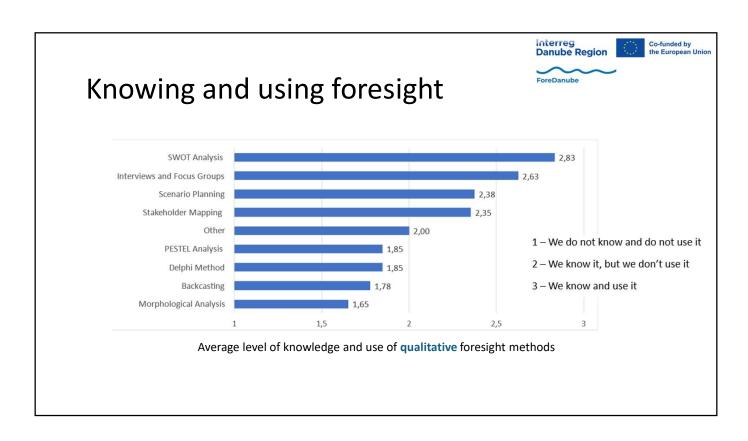












Knowing and using foresight





RQ1:

Is the average score for understanding of the "FORESIGHT" area (based on a 5-point scale) lower than 3 (poor knowledge), suggesting limited familiarity?



One-sample t-test



We cannot statistically confirm the RQ1.

The result is borderline non-significant, suggesting a tendency toward limited familiarity, though with considerable variation in responses.

Foresight is not broadly well understood, but also not entirely unknown, and further awareness-building may be warranted.







Knowing and using foresight





RQ2:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the average score for understanding of the foresight area depending on the size of the organization?



One-way ANOVA



The results do not support the RQ2.

We cannot confirm that organizational size has a statistically significant impact on the understanding of foresight, but the near-significant p-value and the differences in mean scores warrant further exploration in future studies.

Knowing and using foresight





RQ3:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the average score for understanding of the foresight area between the public and private sectors?



Independent Samples t-Test



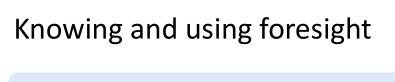
The results do not support the RQ3.

There is no evidence that organizational sector (public vs private) influences individuals' understanding of foresight. This suggests that knowledge levels are consistently moderate across both sectors.













RQ4:

Is there a positive linear correlation between individuals 'understanding of foresight and their involvement in strategic planning?



Pearson correlation test



The results support RQ4.

We can confirm a moderate positive correlation indicating that individuals who are more frequently involved in strategic planning tend to report greater familiarity with foresight.

Knowing and using foresight





RQ5:

Is the use of foresight related to the size of the organization?



Chi-square test of independence



The results do not support RQ5.

The use of foresight does not vary significantly by organization size.













RQ6:

Is the use of foresight related to the organization ownership and funding?



Chi-square test of independence



The results support RQ6.

The use of foresight is significantly more common in private sector organizations compared to public ones, suggesting possible differences in strategic culture, innovation focus, or operational flexibility.

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Part 3

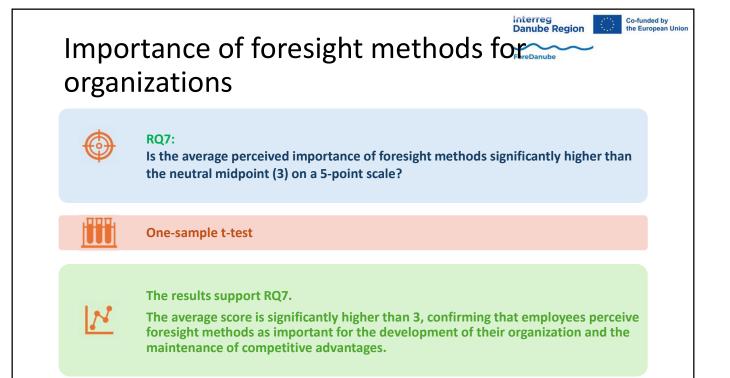
Importance of foresight methods for organizations







Co-funded by the European Union Importance of foresight methods form organizations 2,94% 5.88% ■ 1 – Not important 27,94% 11,76% 2 – Slightly important The average rating was ■ 3 – Moderately important 3,65 (s=0,93) ■ 4 – Important 5 – Very important No answer n=68 44,12% Perceived importance of foresight for organizational development and competitiveness











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Importance of foresight methods for organizations



RQ8:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the perceived importance of foresight methods for organizational development depending on the size of the organization?



One-way ANOVA



The results do not support RQ8.

Although medium-sized organizations may rate foresight slightly higher, these differences are not statistically significant.

Importance of foresight methods for the land of the la organizations



RQ9:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the average score for the importance of foresight methods for further development between the public and private sectors?



Independent Samples t-Test



The results do not support RQ9.

The perceived importance of foresight is similarly high across both sectors, suggesting a shared recognition of its strategic value.



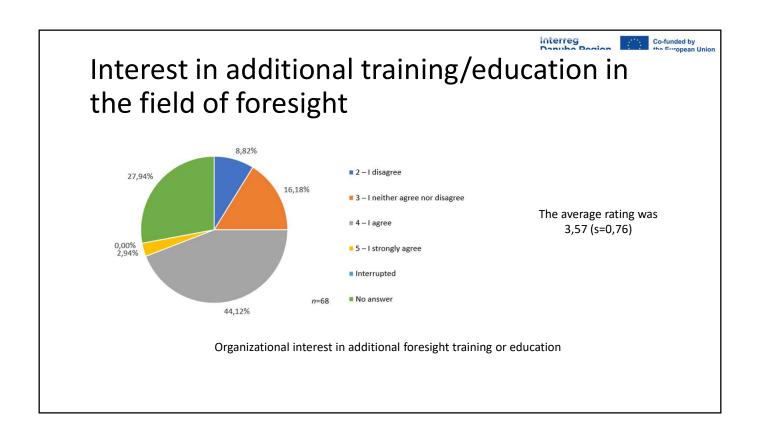






Part 4

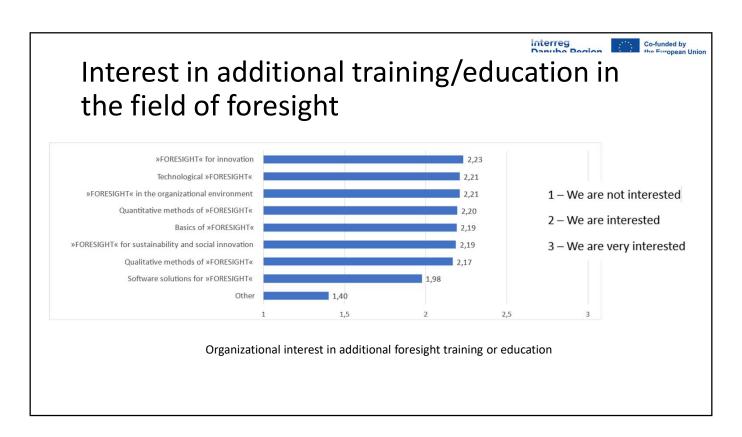
Interest in additional training/education in the field of foresight

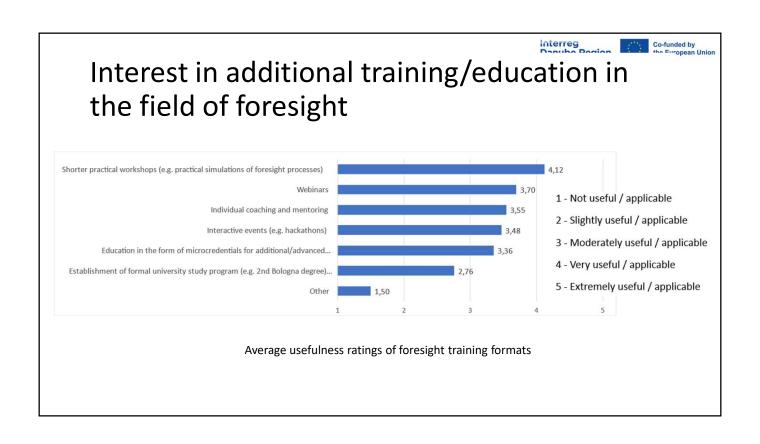


















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Interest in additional training/education in the field of foresight



RQ10:

Is the average level of agreement with the statement about willingness to participate in foresight training significantly higher than neutral (3) on a 5-point scale?



One-sample t-test



The results support RQ10.

Organizations express a clear positive attitude toward additional training and education in the field of foresight.





Interest in additional training/education in the field of foresight



RQ11:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of agreement with the statement about sending employees to foresight training, depending on the size of the organization



One-way ANOVA



The results do not support RQ11.

Interest in foresight training is consistently positive across all organization sizes, with no significant differences.







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Interest in additional training/education in the field of foresight



RQ12:

Is there a statistically significant difference in the average level of agreement with the statement on foresight training between public and private sector organizations?



Independent Samples t-Test



The results support RQ11.

Public sector respondents are more willing to engage in additional foresight-related education and training than their private sector counterparts.



Conclusion

- Foresight is not yet widely applied, but there is clear recognition of its strategic relevance.
- Perceived importance is high, especially among those involved in strategic planning.
- Public sector organizations show more interest in further training. Private sector organizations report higher current usage.
- Respondents prefer practical and flexible formats of education / training (e.g. workshops, webinars, mentoring, micro-credentials).
- These findings confirm the relevance of the ForeDanube project and support further investment in foresight capacity building. There is strong support for developing a regional foresight training platform and a Foresight Competence Center in the Danube Region.

















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Foresight in the Context of the Danube Region Strategy

Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković, Prof. Dr. Milan Martinov

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June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

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Building Anticipatory Capacity

DECO Public Governance Roberos

Building Anticipatory Capacity with

Strategic Foresight in Government

Lessons from Lithuania, Italy, and Malta



Recommendations:

Leadership Commitment: High-level endorsement to ensure continuity and legitimacy.

Capacity Building: Structured training programs tailored to different roles in government.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: Breaking silos and fostering inter-ministerial coordination.

Action-Based Learning: Testing foresight methodologies in real-world settings.

Sustained Engagement: Building communities of practice to share insights and methodologies.







EU Macro-Regional Strategies and EUSDR, learning from the others – working with the others







Europe and MRS



Europe develops and changes. Grand societal challenges which shape Europe's development have a considerable influence on our governance systems and the possible development paths of different parts of Europe, their regions and cities.



"A 'Macroregional strategy' is an integrated framework endorsed by the European Council, to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion."







EUSDR as a network of targets – multi (cross)-sectoral approach









LIFE IS CROSS-SECTORAL!!!

Joint Statement of the Ministers Responsible for the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region
Brdo pri Kranju, 24 October 2023



.....Based on the outcomes of EC Strategic Foresight, recognise the need for more digital, sustainable, personal, social and civic skills and competencies in the Danube Region. **Support the development of methods and processes of strategic foresight, based on global and EU data....**







Foresight and the Danube macroregion

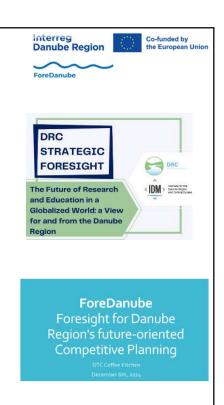
Building foresight capacity in the Danube region involves strengthening local and regional foresight capabilities to inform policy decisions and promote future-oriented strategies keeping in mind European specificities.

Policy Foresight:

Strategic foresight is crucial for developing effective policies that anticipate and respond to future challenges and opportunities. This involves using foresight methods to explore potential futures and inform policy decisions.

Business Foresight:

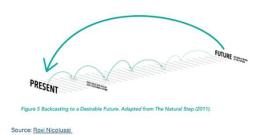
Foresight is also essential for businesses to identify and adapt to changes in the market and environment. This can involve using foresight methods to understand future trends and develop strategies for long-term success.



Why Foresight Matters for the Danube Region



- The European science-for-policy ecosystem remains fragmented across regions, sectors, and governance levels—especially in macro-regional and cross-border contexts. The need for future-oriented policymaking is growing in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). Yet, tools and capacity for integrating foresight into policy cycles remain underdeveloped, particularly in widening and non-EU territories.
- Transversal Foresight Themes both for EUSDR and EU:
 - ➤Climate resilience
 - ➤ Migration and inclusion
 - ➤ Youth, education, skills
 - ► Innovation ecosystems
 - **≻**Geopolitics





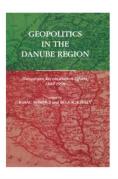






Why Foresight Matters for the Danube Region-Europe's - New Geostrategic Reality







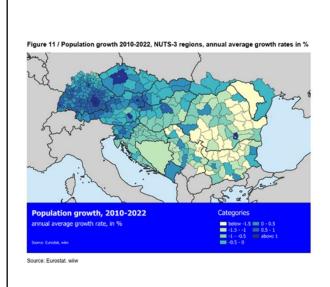


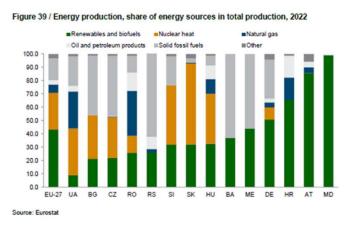
ELITICAL AND GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE DANUM IN THE CONTEXT OF ELROPEAN SECURITY

Facing geopolitical threats, economic volatility and severe effects of global climate crisis, cooperation in the Danube Region has become more important than ever. Working together across borders proves to be opportunity to develop joint perspectives for a stable, sustainable and prosperous future not only for the Danube macro-region, but for the whole EU.

Why Foresight Matters for the **Danube Region**







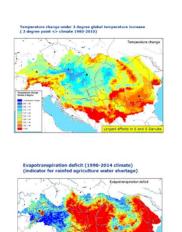


Why Foresight Matters for the Danube Region

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

 Beyond Scarcity: Water Scarcity and Drought Risk Management in the Danube Region





Challenges to be Addressed





- > Fragmented science-for-policy ecosystem
- ➤ Underutilization of foresight in EUSDR
- ➤ Lack of tools and capacity, especially in widening and non-EU countries











Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) on R&I Foresight





https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/statistics/policy-support-facility/psf-challenge/mutual-learning-exercise-mle-ri-foresight





Co-funded by the European Union









https://op.europa.eu/webpub/jrc/tools-and-practices-for-countries-and-regions/en/foresight.html

Interreg Danube Region

Austrian Presidency's Experts Studies on Future Perspectives of Cooperation in the Danube Region





Socies à responsables imites R.C.S. LUMENDOUS BYSYDES TUX-2007 DAYS BIB











EUSDR test-bed for EU foresight





Foresight could explore the ability of the EU macro-regional strategies to bridge wider EU-level policies on the one hand and local policies on the other.

In essence, EUSDR acts as a testbed for EU foresight by offering practical insights into regional policy implementation, governance, and collaboration, paving the way for more effective and inclusive strategies across Europe.

USE MACROREGIONS (EUSDR) AS LABORATORIES FOR EU-WIDE CHALLENGES



Strategic Implications & Policy Stress Testing:

How:

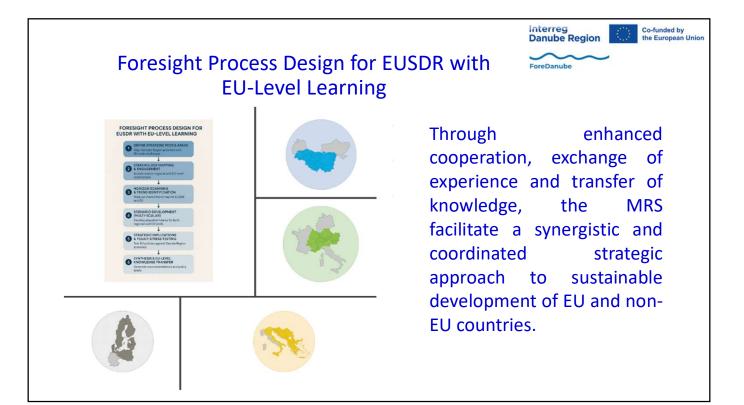
Test EU policy instruments (e.g., cohesion funding, Green Deal) against Danube scenarios

Analyze: What works at the Danube level that could scale up to EU level?









Data-Driven AI Foresight and Strategic Intelligence for the Danube Region







Interreg Danube Region

Danube Reference Data and Services Infrastructure (DRDSI)



KATI (Knowledge Analytics for Technology & Innovation)



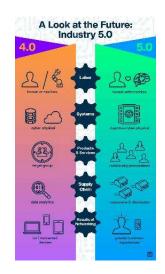




Contribution of Artificial Intelligence to solutions for enterprises







"Development of flagship projects for the PA8 of the EUSDR"

Study regarding the state of the art in the Danube region at the time of the Ukraine crisis and the post-Corona period

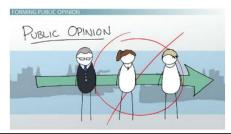
Foresight for insights beyond the evidence



Scientific policy advice should be sensitive to more than scientific evidence.

To avoid possible issues with public acceptance of policy measures, or with certain stakeholders' concerns, foresight may help prepare policies more efficiently. Foresight's purpose in the policy process is to enable evidence-based policy options to be weighed in their overall societal context, and to anticipate how stakeholders' concerns may possibly affected by the considered measures.





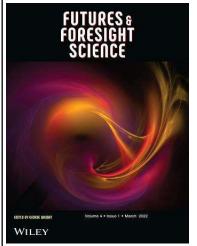


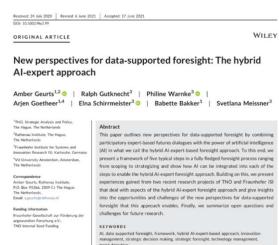




New perspectives for data-supported foresight: ForeDanube The hybrid Al-expert approach









"Human-in-the-Loop"

Transforming EUSDR Foresight Insights into Actionable EU-Level Policies



Supporting Mechanisms:

- Foresight-to-Policy Toolkit:
 - Develop a toolkit guiding policymakers in how to apply foresight results to programming and policy formulation.
- Cross-Macro-Regional Learning:
 - Compare and align foresight findings with other macro-regional strategies (e.g. EUSALP, EUSAIR) to identify scalable EU-level trends.
- Timeline Synchronization:
 - Align outputs with key EU policy milestones (e.g. Multiannual Financial Framework reviews, ERA policy cycle, cohesion policy midterm reviews).







Future of Europe and macro-regional strategies Kai Böhme

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

- Director, Spatial Foresight
- "The macro-regional level can in many cases be the most appropriate, as collective answers at this level can be more concrete."
- ➤To conclude, Europe is changing and meets new trends and grand societal challenges. In these turbulent times, macro-regional strategies hold the potential to push for appropriate answers. These, however, require that there are shared visions of our common future and that these visions are linked to concrete actions. A vision (however good) without action remains a daydream, while action without a vision can easily turn into a nightmare.

To Conclude:

Foresight as a stress-testing mechanism for policy: 'Foresight is not about predicting the future, it is about minimising surprise. Scenario-based foresight allows the mapping of pathways that are likely to lead to, or away from, envisaged future scenarios. In the policy context, 'stress-testing' identifies the weaknesses of the policy measures and verifies how these are equipped for possible future developments To conclude, foresight thinking may be seen as the backbone of future-proof policy-making.

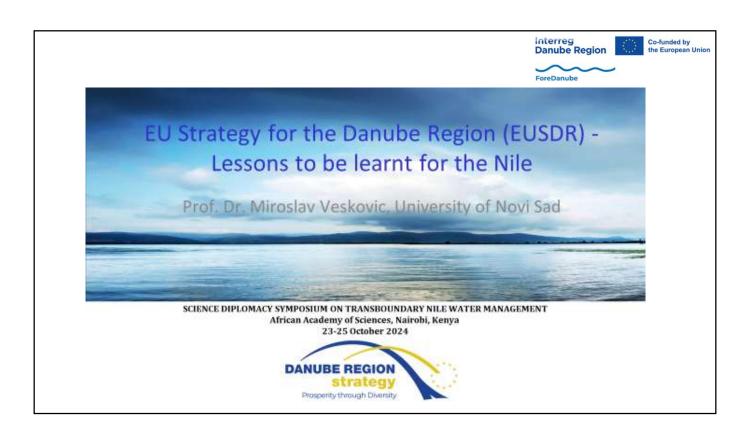
























Proposed

Master's Program in Strategic Foresight and Future Studies

by Dušan Mežnar

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

Proposed Master's Program: Strategic Foresight and Future Studies Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor

Program Objective:

To develop future-ready professionals capable of anticipating change and creating strategic responses in complex, uncertain environments.

Key Focus Areas:

- · Strategic foresight methodologies
- Scenario development and analysis
- · Systems thinking and complexity
- Innovation and transformation strategies
- · Policy design for future resilience

















About the Program

Interreg Danube Region



Duration

2 years (4 semesters) of comprehensive study designed to build expertise progressively

2mg

Credits

120 ECTS providing a thorough grounding in all aspects of strategic foresight

Study Mode

Flexible modular, blended learning combining online and in-person sessions



Host Institution

UM Faculty of Organizational Sciences with its established excellence in organisational studies

Target Audience







Academic Backgrounds

Designed for graduates from

social, natural, and technical sciences

seeking to expand their strategic toolkit with futures-oriented approaches and methodologies. \\



Professional Profiles

Ideal for

innovation managers, strategic analysts, and decision-makers

looking to enhance their capabilities in long-term strategic thinking and planning in complex environments



Specialised Roles

Particularly valuable for

policy makers, researchers, consultants trend analysts

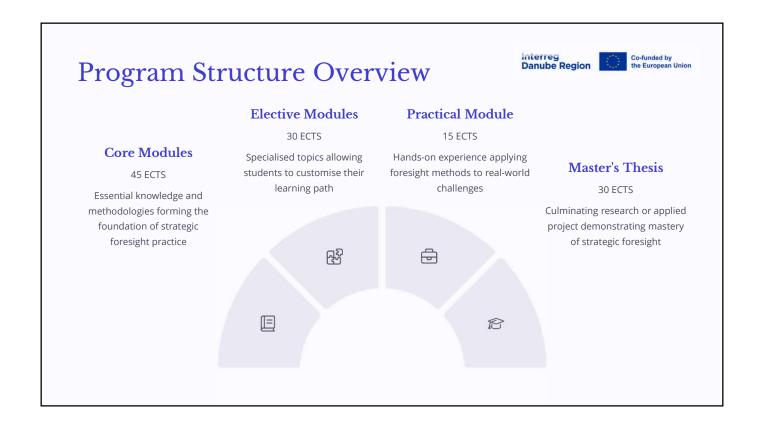
who need to anticipate change and design robust strategies for uncertain futures.







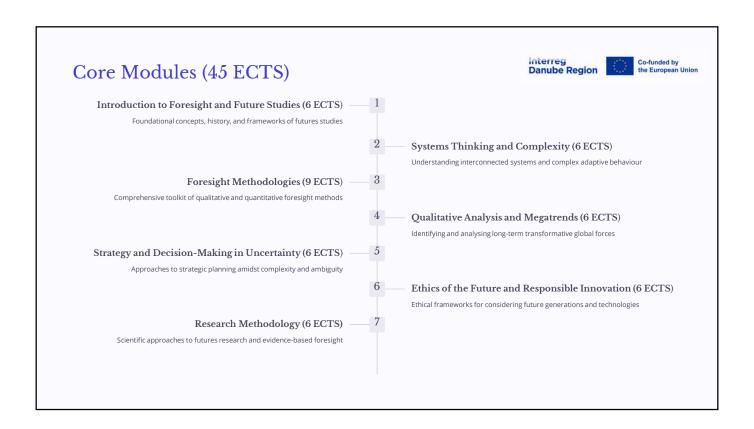


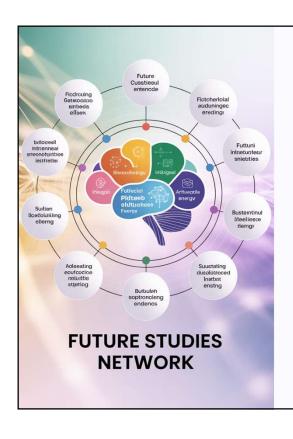












Elective Modules (30 ECTS)

Digital Foresight and AI

Explore emerging digital technologies and their transformative potential across sectors, with particular focus on artificial intelligence, automation, and digital governance frameworks.

Foresight in Public Administration and Policy

Apply anticipatory approaches to policy design, public governance, and long-term planning for community resilience and adaptive governance systems.

Environmental Futures & Sustainability

Examine scenarios for ecological transitions, circular economy models, climate adaptation strategies, and sustainable development pathways.

Sociocultural Transformations

Analyse shifting values, demographic changes, cultural evolution, and social innovations shaping future societies and communities.





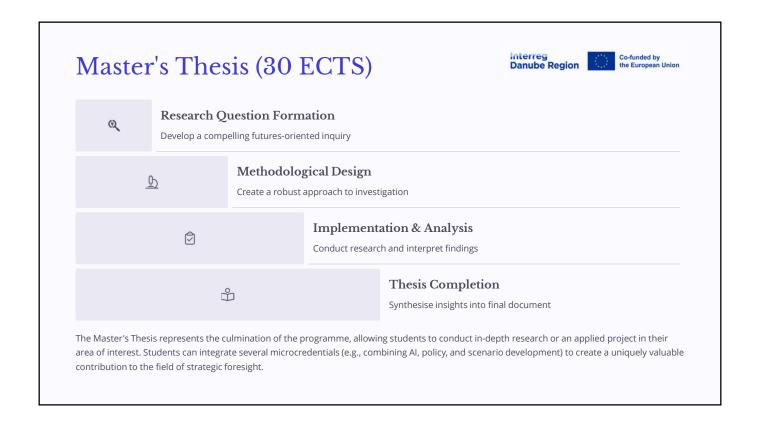








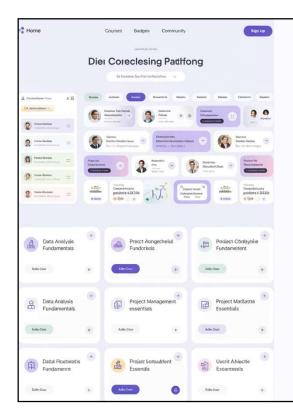






Co-funded by





Flexibility & Microcredentials

Stackable Modules

Study can be completed gradually through microcredential accumulation commitments.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous relevant academic or professional experience can be assessed for credit recognition, potentially reducing the time and investment required to complete the programme.

International Mobility

Through Erasmus+ partnerships and visiting international experts, students gain global perspectives on strategic foresight practices and build valuable professional networks.

International Partnerships









Our programme leverages strong partnerships with leading futures-oriented organisations, including

- UNESCO Futures Literacy
- EU Foresight Network
- Think tanks, strategic units, innovation hubs
- Public sector: ministries, municipalities, development agencies

These partnerships enrich the learning experience through guest lectures, case studies, research opportunities, and potential career pathways. Students benefit from exposure to cutting-edge practices and a diverse international network of futures practitioners.

































A FORESIGHT FOR A TIME OF CRISIS!

Professor Dr. Iztok Podbregar

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia



DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

A *CRISIS* is an unexpected event or action that threatens human lives or an organization's ability to survive.

For a situation to be declared a crisis and thus require crisis management, three key elements must be present:

- an unexpected event that takes people by surprise;
- a threat to the organization;
- relatively little time for action and decision-making.

UNCERTAINTY is a state, usually time-limited, in which an individual or an organisation does not recognise what is happening to them.









OBJECTIVES OF FORESIGHT

To ensure adequate, necessary and organized responsiveness to uncertainties and threats.

Ensuring the shortest possible response time and return to regular operations.

The timely provision of all essential information for survival and functioning.

Proper public communication.

Appropriate responsiveness, cooperation and coordination with the environment.

Other.

SOURCES OF SECURITY THREATS AND RISKS



Global Sources of Security Threats and Risks:

- · Climate change
- · Global financial, economic and social risks
- · Crisis hotspots

Supranational sources of security threats and risks:

- Terrorism
- Illegal activities related to conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction and nuclear technology
- · Organised crime
- · Illegal migration
- · Cyber threats and abuse of IT systems
- Activities of foreign intelligence services
- · Military threats

National sources of security threats and risks:

- Threats to public safety
- · Natural and other disasters
- Limited natural resources and environmental degradation.
- · Health and epidemiological threats
- Uncertainty factors









CLIMATE CHANGE



Due to its distinctly multiplicative character and effect, climate change poses a significant security threat. Rising air and sea temperatures, altered precipitation patterns and more intense extreme weather events will exacerbate shortages of vital resources, such as food and water, and increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters, such as floods, droughts and storms.



GLOBAL FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RISKS



Global financial and economic risks can escalate into broader, or even general, social crises, reducing employment rates among other things. Prolonged global financial and economic crises can lead to social tensions and conflicts through the implementation of reforms, thereby complicating the management of supranational and national security threats and risks.









CRISIS HOTSPOTS



Crisis hotspots involving armed or low-intensity conflicts pose a threat to security and risk undermining broader international stability. They result in unstable and failed states, a rise in organised crime and gross human rights violations. These factors influence migration flows and create safe havens for terrorist groups.



SUPRANATIONAL SECURITY THREATS AND RISKS



These threats have transnational origins and cross-border dimensions.









TERRORISM

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

Terrorism is a major global security threat today. It is also becoming increasingly interconnected with other threats.

Terrorist targets include critical infrastructure, civilians, government representatives, institutions, diplomatic missions and international forces.



ILLEGAL ARMS AND NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES



This includes the spread of conventional weapons (especially small arms), explosives, dangerous substances and dual-use goods, which are often traded illegally from conflict regions.

An even greater threat stems from the proliferation of materials and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction, including ballistic missiles.









ORGANISED CRIME



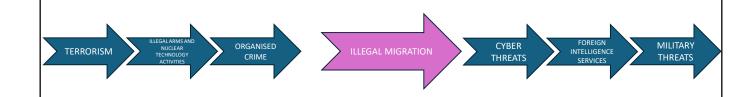
This is closely linked with states with weak institutions and mainly targets developed countries. Major transnational threats include drug smuggling, human trafficking, the illegal arms trade, tax fraud, corruption, money laundering and forgery.



ILLEGAL MIGRATION



Since the removal of EU internal border controls, illegal border crossings have increased, particularly by migrants from Africa.









CYBER THREATS



Modern society relies heavily on information systems. Disruptions to these systems pose serious risks to both the public and private sectors, particularly to core state functions.



FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES



Seek intelligence through legal activities and publicly available sources enabled by democratic systems and modern IT.









MILITARY THREATS



These are likely to manifest as local and regional instabilities with the potential to escalate beyond their immediate regions.



NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS AND RISKS



These threats originate within the national environment.









PUBLIC SAFETY THREATS



In times of economic and social crisis, threats may include increased violence, economic crime, corruption, fraud, cybercrime, environmental crime and mass disturbances.

Such threats can erode trust in the effectiveness of national security institutions.



NATURAL AND OTHER DISASTER



These pose a constant threat to people, property, cultural heritage, the environment and other national assets.









LIMITED NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION



Due to past misuse, there are visible negative impacts on both nature and living environments.

For resource-dependent states, a stable and sufficient supply of energy and strategic raw materials remains critical, especially given global market instability and insecure supply routes.



HEALTH AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL THREATS



Globalisation increases the risk of widespread infectious diseases in humans, animals and plants. Epidemics and pandemics can disrupt essential state and societal functions.









UNCERTAINTY FACTORS



Poverty and other forms of social insecurity can have a profound impact on large segments of society during periods of financial and economic hardship, particularly when combined with high unemployment and irregular incomes.











ForeDanube



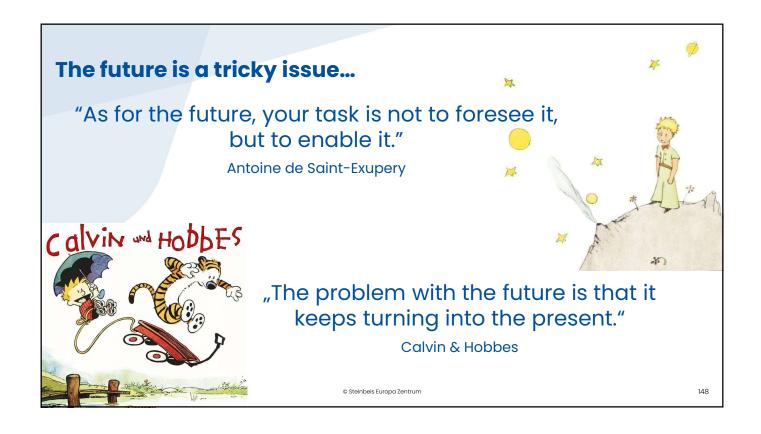


Danube Transfer Centre as Foresight network fostering Competitiveness of the Danube region

Prof. h.c. Dr. Jonathan Loeffler, CEO Steinbeis Europa Zentrum

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 - 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia



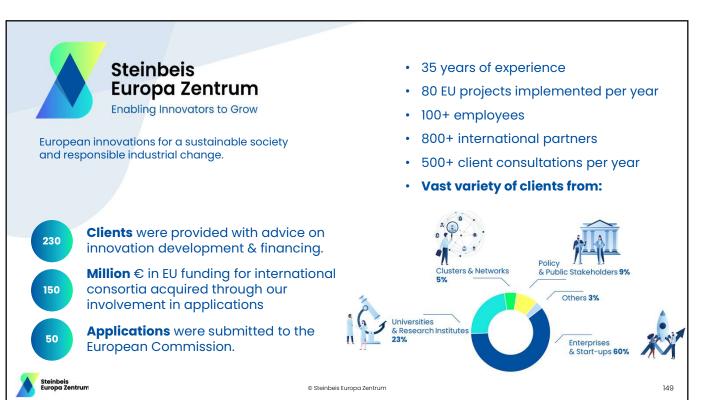












Where we do foresight







We include wherever possible futures thinking and doing in our activities

- SME support and consulting using forward-looking mindset and approaches (Technology Watch)
- **Public policy consulting** (e.g. Vanguard initiative, Frontex, EU)
- Consulting of regional development organisations to include futures thinking in their activities (innovation strategies, RIS3)
- MASTT2040
- **Cluster** forward-looking **strategy development**
 - Participatory roadmapping and trends analysis in EU projects
 - Active in international Foresight networks









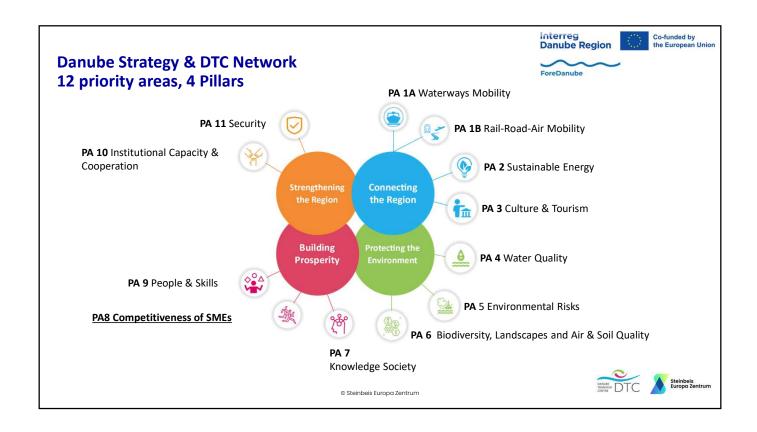




150









PA8 Competitiveness of SMEs Coordinators

Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism Baden-Württemberg Carmen Hawkins

and the

Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in Croatia Helia Kovačić Grčić

Danube Strategy Point (DSP)

Cristina CUC Pillar Officer (Pillars 2 & 3), Bucharest



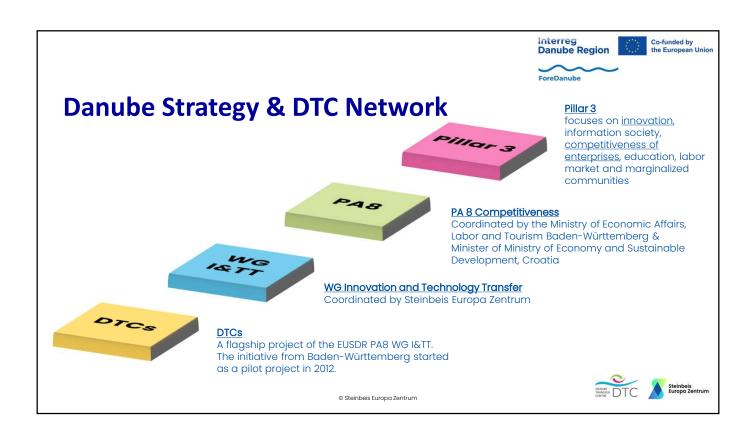


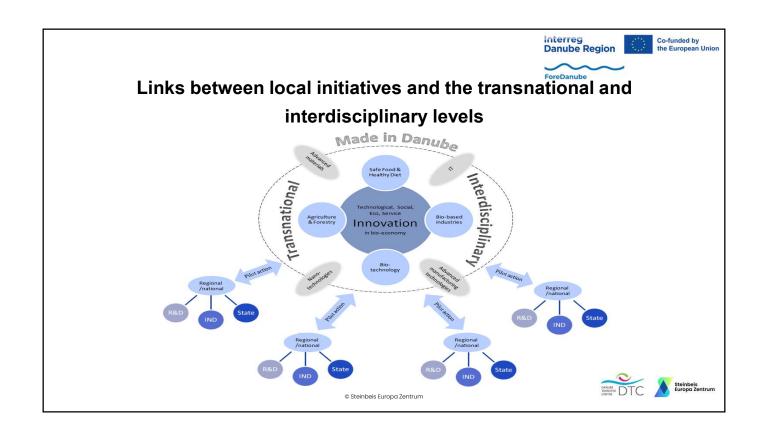








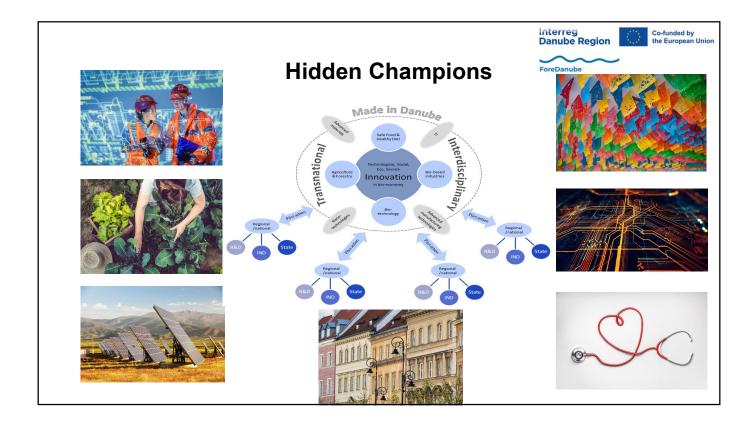














Danube Transfer Centers

Bridging the gap between research and innovation

Focusing on improving competences and cooperation between producers and users of knowledge

Supporting the innovation and technology transfer at the local and regional level

DANUBE TEAMSFER DTC

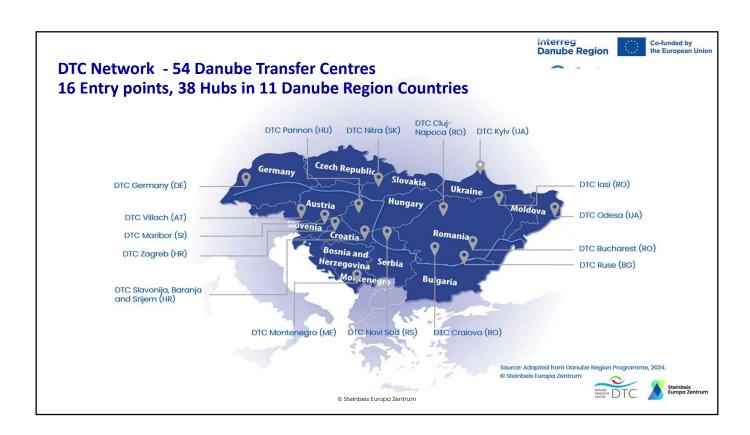


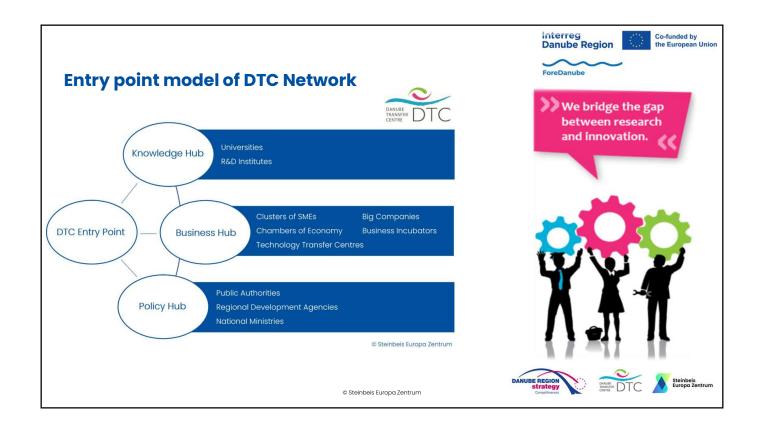


















How to mix oil and water?

- Scientists are not salesmen!
- Companies are not research institutes and have to make benefits!

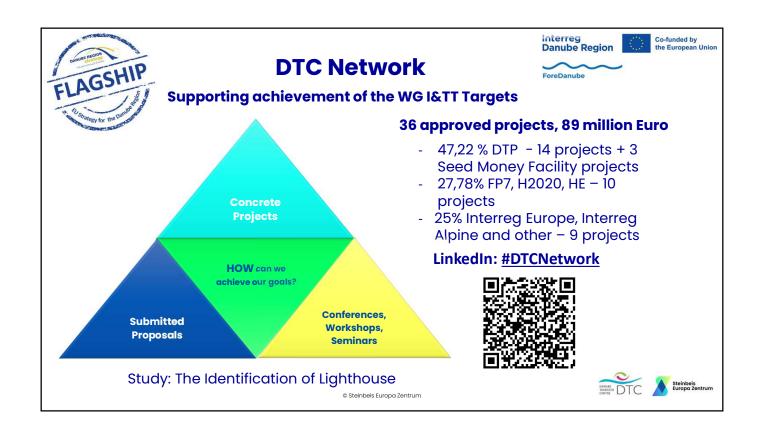




















Danube Transfer Centre - PA8 Flagship







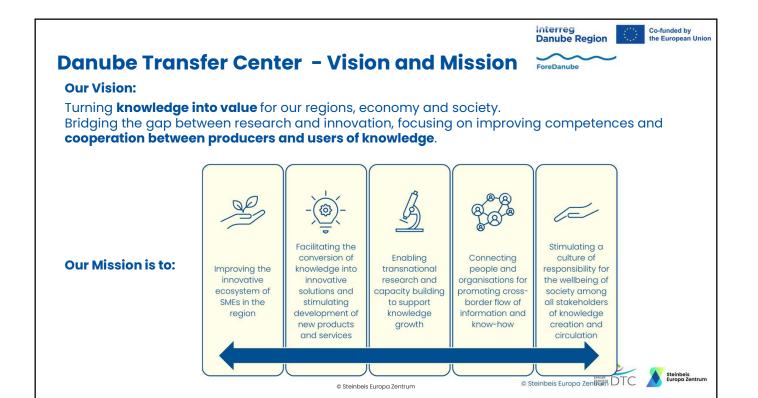
© Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, picture

<u>Danube Strategy Flagships - EUSDR - Danube Strategy Point (danube-region.eu)</u>

Priority Area 8 aims to support the competitiveness of enterprises in the **Danube Region**

























Draft Work Plan for Foresight Development in the Danube region

Prof. Dr. Milan Martinov, prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 – 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

Interreg Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

What is the EUSDR?

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in December 2010 and endorsed by the European Council in 2011. The Strategy was jointly developed by the Commission, together with the Danube Region countries and stakeholders, in order to address common challenges together. The Strategy seeks to create synergies and coordination between existing policies and initiatives taking place across the Danube Region.

The Strategy is not about funding, it is about closer cooperation!

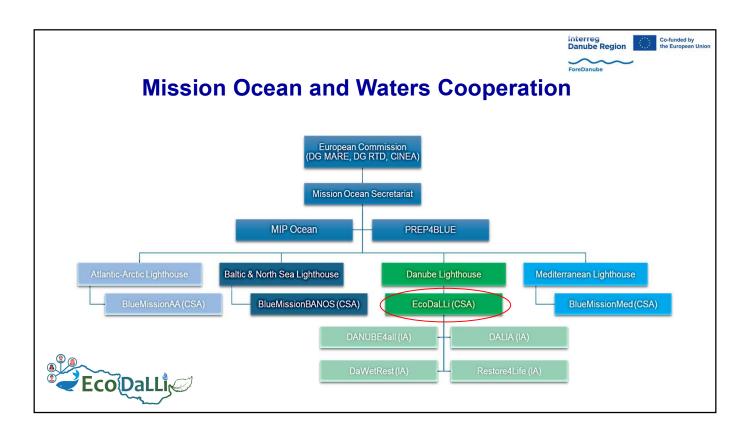
The Danube Region Strategy area

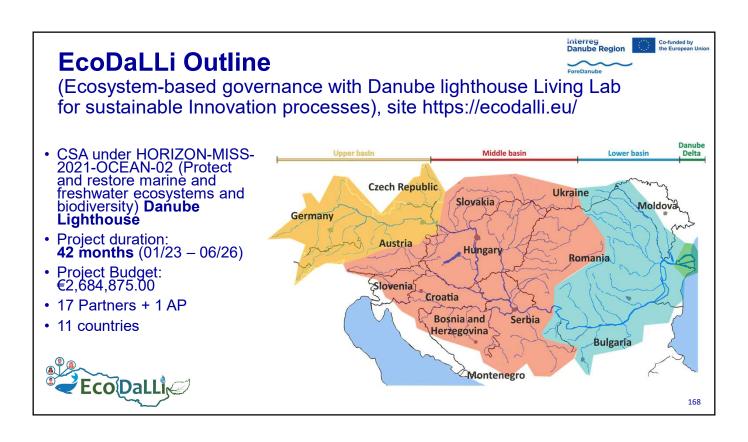
The area covered by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region stretches from the Black Forest (Germany) to the Black Sea (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova) and is home to 115 million inhabitants.





















JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

Good example of foresight application for Danube River Basin

> Water scenarios for the Danube River Basin: future challenges and preparedness

> > A foresight study to inform water management in the Danube River Basin

Alberto Pistocchi, Laurent Bontoux, Sara Rafael Almeida



PROJECT DOMAIN(S), OBJECTIVES, TARGET GROUP(S), TYPES **GROUPS OF ISSUES**

1. General

Societal Challenges Social Justice and Social Cohesion Disruptions **Democracy Disruptions** Strategy planning, etc.

2. Development and Application of Foresight

Development of Methodology, Tools, AI, Typology, Frameworks, Modeling, Education,

Knowledge and Social Capacity Building for Sustainable Future Planning, etc.

3. Geographic, Spatial Domain

World, EU, Country, Countries, Macro Regions, Geographic Regions, Local











4. Sectors, Domains of Interest, Technologies

IT and Communications Sector, Including Al Energy, Environmental Technologies, New Materials and Recourses Defense and Security, Disaster Risks, etc.

5. Target Group(s)

World Community, EU, Countries, etc. Governments, Authorities Companies, Industry, Agriculture, Commerce Sectors, etc.

6. Types of Horizon Projects

RIA, Research and Innovation Actions IA, Innovation Actions CSA, Cooperation and Support Actions

Interesting example for 1. group, performed for EU, relevant for 4. group





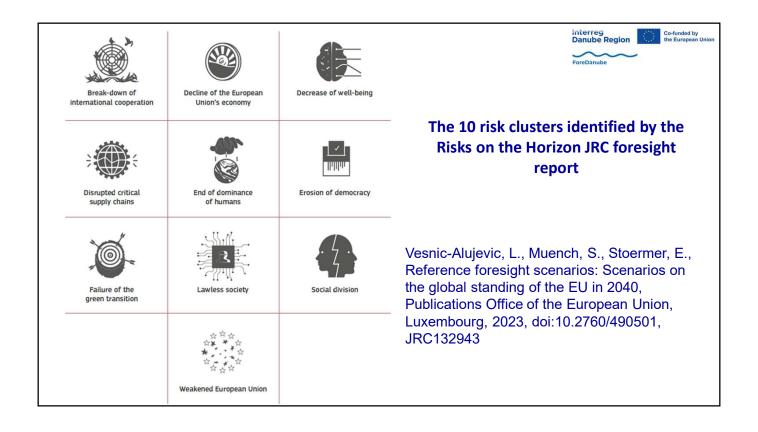
MUENCH, S., WHYTE, J., HAUER, G., DE MALEVILLE, A. and ASIKAINEN, T., Risks on the horizon, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, doi:10.2760/526889, JRC137493.

















Very good and usable example, EU project Relevant for group 2





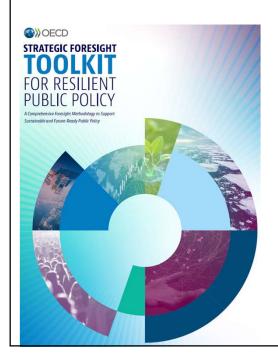
Becoming future-oriented entrepreneurs in universities and companies http://futureoriented.eu/about-us/

"The challenge is not that we must find ways to "know" the future, rather we need to find ways to live and act with not knowing the future." (R. Miller, 2011)

"Becoming Future-Oriented Entrepreneurs in Universities and Companies"

Relevant for Groups 1 and 2, and whole World





OECD (2025), Strategic Foresight Toolkit for Resilient Public Policy: A Comprehensive Foresight Methodology to Support Sustainable and Future-Ready Public Policy, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/bcdd9304-en.

FACILITATION GUIDES

Module One: Exploring disruptions Module Two: Imagining interactions Module Three: Creating scenarios

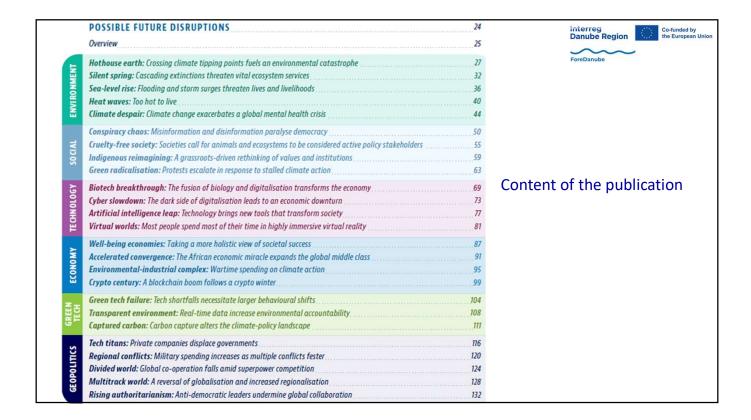
Module Four: Envisioning and strategizing Module Five: Recommending policies

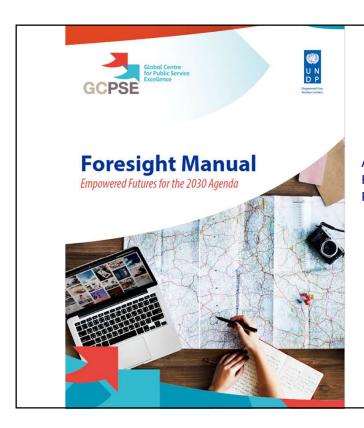














Anonymous. 2018. Foresight Manual, Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda. UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Singapore.







UNDP Foresight Manual

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Unio

10 things we need to know about the future/s

- 1. The future cannot be fully predicted most things we think we know about the future tends to be extrapolation of current trends, which is based on past data so we should not just be looking at the rear-mirror when driving forward.
- 2. The future should be "pluralized" there is not one, but multiple alternative futures so, in the broader scope of all possible futures, some are more probable or plausible, some are less so. Normative (preferable) futures are those that stakeholders aspire to create.
- 3. There are no facts or evidence from the future (we create the future as we experience it) we should be thinking about futures in terms of different (often conflicting) personal and group perspectives, frames of references, and "images".
- 4. Very often, useful ideas and "images" of the future tend to seem ridiculous in the present exactly because they were "not expected" therefore, foresight should challenge existing beliefs, values, mindsets, and behaviour to avoid being trapped in "business as usual".
- 5. Technology is not the future how we use existing (and develop new) technologies will determine their future implications.
- 6. The future belongs to the curious those who see beyond existing systems and thinking patterns.
- 7. The future is a process, not a destination you cannot "reach" the future or "arrive" there: there will always be another ten years into the future.
- 8. Historically, most trends died out relatively quickly, while most important events that did reshape the future started as barely noticeable, "weak signals" of change. So don't believe the hype.
- 9. For every future that will happen there are hundreds of expected futures that will not happen so we always need plan B (and C and D, etc.).
- 10. The worst thing is to live someone else's past thinking it is your future.







Latest issue Volume 7, Issue 1 April 2025 Interreg Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

Focusing on methods that aid anticipation of the future in the widest sense, FUTURES & FORESIGHT SCIENCE is a methods journal that publishes articles that document the status of a particular method's application and use, and that analyze its future potential and prospects. The journal welcomes papers on methods that contribute towards areas such as futures studies, scenario planning, horizon scanning, corporate foresight, and more.

Artificial Intelligence in Strategic Foresight – Current Practices and Future Application Potentials

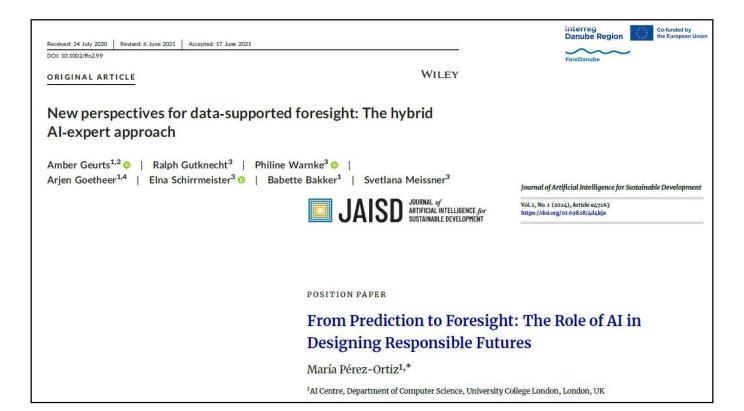
Current Practices and Future Application Potentials

Patrick, P., Brandtner University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria patrick.brandtner@fh-steyr.at Marius, M. A., Mates University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria Marius-Adrian.Mates@students.fh-steyr.at









Good example of groups 2 and 4 and potential partner in the project



The Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI Karlsruhe, Germany

The **Department of Foresight** (until 2024: Competence Center Foresight) develops, supports, and facilitates processes in three business units:

- Foresight for Policy and Administration
- Foresight for Business and Industry Associations
- Foresight for Research and Civil Society

Our methods include:

- *Horizon Scanning for the identification and assessment of early signals of change and trends.
- •<u>Futures Surveys</u>, such as <u>Delphi Surveys</u> or Expert Interviews, for evaluating trends in terms of their relevance, opportunities, and risks.
- •Scenario Building for the development and analysis of different futures and the identification of implications for today.
- •Roadmapping for the formulation of robust strategies and options for action.
- •Visioning for formulating visions and long-term, value-based shared goals.







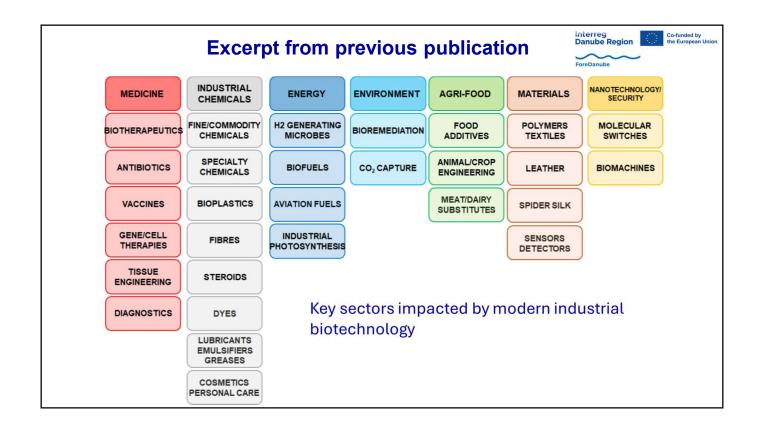






Example of Groups 4 and 5

European Commission: Joint Research Centre, R. Lowe, C., Minssen, T. and Skentelbery, C., Emerging Biotechnologies in Europe: Foresight for Policy, Pelissier, P.-M. editor(s), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/4814109, JRC139415











Project Application Flow and Activities

- 1. Define title, objectives, of the project, domain(s) and objectives, short draught
- 2. Select call(s)

Call and type of the project.

3. Define draft of the abstract which contains:

Objectives, groups of the project domains which will be covered, Preliminary work plan,
Vision of partners to be involved with their qualification,
Define Call for Partnership to be sent.



4. Work plan for project application

Elaborate draft of Application, especially work packages and tasks, delivarables, milestones,
Organize meetings with partners,
Discuss Application with parters, perform corrections,
refinings.

- 5. Finalize Application
- 6. Apply project









Faculty of Technical Sciences Potential Involvement, Participation

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Topic: Development and Application of Foresight

Department for Industrial Engineering and Management Chair of Information and Communication Systems

The Institute for Artificial Intelligence Research and Development of Serbia (This Institute has very close relations with FTS, located in one of FTS buildings)

Science and Technology Park (same comment)

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Topic: Environmental Issues, Bioeconomy, Energy, Waters, etc.

Department for Environmental Engineering

Department of Energy and Process Engineering

Department of Energy, Electronics and Telecommunications

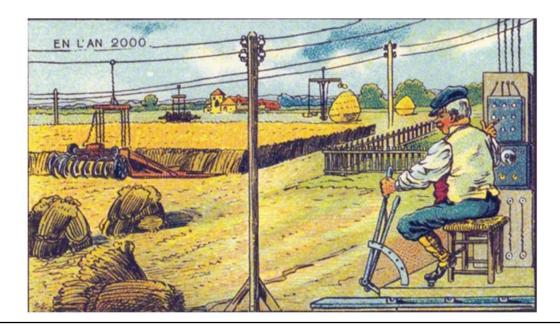




How we have seen future yesterday

Vision in late sixties of the last century







THE LAST SLIDE!

In https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/foresight

"the ability to judge correctly what is going to happen in the future and plan your actions based on this knowledge"

We would suggest

maybe to replace the word KNOWLEDGE with WISDOM











EU Calls for Co-financing of Foresight Activities

Tania Cimesa, Project Consultant Steinbeis Europa Zentrum

DISSEMINATION AND NETWORKING CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER EVENT

June 10 – 11, 2025 Bled, Slovenia

Danube Region Co-funded by the European Union

Agenda

- 1. Introduction (Project pillars and Horizon Europe Work Programme)
- 2. Call analyses
 - 2.1 ERA call
 - 2.2 Twinning call
- 3. Conclusion

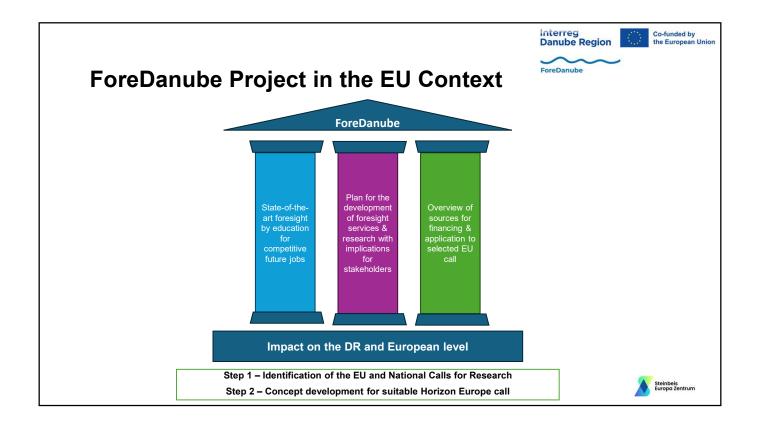
























Horizon Europe Work Programme 2025

Introduction:

This part of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2025 addresses the area "Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area" (WIDERA).

The work programme includes two components:

- I: Widening participation and spreading excellence \rightarrow aims to tackle the R&I gap to move towards a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the European Union, addressing especially the third priority area of the Pact for R&I.
- II: Strengthening the European Research Area (ERA) by reforming and enhancing the European research and innovation system -> designed to support the implementation of the first ERA Policy Agenda, which outlines 20 concrete 'ERA Actions' for the period 2022-2024, to advance in the four priority areas defined in the Pact for R&I.



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Horizon Europe Work Programme 2025

The 2025 WIDERA work programme calls and other actions are designed to contribute toward the implementation of the four priority areas of the Pact for R&I:

- **Priority I:** Deepening a truly functioning internal market for knowledge;
- Priority II: Taking up together the green transition and digital transformation and other challenges with impact on society, and increasing society's participation in the ERA;
- Priority III: Enhancing access to R&I excellence across the Union and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the Union;
- Priority IV: Advancing concerted R&I investments and reforms.

The WIDERA work programme also supports the key strategic orientations of Horizon Europe presented in the Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027 by building up Europe's R&I capacity to address global challenges and boost its competitiveness.











Horizon Europe Work Programme 2025

Actions support those EU countries that continue to lag behind in R&I to increase the performance of their research and innovation systems

6 objectives in this Work Programme under the component Widening participation and spreading excellence :

- >1. Encourage institutional reforms and transformation processes of the R&I system at national and regional level in widening countries in line with ERA principles;
- ▶2. Mobilise national investments in R&I capacity in widening countries;
- ▶3. Raise the bar for excellence of R&I actors in widening countries in partnership with outstanding European and international institutions ('win-win situation');
- ▶4. Increase number of participations and success rates of widening actors in research and innovation projects in other parts of Horizon Europe (notably in Pillars 2 and 3);
- ▶5. Promote the creation of new innovation ecosystems, interconnect and scale up existing ones by a set of measures, which include place-based and international collaboration between academia and business in widening countries;
- ▶6. Foster brain circulation, including inter-sectoral mobility for researchers and innovators and turn it into brain gain for widening countries.



HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-06: Strengthening of the European Science for Policy Ecosystem Call analysis

Call - Enhancing the European R&I system

Destination: Reforming and enhancing the European research and innovation system

- · Indicative number of projects expected to be funded: 1
- EU contribution per Project: 2 Mill EUR (total call budget 2 Mill EUR) (cca. 3 years duration)
- · Type of action: CSA
- Eligibility criteria: Exceptions: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding. Applications → submitted by a consortium including participation, as beneficiaries, of at least three independent legal entities:
 - Each established in a different Member State or Associated Country; and
 - Two of which are established in a Member State.
- Legal setup of the GA: No information
- Opening call: 15/05/2025Deadline: 18/09/2025

Expected Outcome: The successful proposal will deliver on the following impact: "A more robust and interconnected European Science for Policy (S4P) ecosystem that better supports evidence-informed policymaking across sectors and governance levels".

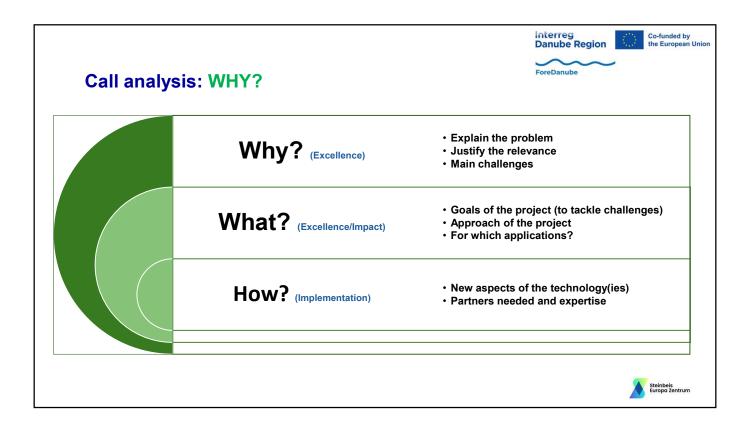














Call analysis: WHY?

The Problem:

• There is a need to improve the European research and innovation (R&I) landscape → Important innovation gap within the European Union. → Need for a structured scientific support to policymaking at EU, national and subnational level.

Justification for Relevance:

- The need for a structured scientific support to policymaking in EU is in line with evidence-based policymaking acknowledged in the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe and is underscored in several recent EU policy documents and initiatives.
- The European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) conclusions from June 2022 on Policy Debate and the Council
 conclusions on "Strengthening the role and impact of R&I in the policymaking process in the European Union" urge the
 European Commission to take actions in this domain,
- The call fits within the Priority III: Enhancing access to R&I excellence across the Union and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the Union.

Main Challenges to tackle:

- Fragmentation and weak connectivity among S4P actors and networks.
- Lack of mainstreaming of S4P approaches in national R&I policy institutions.
- Absence of shared frameworks, best practices, and structured support mechanisms across governance levels.
- Limited visibility, accessibility, and operational support for the emerging S4P community.











Call analysis: WHAT?

Goals of the project (to tackle challenges):

- Further develop the concept of "Science for Policy" and improve the cross-cutting integration of scientific evidence and knowledge in public policies.
- · Advance and strengthen the European S4P ecosystem across sectors and governance levels.
- Promote the collaboration of networks of relevant actors and foster the identification and exchange of best practices and mutual learning.

Approach of the project:

· Not defined yet

Impact: → Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased connectivity of S4P actors → enhances interactions, mutual learning, collaboration, capacity building, and promotion
 of S4P practices and knowledge, while also strengthening pan-European and international ecosystems.
- S4P approaches will be mainstreamed in national R&I policy institutions at all levels of governance through coordinated efforts and mutual learning across Europe.
- The concept of "Science for Policy" will further be developed and widely adopted among S4P stakeholders and actors through
 identification of best practices, guides and frameworks at different levels of governance and across thematic sectors.



Call analysis: HOW?

Types of activities defined in the call:

- Nurturing and animating a Science for Policy Community of Practice → to bring S4P actors to share concepts, challenges, and best practices and promoting S4P across Europe and beyond. → community supported by digital collaboration tools.
- $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Organise events, training, and peer learning to build skills, foster engagement, and increase impact.
- · Dedicated governance body should coordinate closely with the Commission to ensure good policy alignment and communication
- 2. Providing operational support to the Network of Science for Policy Correspondents
- Bring together officials working on S4P in national R&I policy institutions across Europe. Aim → to coordinate efforts to mainstream S4P approaches at all levels of governance and foster mutual learning across countries. (Logistical assistance: organisation of key meetings, agenda development, and facilitation of events.)
- 3. Creating an observatory of the European S4P landscape and its practices (collaboration btw. network and community of practice)
- Mapping the institutional landscape by developing or making use of an appropriate taxonomy that builds on relevant existing initiatives, frameworks and Commission activities.
- First half of the project → a repository of good S4P practices and use cases must be established, including a toolkit and an analysis of success factors and common challenges of operating at the science-policy interface, to be kept up to date throughout the project.













Call analysis: HOW?

- 4. Regular gathering of the network, the community of practice, and other interested stakeholders
- Aim -> discuss how to create engagement between research and policy and support production, knowledge, and expertise in policymaking. Dialogues take place in alignment with Council presidencies.
- **5. Developing publicly available outputs** (policy briefs, factsheets, resources and instruments for practitioners, etc.) + **promoting and disseminating** the outcomes and results (communication strategy).
- Materials and tools should be widely available to the network and the community of practice.
- Implement a multi-actor approach → disciplinary and geographical diversity + gender-sensitive approaches in all activities.
- Proposals should capitalise and build on relevant Commission S4P initiatives, such as the Mutual Learning Exercise 'Bridging the Gap between Science and Policy' and the work of the Commission's Joint Research Centre on S4P competencies and skills and institutional capacity building, and other relevant initiatives like the Guiding Principles for Knowledge Valorisation.



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Call analysis: HOW?

- Partners needed & expertise:
- Scientific and academic institutions: to contribute research expertise and policy.
- Governance body/political authorities: to coordinate closely with the Commission to ensure good policy alignment and communication
- Communication and dissemination experts: for visibility, facilitation of participatory multi-actor processes and events
- The Joint Research Centre (JRC): (expertise in institutional, individual and community building for S4P.) Support the consortium in delivering the expected outcomes and assure complementarity of the project with public administration reforms conducted in several Member States under the Technical Support Instrument.

(scientists, academia, intermediaries and knowledge brokers, science advisors, policymakers/political authorities, civil society organisations, etc.) \rightarrow all level of governance.













HORIZON EUROPE WORK PROGRAMME 2026-2027

Annex XI

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2026-2027

11. Widening participation and strengthening the European Research

DISCLAIMER

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for the Member State or entity to which it is addressed for discussions and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.



HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-02: Twinning Call analysis

Call - Twinning

Destination: Widening participation and spreading excellence

- Indicative number of projects expected to be funded: No data
- EU contribution per Project: Data not availabe yet (cca. 3 years duration)
- Type of action: CSA
- Eligibility criteria: Participation as coordinators to the call is limited to legal entities established in Widening countries
- Legal setup of the GA: Eligible costs will take the form of a Lump Sum
- Opening call: 08/01/2026
- Deadline: 09/04/2026







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HORIZON-WIDERA-2026-WIDENING-02: Twinning Call analysis



Procedure:

Ex-aequo proposals will be prioritised according to geographical diversity criteria, defined as proposals with coordinators established in a Widening Country, not otherwise represented as coordinator higher up the ranking list. It will serve to better spread the impact of the action and to strengthen the efficiency of the 'Widening participation and spreading excellence' programme.

Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements: Exceptions: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum.

- · This Twinning call adopts a directional approach allowing proposals in line with the Competitiveness Compass.
- The broader research management capacities will be improved as defined in the European Competence Framework for Research Managers

Expected Outcome:

Twinning aims to enhance networking between research institutions in Widening countries and leading EU counterparts by partnering with at least two institutions from different Member or Associated States. The goal is to enhance the research and staff profiles of the Widening institution, with a focus on improving its research management and administrative capacity.



Call analysis: WHY?

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The Problem:

 There is a need to improve the European research and innovation (R&I) landscape → Important innovation gap within the European Union.

Justification for Relevance:

- The component "Widening participation and spreading excellence" aims to tackle the R&I gap to move towards a truly
 integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the European Union, addressing especially the third priority area of the Pact for R&I.
- The call fits within the Priority III "Enhancing access to R&I excellence across the Union and enhancing interconnections between innovation ecosystems across the Union ".

Main Challenges:

- Diminish the disparities between leading and less advanced countries in terms of R&I performance.
- Improving the attractiveness of research careers, internationalisation, effectiveness of management of R&I institutions or matching activities with EU initiatives Fragmentation and weak connectivity among S4P actors and networks.
- Twinning proposals should clearly outline the strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and
 innovation capacity in a defined area of research and innovation as well as the scientific excellence of the partners involved.
 The strategy should outline plans for developing/or continuing innovation projects and explain how Twinning will elevate the
 quality and impact of this research.









Call analysis: WHAT?

Goals of the project (to tackle challenges):

- · Twinning proposals should outline the strategy for stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity.
- Enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries acting as co-ordinators at European Union level by linking it with at least two research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries. (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia / Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and once associated Morocco).
- Help raise the research profile of the institution from the Widening country as well as the research profile of its staff. → Special focus on strengthening the research management and administrative skills of the coordination institution from the Widening country.
- · Illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected impact of the twinning exercise within the coordinating institution.
- Demonstrate how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists and young researchers including doctoral candidates.

Approach of the project:

· Not defined yet



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Call analysis: WHAT?

Impact → Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved excellence capacity and resources in Widening countries closing the research and innovation gap within the European Union;
- Enhanced strategic collaboration between the research institutions or higher education establishments of the Widening countries and at least two internationally-leading research institution or higher education establishments at European Union level;
- Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution from the Widening country and the research profile of its staff;
- Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills of the staff working in institutions from the Widening country;

Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in Research and Innovation collaboration, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.













Call analysis: HOW?

Types of activities defined in the call:

- · Development of new ideas, methods, or technologies to push boundaries of knowledge and creating novel solutions.
- · Use of R&I strategies, technology transfer, IPR management and Regional smart specialization strategy.
- Create Policy reforms at national and regional level to tackle disparities between leading and less advanced countries in terms of R&I performance. → E.g. for improving the attractiveness of research careers, internationalisation, effectiveness of management and governance of R&I institutions or matching activities with EU initiatives (e.g., Seals of Excellence).
- Short-term staff exchange + Expert visits + Short-term on-site or virtual training (e.g. workshops, conference attendance, organisation of joint summer schools and dissemination and outreach activities). (Need to take into account the gender equality plans of the participants).
- Analyse indicators such as expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property developed, new innovative products or services, number of international students, number of women scientists and their roles in the research institutions to illustrate the impact of the twinning exercise.
- WP with deliverable → As defined in the European Competence Framework for Research Managers → establishing/upgrading a dedicated team within the coordinating institution for increasing broader research management capacities. → use of best practices.
- A research / innovation component not exceeding 30% of the total Horizon Europe grant (including the indirect costs) may include a research / innovation project which should be presented in a dedicated workpackage entitled 'Research component'. (50% budget of the component to the coordinator).



Call analysis: HOW?

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Partners needed & expertise:

- . Scientific and academic institutions: main protagonist of the project.
- Policy and governance experts: to create policy reforms at national and regional level.
- **BSO**: for the knowledge regard internationalisation, effectiveness of management.
- The JRC can take part in this action by providing relevant expertise, depending on the project's chosen R&I area, and can help with technology transfer, IPR management, and connections to regional smart specialisation strategies.











Conclusion

The Horizon Europe Work Programme highlights the EU's strategic commitment to strengthening research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems, especially in Widening countries.

Two key calls - **ERA** (Science for Policy) and **Twinning** - aim to bridge the innovation gap by enhancing institutional capacities, promoting cross-border collaboration, and mainstreaming evidence-based policymaking.

- ERA Call: Focuses on building a robust Science for Policy (S4P) ecosystem to better support policy decisions through coordinated knowledge-sharing and mutual learning.
- Twinning Call: Aims to elevate excellence in Widening countries by linking them with leading EU institutions, enhancing research capacity and strategic collaboration.

Both calls emphasize inclusivity, innovation, and the alignment of R&I with societal challenges. They provide strategic opportunities for stakeholders to co-shape Europe's competitive and cohesive research future.





Thank you for your attention!

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