



Videoconference

Affirming European security in the Danube Region

6 May 2025, 10h00-11h30

Videoconference in English on the platform Zoom

The Danube region has become increasingly significant in European geopolitics, especially in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Serving as a vital corridor for trade, energy, and security, the Danube River connects numerous countries, both within and outside the European Union, thereby enhancing EU resilience and stability. A key instrument to that end is the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), launched in 2011 with the aim at creating synergies and coordinating existing policies and initiatives across the Danube Region. This EUSDR is crucial for fostering economic growth, cross-border cooperation, and infrastructural connectivity. In the context of rising security concerns, particularly those emerging from the war waged by Russia, cooperative security frameworks are essential to ensure regional stability and mitigate external threats. How can the Danube region serve as a bridge between EU and non-EU countries in fostering security and economic cooperation? What role does the EUSDR play in enhancing resilience against geopolitical disruptions and energy crises? How can regional connectivity initiatives contribute to broader European security and economic integration?

This videoconference will delve into these critical issues. It will bring together the representatives of key countries from the region, in particular Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUSDR Presidency in 2024 and 2025 respectively), experts, and stakeholders to discuss and strategies that leverage the Danube region's strategic importance for a more secure and integrated Europe.

10h00 Opening

Sebastian Schäffer, Director of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM),
Vienna

10h05 Introduction

Goran Behmen, Ambassador-at-large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Sarajevo

10h15 Discussion

Harald Stranzl, Ambassador, National Coordinator EU Danube & Alpine Strategies, Head of the
Foreign Trade Department at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe and International Affairs,
Vienna

Nadija Afanasieva, Representative of the Ukrainian National Coordination of the Danube Strategy,
Co-Head at EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform, Director of the Ukrainian Institute for
International Politics, Kyiv

Ionela Ciolan, Research Officer at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Brussels

Ulrich Bounat, Research Associate at Euro Créative, Paris

Moderation

Dietmar Schweisgut, Secretary General of the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

11h30 End of the discussion