

# WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF THE DANUBE REGION: TRANSITION AND CIRCULARITY BY FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

## Agenda

An event within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), Priority Area 8 (Competitiveness of enterprises)

**WHEN:**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**WHERE:**

**ZAGREB (CROATIA),  
HOTEL INTERNATIONAL, MIRAMARSKA CESTA 24  
AND ONLINE**

**Join us in Zagreb or online** and use the opportunity to inform yourself on women entrepreneurship in the Danube Region

**Registration with this link:** [The Female entrepreneurship conference apply](#)

The deadline for Registration for participation **ON-SITE is 28th October 2024** and for participation **ONLINE is 4th November 2024**.

Female entrepreneurs are vital to the economy as they drive innovation, create jobs, promote diversity, and contribute to sustainable economic growth by bringing new perspectives and solutions to the business landscape.

Join us for an inspiring conference dedicated to promoting and supporting female entrepreneurship across the Danube Region. This event will bring together policymakers, innovative entrepreneurs and experts highly involved into the field to explore key trends, share valuable insights, and build strong networks.

In spite of differences in the countries across the Danube region when it comes to female entrepreneurship, there are similar positive and negative issues. In order to improve the current state of affairs, different stakeholders (EU, national, regional, local governments, educational system actors, business support organizations, NGOs, employment and labour service institutes) need to come together with their efforts and shape the positive environment for the growth of female entrepreneurship. A real impact and an actual increase in the number of successful women entrepreneurs can occur with unifying efforts across all 14 countries of the Danube region.

In order to support the development of women entrepreneurship the PA8 WG Female Entrepreneurship also takes over the roles and supports development of a functional and efficient system that gives women the opportunity to do business more freely and focus on sustainable growth. Its main action is to improve business support to strengthen the innovative and digital capacities of female-led-SMEs focusing on support to the development of innovative and digital capacities of female-led start-ups and dynamically growing SMEs.

Despite efforts to empower women entrepreneurs, only 25.6% of business founders in the Danube Region are female. The gender gap exists in all sectors, including those related to bioeconomy and circular economy. There is a recognised need to improve the digital skills of women entrepreneurs, to identify the needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, and to share knowledge and experiences.

Overall, women entrepreneurs have made leaps and bounds over the last decade.

**Join us in Zagreb** and take the opportunity to inform yourself and discuss these and other related issues on how to accelerate economic transition and strengthen the resilience of the female SMEs in the Danube region.

**This conference is organised by the EUSDR PA 8 “Competitiveness of enterprises”** in cooperation with Technology Park Varaždin, Croatia, International Business Women’s Network, Croatia as members and Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations - Varna (RAPIV), Bulgaria as the Coordinator of the PA8 WG Female Entrepreneurship and here to support the ambitions of Female entrepreneurs to start and grow their business and address a very important challenge: boosting the digital and business skills, preparing female entrepreneurs for the transition to Industry 4.0, while fulfilling aspects of the circular economy.

**Moderator:** Sanja Drakulić, Duart j.d.o.o.

**Programme:**

11.00-11.45 Registration and Light lunch

**11.45-11.55 Opening of the conference**

**Moderator:** Sanja Drakulić, Duart j.d.o.o.

Robert Blažinović, Head of the Directorate for Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of Economy, Croatia

**11.55-12.05 Introduction and welcome addresses**

Helia Kovačević Grčić, Coordinator of EUSDR Priority Area 8, Ministry of Economy, Croatia

Carmen Hawkins, Coordinator of EUSDR Priority Area 8, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, Baden-Württemberg

**12.05-12.45 Croatian and EU perspective of entrepreneurship and overview of female entrepreneurship**

Andrea Čović Vidović, Deputy Head of EC Representation to Croatia, Zagreb

Irena Sarta, Advisor to the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality, Croatia

prof. Sunčica Oberman Peterka, PhD, Faculty of Economics and Business (EFOS),

Osijek, Croatia

Ralitzka Zhekova, Coordinator of the PA 8 Working Group Female Entrepreneurship, Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations - Varna (RAPIV), Bulgaria

### **New opportunities in the Danube region for women entrepreneurship and employment**

Alida Perkov, PhD, Founder and President of the Croatian Board of Platform of Business and Professional Women (BPW), Pula, Croatia, member of the international Association of Businesswomen, former Chairwoman of the Confederation of Business Associations BPW Danube net and Isabela Vitasović, Vice-President of BPW, cooperation with BW and Hungary

#### 12.45 -13.30 Panel discussion – **Women in business**

Joze Tomaš, Vice President of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Chamber of Economy, Split, Croatia

Blaženka Urbanke, SENTOR, mentorship programme for women entrepreneurs, Croatia

Dragana Kokot, Secretary General, Chamber of Commerce, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Davorin Štetner, Kreator grupa, President of Croatian Investors & Business Angels Union (CRANE), Croatia

**Moderator:** Ivana Radić, MSc, President of the International Women's Business Network, Zagreb, Croatia

#### 13.30 -14. 10 Panel discussion – **Circular economy as a new business model and driver of growth, development and innovation in the context of female entrepreneurship**

Emilija Stručić, EU Funds and Finance consultant, consultant for EU funds and finances, Technology Park Varaždin, Croatia

Mariya Zlateva, Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations - Varna (RAPIV), Bulgaria, Results of analyses WOMEN IN BUSINESS and WE.Circular flagship project

Hana Palušková, Slovak Business Agency, Slovakia

Corina Banu, Impact Hub Bucharest, Romania

Lana Anderson, Eco interior designer, craftswoman, Domus Decorum, role model of eco design, circular economy, Croatia

#### 14.10-14.30 Coffee break and networking

14.30-15.20 Panel discussion - **How to improve the potential for all aspects of digitalisation? The role of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in overcoming traditional barriers in women's entrepreneurship**

Prof. Samra Mujačić, PhD, STEM Academy, University of Tuzla, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Andrea Enyingi-Kurucz, Pannon Business Network (PBN), Hungary

Leonela Krajač, Junior International Business Student, Double Minor in Marketing and Management, President of Women in Business Club, RIT Croatia

Iva Cibulić Blažević, member of Croatian Employers' Association, HUP-ICT Association, Croatia

Verica Jurković, Managing Director, Datalab HR d.o.o., PANTHEON business-IT system, Croatia

Tena Turčinović, Board Member of CroAI, TBC

15.20-16.20 Panel discussion - **Financing possibilities for female entrepreneurship**

Ilona Staneva, Director Marketing and Advertising Department, First Investment Bank, Bulgaria

Kristijan Buza or representative of the Croatian Employment Service, (Presentation of active employment policy measures for 2024, founding and supporting start-ups, with emphasis on green-digital workplaces and employment of vulnerable groups)

Valentina Morosan- Organisation for the Development of Entrepreneurship (ODA), Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation, Moldova

Representative of the Croatian Ministry of Economy (Improvement and development of entrepreneurship)

Sabina Cvitan, Head of Service, Croatian Agency for SMEs, Innovations and Investments (HAMAG-BICRO)

Vedrana Jelušić Kašić - member of the Board of the PBZ Bank responsible for the medium and large companies and investment banking, Croatia

EBRD Croatia, Western Balkans and EU countries, SME Finance and Development team – how to start and develop business in the region (TBC)

Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR), (TBC)

**16.20-16.35 Exchange of best practices**

**16.35-16.40 Wrap up and end of the conference**