Danube Governance Conference

Towards European integration with the SDGs

28th January 2021

Online Conference

Language: English

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

WITH FUNDING FROM

AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Danube Governance Conference: *Towards European integration with the SDGs* is the final event of the program **Building Administrative Capacities in the Danube Region and Western Balkans[1] (BACID)**, co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and implemented by the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and KDZ Centre for Public Administration Research.

At this occasion we would like to gather stakeholders with whom we have been cooperating in the past years to discuss the topics identified as priorities in improving governance in the countries of the Region on the way to European integration and how the Sustainable Development Goals support this process. Besides ministries, local governments, NGOs and other organisations from the Western Balkans, the event will bring together our partner public institutions and private organisations from the whole Danube Region, as well as representatives of the EU and international organisations that are supporting European integration and public administration reforms in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova.

Our partners are invited to present their challenges and achievements and discuss possible solutions to be further developed through future collaborative activities.

Structure of the conference

❑ **Opening with the status of EU integration of the Western Balkan countries followed by a panel discussion on local government responses to the COVID-19 crisis in the Region.**

❑ **Parallel Sessions with local actors working towards implementing the Agenda 2030**

Four sessions on different topics regarding SDGs and local governments:
- Governance and democracy
- Climate adaptation and Smart Cities
- Participation and civil society
- Local economic development

An inner circle of speakers from partner organisations will discuss the given topic, participants can join in the discussion via chat or video.

❑ **Expo booths with presentations of organisations and projects**

The participants are encouraged to promote their projects and/or organisations via Google slides or video presentations. Presentation of the projects through online booths and networking possibilities in order to develop further project ideas and networking.

In the afternoon breaks there will be a chance for selected projects to be in the spotlight. In 30-minute slots BACID Fund grantees and other partners can present their projects live and with more interaction.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact bacid@kdz.or.at.

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[1] The Region of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova includes Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska) and Moldova.

AGENDA **Thursday, January 28th, 2021** **09:30 – 17:00**	

08:30 – 09:30	**Login and access to the online conference**
	Host: Alexandra SCHANTL, KDZ Centre for Public Administration Research

09:30 – 10:30 **Opening of the conference**

Welcome by Michael LUDWIG, Mayor of the city of Vienna and President of the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (video message)

Opening statement on European Enlargement by Katalin Tünde HUBER, Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs

10:30 – 10:45 **Break**

10:45 – 12:00 **Virtual Panel Discussion on "Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: Challenges and responses of local governments in the Danube Region"**

Moderated by Thomas PROROK, KDZ

- Lukas MANDL, Member of the European Parliament
- Emanuil MANOLOV, President of NALAS
- Damir MARJANOVIC, International Burch University Sarajevo and Member of the Parliament of the Canton Sarajevo
- Stefano MARTA, OECD, Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division

12:00 – 13:00 **Lunch Break and Expo Booth Spotlights**

13:00 – 13:30 **Keynote** by Jurijs GRIZĀNS, Riga City Council

Localizing and Measuring Sustainable Development Goals in Riga

13:30 – 14:00 **Break and Expo Booth Spotlights**

14:00 – 15:00 **Parallel Session Governance & Democracy**

Moderated by Vedran DZIHIC, Austrian Institute for International Affairs

- Sebastian SCHÄFFER, Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe
- Claudia SINGER, Danube Region Strategy PA10
- Elton STAFA, NALAS

14:00 – 15:00 **Parallel Session Climate adaptation and Smart Cities**

Moderated by Ina HOMEIER, City of Vienna

- Nikolas NEUBERT, Austrian Institute of Technology
- Nermina SULJEVIC, City of Sarajevo
- Dubravka ŽIVKOVIĆ, University of Kragujevac

15:00 – 15:30	**Break and Expo Booth Spotlights**

15:30 – 16:30	**Parallel Session Strengthening Participation and Civil Society**

Moderated by Stefan LÜTGENAU, Foster Europe

- Kelly-Jane BISHOP, Ximpulse Gmbh, Switzerland
- Gentiana RAMADANI, Center for European Integration and Development
- Ankica TODOROVIC, City of Bijeljina

15:30 – 16:30	**Parallel Session Local Economic Development**

Moderated by Mario HOLZNER, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies

- Gerhard SABATHIEL, SA Consulting
- Ana JANOSEV, Social Impact Award
- Darko MRVALJEVIC, NALAS

16:40 – 17:00	**Closing words and outlook**
17:00 – 18:00	**Open Networking**

What are Expo Booth Spotlights?

From 12:00 onwards during each break, two of our booth exhibitors will go live in their booths for 30 minutes! You can hear their presentations and directly ask questions if you are interested in their work. The booths will go live in the following order:

12:00 – 12:30	**Wonderland – Blind date series:** same chances for everyone!
	pulswerk: Localizing the SDGs in Bosnia & Herzegovina
12:30 – 13:00	**Forumul Moldo-German:** Developing the rule of law and strengthening anti-corruption measures in public procurement in the Republic of Moldova.
	LIR Evolution: small solutions, instead of big illusions in sustainable development
13:30 – 14:00	**superwien:** 100 Albanian Villages – civic engagement towards urban-rural linkages
	Social Impact Award: Deep collaboration within and across sectors to foster social entrepreneurship amongst youth
15:00 – 15:30	**Smart City Wien:** Vienna's path into a sustainable future
	University of Kragujevac: High energy performance, low environmental impact and affordable cooperative housing in Serbia

Our other booths include the organisations: BACID, NALAS, Austrian Institute for International Economic Studies, Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Center for European Integration and Development, Concordia Sozialprojekte, Akademie für politische Bildung, SA Consulting and ConPlusUltra.

Background Information

With funding provided by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (AACT) and KDZ - Centre for Public Administration Research implemented the programme *„Capacity building in the countries of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova",* in the period December 2014 to January 2018. The aim of the programme was to strengthen the governance structures of the countries in the region and to prepare them for possible accession to the European Union, with focus on local and regional governments. After successful implementation of the first phase, the follow-up three-year programme has been approved and BACID II relaunched in April 2018.

BACID II covers the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova following the geographic coverage of the ADC Regional Strategy for Danube Area / Western Balkans Region. It is consistent with the strategy's objectives to strengthen regional cooperation and support EU accession as well as with the third thematic priority Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law: institution-building in the context of EU accession. The main framework of the intervention is the EU Enlargement Strategy (2016) as well as the EU strategy "A credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans" (2018) and ongoing process of EU integrations common to all partner countries: as EU candidate (Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia), EU potential candidate (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) or EU neighbouring country (Moldova), they have to integrate EU standards in all areas of public policies. The three key reform pillars on this path are rule of law, economic governance and public administration reform. Following the EU perspective of the Region, the programme supports the implementation of the *South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy* and its Dimension *Governance for Growth*. As such, the programme has impact on overall the socio-economic development of the partner countries through effective delivery of public services supported by regional and cooperation between national, local, civil, science and business sectors. Finally, all those strategies are in line with the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* The defined Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this Agenda 2030 are a call for action to all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. The EU accession process is thus also a major accelerator for reforms and transformations that are critical for achieving the SDGs.

Aiming at strengthening the governance structures of the target countries and to supporting the European Integration process with focus on local and regional governments BACID II has been implemented via three pillars:

1) *BACID Fund:* Small-scale grant scheme for know-how exchange between Austrian and partners from the target countries.
2) *Danube Governance Hub:* Supporting good governance in the Region together with ReSPA through quality management by both promoting CAF as the European Quality Management tool for the public sector and transferring expertise and practical experience from KDZ as the Austrian CAF Centre.
3) *LOGON :* Supporting NALAS in positioning local governments as sound partner in European Integration focusing on better service provision through decentralisation monitoring, fiscal decentralisation benchmark and budget transparency as well as on EU integration through access to EU funds, participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks.

All BACID II activities are presented at the project website: www.bacid.eu.