



An initiative of the European Union

**CLUSTERS MEET
REGIONS**

AJDOVŠČINA
SLOVENIA

10 - 11
SEPTEMBER 2025

**AGORADA + DISCUSSES THE KNOWLEDGE PARK AS A CATALYST FOR
THE GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION IN THE NORTH ADRIATIC REGION**



AGORADA+ 2025
EURADA EVENT



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Clusters meet Regions Ajdovščina

AGORADA+ discusses the Knowledge Park as a catalyst for the green and digital transition in the North Adriatic region

10 - 11 September 2025

Hall of the First Slovenian Government

Ajdovščina, Slovenia

Master of ceremony: Teodora Jilkova, Veritas Cluster, ECCP team member

Day 1: 10 September 2025

Regional innovation ecosystems and thematic cross-border collaboration

09:00	Registration and welcome coffee
09:30	Opening plenary session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tadej Beočanin - Mayor of Ajdovščina• Representative of the Slovenian Ministry of Economy and Sport• Representative of the European Commission (DG GROW)• Representative of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)
10:30	Setting the scene Presentation of the input paper on Slovenia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Jan-Philipp Kramer - Head of EU Services, Prognos / ECCP Team Member
10:50	Panel discussion 1 – The Knowledge Park of Ajdovščina as a driver of regional innovation: strategic dialogue on the role of clusters in the region <p>This high-level panel will explore how clusters drive regional innovation and smart specialisation through collaboration between industry, academia, and policymakers. The focus will be on enhancing industrial ecosystems and regional competitiveness in the context of the green and digital transitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boštjan Golob – Dean of the University Nova Gorica• Tine Tomažič – CEO of Textron Pipistrel• Boštjan Jerončič - CEO of Incom• Dr. Jana Krapež Trošt - CEO of BIA Separations – Sartorius <p>Moderator: Dr. Peter Wostner – IMAD (Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development)</p>
11:30	Coffee break

<p>11:45</p>	<p>Panel discussion 2 - The green transition and hydrogen solutions In the North Adriatic</p> <p>This panel explores the role of hydrogen technologies in driving the green transition in the North Adriatic region. Experts will discuss current initiatives, cross-border cooperation, and opportunities for sustainable industrial development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketty Segatti - North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley • Brigita Štolfa – Director of Northern Primorska Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Representative of InnoRenew (TBD) • Aleksander Gerbec – CEO of ECUBES Ltd. <p>Moderator: Jurij Giacomelli - Founder and Managing Director of META Circularity Ltd</p>
<p>12:45</p>	<p>Networking lunch</p>
<p>14:00</p>	<p>Panel discussion 3 – Innovation for sustainable food systems: from biotech solutions to climate-resilient supply chains</p> <p>The panel discussion will focus on how innovation and advanced technologies are transforming food systems to become more sustainable, resilient, and climate-smart. Speakers will discuss solutions ranging from biotechnology and circular approaches to new value chains that strengthen food security and promote regional economic growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borce Makarijoski – Professor, Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences in Bitola, St. Kliment Ohridski University (NANOBIOTECH NEXUS) • Maria Valentina Vanceo – EU Project Manager, Veneto Region Cluster • Andoni Hildago – Value Chain Transformation Lead, CLIMATE KIC • Luca Capra – Deputy Director Startup and Innovation Area, Trentino Sviluppo • Representative from Microbium

	Moderator: Jurij Urbančič - Postdoctoral Researcher at University of Nova Gorica
15:00	<p>Co-creation workshop - Building smart innovation ecosystems</p> <p>This co-creation workshop will focus on developing joint projects and regional initiatives aligned with the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP). Participants will be divided into three thematic groups - biotechnology, hydrogen solutions, and climate-resilient systems - to enable targeted discussions and foster impactful collaboration.</p> <p>The workshop builds on the objectives of STEP, which supports European industries in accelerating investments in strategic technologies to reduce dependency, strengthen value chains, and reinforce economic resilience, positioning Slovenia as a leader in sustainable and advanced technology innovation.</p> <p>Facilitator: Representative of the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development (MCRD)</p>
15:55	Wrap up Day 1 and Information about Day 2
17:30 – 22:00	<p>Cultural Evening – GO!2025</p> <p><i>Departure from Ajdovščina Bus Station</i></p> <p>Presentation of the European Capital of Culture 2025 & Experience of an Innovative Wine and Culinary Product from the Vipava Valley, including dinner in a castle wine cellar</p> <p>Cross-border cultural showcase and networking evening, offering participants a unique opportunity to discover the vibrant GO!2025 program, connect with local culture, and enjoy authentic regional gastronomy in a special setting.</p> <p><i>(Note: The local host team will do their best to optimize logistics. The timing of the evening program is fixed due to coordination with external partners. Depending on accommodations, brief hotel returns may be possible.)</i></p>

Day 2: 11 September 2025

RDAs and Clusters Powering Europe's Twin Transition and Autonomy

09:00	Registration
9:30	Opening session Outcomes of the workshop on building an innovation ecosystem on Day 1 Keynote speech by Veneto Cluster – European Meta Cluster on Culture and Creative Industries (TBC)
10:00	Roundtable - Agents of change: how regional development agencies are powering Europe's twin transition In this roundtable, regional and innovation agencies will discuss best practices implemented at local and regional levels to accelerate the twin transition within their respective ecosystems. Participants will also explore practical examples of interregional cooperation in the North Adriatic Region. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lia Gover - INFORMEST (TBC)• Dr. Amna Potočnik - Regional Development Research Group, RRA Podravje• Tina Pezdirc Nograšek - Regional Development Agency of Ljubljana Urban Region - RRA LUR (TBC)• Representative of Veneto Innovazione (TBC) Moderator: Marina Dujmović Vuković - Director, ZADRA NOVA
11:00	Coffee break
11:30	Panel discussion – RDAs and clusters: what role for advancing strategic autonomy in the North Adriatic?

	<p>This session focuses on harnessing local knowledge and innovation capacities. Strategic autonomy is not just about independence at a national or continental scale: it must be deeply rooted in the specific strengths, needs, and identities of local territories. This is where place-based approaches come into play, and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are crucial actors in this process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francesco Molica – Director, EURADA • Representative of a cluster (TBD) • Vedran Kružić - Director of the Regional Development Agency of the Primorje - Gorski Kotar County • Tanja Ivek – Senior Advisor, Zagorje Development Agency (ZARA) • Joint Research Centre, European Commission (TBC) <p>Moderator: TBD</p>
12.15	<p>Closing remarks and upcoming ECCP events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of RDA Ajdovščina • Representative from DG GROW, European Commission • Representative of ECCP
12.30	Networking Lunch
Site visits	
13:30 – 15:00	<p>Pioneering aviation, smart manufacturing & future-ready agri-food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pipistrel: based in Ajdovščina, is a pioneer in the development and production of energy-efficient aircraft. The company is globally recognized for its innovations in electric aviation and its commitment to sustainable flying. With numerous international awards and a strong presence in global markets, Pipistrel continues to shape the future of green aerospace technology.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incom: based in Ajdovščina, is one of Slovenia's leading producers of ice cream and frozen desserts. The company successfully exports its innovative products under the Leone brand to numerous international markets. With a strong focus on quality, research, and sustainable production, Incom has become a key player in the global frozen dessert industry.• Municipality of Ajdovščina: representatives of the Municipality of Ajdovščina will present innovative solutions developed together with companies and institutions for the needs of smart farming - irrigation systems, civil protection, protection of agricultural products against pests, digitisation of sales channels of agricultural products.
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