

EUSAIR PILLAR II: Connecting the Region (Transport sub-group)

**"CONNECTIVITY AS A VITAL TOOL FOR
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT"**

May 7, 2025 (10:00 – 11:30)



10th EUSAIR Forum

Georgioupolis, Crete

6-7 May 2025





EUSAIR PILLAR II - Transport **"CONNECTIVITY AS A VITAL TOOL FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT"**

Chair (Moderator): **Theoni Papasimakopoulou, Hellenic Infrastructure and Transport Ministry.**

Co- Chair: **Dr. Evangelia Kaselimi, Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy.**

Panellists:

- **Mr. Matej Zakonjsek, Director, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat,**
"Improving Transport Connectivity in Western Balkans."
- **Mr. Athanasios Porfyris, Chief Executive Officer, Igoumenitsa Port Authority (IPA SA),**
"Intermodality and Ports - the case of the Port of Igoumenitsa."
- **Dr. Maria Morfoulaki, Deputy Head of the Sustainable Tourism Dept., Hellenic Institute of Transport & Tourism (HIT) / Center of Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH) ,**
"Sustainable Tourism and Mobility hand by hand development in ADRION cities."
- **Dr. Glykeria Myrovali, Head of laboratory Technologies for Touristic Development, HIT/ CERTH,**
"From Transport needs assessment to Tourism rethinking in the ADRION macroregion."



Topics of the session

Topic 1: What are the main problems / critical matters related to transport and tourism in the Countries of the AI Region that need to be prioritized?

Topic 2: What are the tourist areas that suffer accessibility gaps and need to upgrade existing road and rail connections as well as, ports, airports?

Topic 3: Are there any ICT improvements in transport that may contribute to upgrade the supply of tourist products and services?

Topic 4: What measures ought to be undertaken to tackle overtourism and to promote minor destinations and itineraries to achieve flexibility and overcome congestion?



Topic 1: Key Transport & Tourism Challenges in the A-I Region

- **Albania:** Faces gaps in rail infrastructure and limited tourist area connections.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Needs upgrades in road infrastructure and improved tourism accessibility, including accommodations and trails.
- **Greece:** Struggles with island connectivity, inadequate roads, and missing TEN-T network links, alongside seasonal transport challenges.
- **Italy:** Focuses on sustainable and accessible tourism mobility, addressing port issues like seabed depth, energy transition, and infrastructure for alternative fuels.
- **Montenegro:** Deals with narrow roads and outdated railways, though scenic train routes are a draw. Five key road corridors are being improved.
- **Serbia:** Faces poor rural roads, aging railways, and urban congestion, particularly in Belgrade, while upgrading Corridor X to enhance connectivity.



Topic 1: Key Transport & Tourism Challenges in the A-I Region

Key areas in need of improvement:

- **Regional Connectivity:** Upgrading road and rail networks, especially in rural areas and for island connectivity (Greece), and enhancing public transport integration (Greece and Albania).
- **Tourism Accessibility:** Improving accessibility for disabled tourists and modernizing infrastructure (Bosnia and Herzegovina); investing in sustainable tourism infrastructure (Italy and Montenegro), including better port and airport connections.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Completing national and regional transport corridors (e.g., Corridor X in Serbia, key highways in Montenegro), and implementing smart solutions like digital reservation systems and advanced port management in Italy.



Topic 2: Key regional infrastructure and tourism challenges -- Accessibility Gaps

Highlights:

- **Transport Connectivity:** Many regions face outdated or limited infrastructure. Key upgrades include Corridor Vc (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Corridor VIII (Albania). Greece and Serbia are improving island and rural access.
- **Tourism Accessibility:** Public transport to tourist sites remains limited. In Italy, under 40% of major sites are accessible by public transport. Bosnia and Herzegovina is enhancing accessibility for disabled visitors.
- **Ongoing Projects:** Major investments are underway, including Vlora International Airport (Albania) and rail upgrades in Montenegro, to boost access to tourism and economic hubs.
- **Port & Rail Infrastructure:** Italy is advancing smart port management, while Serbia works to modernize river ports and regional railways.

Overall, countries across the region are working to close infrastructure gaps, improve transport access to tourist destinations, and implement modern solutions to enhance regional connectivity.



Topic 3: ICT and Smart Transport Developments in the AI Region

- **Albania** is upgrading key corridors and Tirana Airport, but has limited focus on ICT in transport.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** has underdeveloped ICT systems in the transport sector.
- **Greece** offers advanced public transport ICT through OASA Telematics and contactless payment, enhancing tourist accessibility.
- **Italy** leads in SMART & GREEN PORTS, integrating ICT for port efficiency, sustainability, and maritime decarbonization.
- **Montenegro** is developing ITS for roads and planning rail upgrades to support tourism by 2026.
- **Serbia** is rolling out smart systems like e-ticketing, digital tourism maps, and ICT-enhanced airports and border crossings.



Topic 4: Measures to Tackle Overtourism and Promote Minor Destinations

Port Infrastructure & Cruise Tourism Enhancements

- **Albania:** Expanding **Saranda**, **Durres**, and **Vlora** ports to support cruise tourism and improve tourist access.
- **Italy: Venice:** Railway and road upgrades to ease port congestion,
Ravenna: Electrification and track additions for better rail-port connectivity,
Ancona & Bari: New roads to improve port access,
Taranto: Eco-industrial park with integrated road and rail links.
- **Montenegro:** Shuttle buses from cruise ships to tourist sites reduce congestion at port entrances.
- **Serbia: River Cruise Strategy** - Circular and extended Danube itineraries reduce port bottlenecks and distribute tourism more evenly.



Conclusions: Key Challenges and Opportunities for Transport and Tourism in the Adriatic - Ionian (A-I) Region

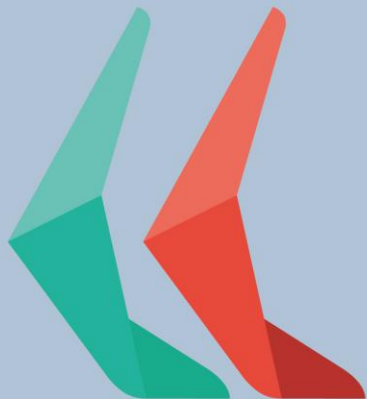
- The Adriatic-Ionian (AI) Region is confronted with major transport infrastructure and connectivity challenges—particularly outdated or insufficient road, rail, port, and airport systems - which limit accessibility and hinder sustainable tourism development.
- Many high-potential tourist areas, especially in islands, cross-border zones, and emerging destinations, remain underserved by modern transport links. While efforts to modernize and integrate these networks are underway, progress is uneven across countries.
- At the same time, digital transformation is increasingly recognized as a critical enabler for improving tourist mobility and service delivery.
- Countries like Greece, Italy, and Serbia are leading with smart mobility initiatives, while others such as Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are still at the early stages.

Moving forward, modernizing infrastructure and scaling up digital solutions will be essential to enhancing connectivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of tourism across the region.

10th EUSAIR Forum

Georgioupolis, Crete

6-7 May 2025



**Theoni Papasimakopoulou,
Hellenic Infrastructure and
Transport Ministry**

Tel. (+30) 210 699 2267

Email: t.papas@ggde.gr

Thank you

**Dr. Evangelia Kaselimi,
Hellenic Ministry of
Maritime Affairs and
Insular Policy**

Tel. (+30) 213 137 4668

Email: e.kaselimi@yen.gr