TiCCA4DANU
TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATION POLICY
FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Maribor Becomes the First City in Slovenia to Sign a Local Green Deal (LGD) and Holds its First Open Discovery Workshop

City of Maribor, RRA Podravje – Maribor and Energap Join Forces to Reduce Energy Consumption in Maribor's Public Buildings

On 7 October 2026 the City of Maribor, RRA Podravje – Maribor and Energap – the Energy and Climate Agency of Podravje – signed a Local Green Deal (LGD) aimed at systematically reducing energy consumption in the City of Maribor's public buildings. The document expresses the three institutions' shared commitment to systematically reducing energy consumption in municipal public buildings. Its development was initiated and supported by the European **TiCCA4DANU** project and carried out in close cooperation with its partner ICLEI, which has already supported numerous similar agreements across Europe. ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development, operating in over 125 countries. ICLEI Europe supports local governments across Europe, the Middle East and Western Asia in their transition towards climate neutrality and in building more resilient and equitable communities.

The signing of this important document concluded the first day of the international conference "Climate Change Adaptation: From Strategies to Action", organised by the Regional Development Agency for Podravje – Maribor at Hotel Habakuk. The two-day event, bringing together more than 50 Slovenian and international experts and representatives from different levels of decision-making, continued the next day with practical workshops and field visits showcasing good practices.

Nataša Ritonija, Director of RRA Podravje – Maribor, emphasised that the conference aims to connect expert knowledge with the region's concrete needs: "Municipalities and businesses need feasible solutions, expert support and access to funding, and RRA Podravje – Maribor plays an important role in bringing stakeholders together. Signing the Local Green Deal is a concrete step in this direction. We see climate change adaptation as an investment in people's safety, quality of life and the long-term development of Podravje."

The conference focuses on practical solutions for strengthening climate resilience: from adapting cities to increasingly hot summers, water management and nature-based solutions to adapting agriculture, engaging businesses and financing measures. Particular attention is being paid to Podravje and to how scientific findings, strategic guidance and

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experience from other European regions can be translated into measures that meet the region's needs.

A Shared Commitment to Energy Efficiency

At the signing of the Green Deal in the Vinag wine cellar, Dr Vlasta Krmelj, Director of Energap – the Energy and Climate Agency of Podravje, highlighted the importance of cooperation and a clear division of responsibilities: "Podravje is highly vulnerable to floods and landslides as well as drought, so it is important that we work together on adaptation and jointly address the region's greatest challenges. The Green Deal is particularly important because it brings institutions together, defines responsibilities and commits us to reporting on what we have done, what has worked and what we need to improve."

The signing marks an important step towards bringing local stakeholders together to advance the green transition, move closer to climate neutrality and make more effective use of European funding. By focusing on energy efficiency, the agreement complements the conference's central theme and confirms the importance of shared commitments to implementing measures at the local level. Initial concepts for further agreements of this kind are already being developed to encourage a more proactive approach to the green transition in the city and the region.

European Experience and the Challenges Facing Podravje

The first day of the conference brought together European perspectives on climate action, cities' experiences and Podravje's development needs. Opening addresses were delivered by Aleksander Saša Arsenovič and Rok Šimenc, State Secretary responsible for cohesion policy, while Jan Dusík, Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action, addressed participants via video.

Maribor Mayor Aleksander Saša Arsenovič stressed that signing the Local Green Deal represents an additional commitment to responding to climate change more quickly and effectively: "Maribor has already taken important steps in energy self-sufficiency, urban greening, sustainable mobility and energy renovation. One of the key upcoming projects is the use of waste heat from the data centre and artificial intelligence factory on Maribor Island to heat homes, and we also expect the state to cooperate in this effort."

Rok Šimenc drew attention to the importance of preparing high-quality development projects and making effective use of European funds: “We must prepare well for the new financial framework and have a clear understanding of what we want and what the regions need. European funds must be directed towards high-quality projects that make sense from a development perspective, rather than projects for their own sake. The Local Green Deal is a welcome commitment in this regard, as it can also open doors to European funding.”

The evidence base for regional action was presented by Associate Professor Dr Naja Marot of the University of Ljubljana’s Biotechnical Faculty, who outlined Podravje’s position in a national study of the vulnerability of Slovenia’s statistical regions, and Juliane Friedrich of the University of Vienna, a partner of the TiCCA4DANU project, who presented an international study of the region’s readiness for adaptation. Dr Vlasta Krmelj also presented an approach to preparing municipal action plans.

The challenges and opportunities facing Podravje, as well as the role of Local Green Deals, were also discussed in a roundtable. A European perspective was provided by Dr Philippe Tulkens, Head of the Climate and Planetary Boundaries Unit at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.

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Practical Workshops and Field Visits

The programme on 8 October 2026 focused on involving businesses in the development and implementation of regional climate adaptation solutions and exploring good practices in the field in an Open Discovery Process (ODP) workshop. Participants learned, among other things, about the use of treated wastewater in agriculture, sustainable mobility and nature-based solutions in Maribor, the redevelopment of the Lent riverfront, and a modern nature-based kindergarten in Selnica ob Dravi, built using innovative technology and exclusively Slovenian timber.

For media enquiries or further information about the project, please visit the project’s official communication channels or contact:

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