



PRESS RELEASE

TiCCA4DANU Launches with Milestone General Assembly in Vienna and Earns Danube Strategy Flagship Status

Vienna, 27 June 2025 — The University of Vienna hosted the inaugural **General Assembly of the TiCCA4DANU project** on 26–27 June, marking a pivotal moment for this transformative initiative focused on **Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)** in the Danube Region. The event brought together a diverse partnership of research institutions, city and regional governments, and key stakeholders from across Europe.

The two-day gathering served as a dynamic starting point for collaboration, learning, and planning. Following an opening by **Project Coordinator Dr. Oliver Ziegler**, participants engaged in a round of introductions, paving the way for a shared understanding of the project's interdisciplinary scope.

A standout feature of the assembly was the series of **“pitching sessions” led by the four anchor City-Regions and their cross-border partners**, offering deep, first-hand insights into the urgent climate-related challenges they face. These presentations catalysed the core theme of the event: fostering **Transformative Innovation for Climate Change Adaptation**.

In a panel discussion that brought together renowned voices from research and business, participants explored how innovation can drive systems change. The discussion underscored the need for a **collaborative multi-level governance** approach paired with innovative financing mechanisms to address regional vulnerabilities and socio-economic complexities.

Local Green Deals at the Core

A central pillar of the event was the introduction of **Local Green Deals (LGDs)**—place-based, collaborative strategies that help cities implement the ambitions of the **European Green Deal**. LGDs were presented as vital tools for translating high-level sustainability goals into **local, actionable pathways** involving governments, businesses, citizens, and civil society.

Niklas Mischkowski and Nina Mia Cikes from **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** introduced the LGD methodology, while **Adrienn Bokányi** showcased the practical benefits of implementing an LGD in **Szombathely, Hungary**, through compelling local examples.



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Knowledge Exchange Through New Learning Formats

The project partners successfully tested innovative formats for mutual learning by bringing City-Regions into direct exchange with interdisciplinary research teams. Participants explored regional innovation ecosystems, climate risks, and adaptation strategies—probing critical questions around **climate justice, societal change, and private sector involvement**.

In a highlight keynote, Prof. **Dominique Foray**, emeritus professor at **École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne** (EPFL) and renowned architect of the **Entrepreneurial Discovery Process** of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), guided participants through the framework of **Transformative Innovation Policies (TIPs)**. His address emphasised TIPs as dynamic, experimental policy processes—where governments act as orchestrators of system transformation, particularly in climate adaptation.

A Flagship for the Danube Region

A defining moment of the Assembly was the formal recognition of TiCCA4DANU as a **“Danube Strategy Flagship”** under the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**. The prestigious designation, presented by **Dr. Jaroslava Szudi**, representative of **Priority Area 7**, confirms the project’s strategic importance at the macro-regional level and strengthens its capacity to influence regional policy and practice.

“This award reinforces our ambition to build a robust and collaborative partner network across the Danube region,” said Dr. Ziegler. “It affirms that the project’s outcomes should reach well beyond the initial pilot City-Regions.”

A Vision for Shared Learning and Transformation

As **Tanja Senekovič** from the **Regional Development Agency Podravje–Maribor (Slovenia)** noted:

“The project is not only about learning from renowned research experts, but also from fellow City-Regions—developing a collaborative, joint learning process that benefits us all.”

The General Assembly marked not just a beginning, but a bold step forward in realising **transformative, place-based climate adaptation** in the Danube Region—powered by science, local action, and collective ambition.

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