

Development Conference & Society Fair

Regions 2030+:

**Building Resilient, Competitive,
and Investment-Ready Communities**

23-24 September 2026 | Celje, Slovenia

Celjski dom, Krekov trg 3, Celje



Organisers



Celje
Mestna občina Celje



Support



Regions 2030+: Building Resilient, Competitive, and Investment-Ready Communities

Regions of the future need a different development framework, built on new forms of leadership, stronger cooperation between the public and private sectors, competencies of the future, and the ability to create development partnerships and investment opportunities. Such a shift will also be crucial for successfully capitalising on the opportunities offered by the European Union's new financial perspective for the 2028–2034 period.

Accessibility is becoming the new development infrastructure: access to knowledge, talent, funding, investment, partnerships, and a high quality of life. A resilient region of the future is built on strong local value chains and openness to the international development environment. **How can regions, by bringing together municipalities, businesses, educational institutions, the financial sector, and civil society, create the conditions for new investment, joint development, and long-term resilience and success under the new financial perspective?**

Development Framework, New Leadership, Collaboration, and Opportunities for Creating New Business and Project Initiatives.

The event brings together representatives of European institutions, public administration, businesses, financial institutions, universities, development organisations, and civil society to open a discussion on new development models and demonstrate how public-private partnerships, supported by international cooperation, the exchange of good practices, and access to new sources of funding, can become a key competitive advantage for the regions of the future.

REGISTER NOW

PROGRAMME

23 September 2026

7.00 PM–8.30 PM

Cultural Evening

DANUBE DANCE ALLIANCE: BETWEEN MOVEMENT, SPACE AND THE DIGITAL WORLD. Artistic Dance Performance and Screening of Dancescapes 360°. More information [HERE](#).

24 September 2026

9.00 AM–9.30 AM

REGISTRATION

9.30 AM–11.00 AM

Panel discussion

Looking Ahead: THE NEW FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE, THE NEW RULES OF DEVELOPMENT

Diverse perspectives on how development approaches, opportunities, and forms of collaboration will evolve under the new financial perspective.

- **Laura Hagemann-Arellano**, Policy Officer of the New European Bauhaus, European Commission - *introductory remarks*
- **Matija Kovač**, Mayor, Municipality of Celje - *introductory conversation*
- **Jože Petkovšek**, Undersecretary, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Cohesion and Regional Development
- **Saša Heath-Drugovič**, Deputy Director, Head of European Affairs, Municipality of Celje
- **Matjaž Ribaš**, Director, Slovenian Regional Development Fund
- **Borut Sever**, Director, Foundation for Funding Disability and Humanitarian Organizations in the Republic of Slovenia (FIHO)
- **Karina Medved Bregar**, Head of EU Affairs and Projects, Petrol d.d.

11.30 AM–12.30 PM

Panel discussion

From Strategy to Action: HOW ARE THE BEST GETTING FUTURE-READY?

Practical experiences, approaches, and solutions from those already driving change today.

- **Tanja Antonič**, Assistant Director, Jesenice General Hospital
- **Karmen Sadar**, Director of the Municipal Administration, Municipality of Šmartno pri Litiji
- **Anja Šerc**, Director, Zasavje Regional Development Agency
- **Primož Vodovnik**, Strategic Lead, Koroška Regional Development Agency
- **Domen Vogelsang**, Director, LTO Rogla – Zreče

Panels Chair: **Zdravko Kozinc**, Co-founder and Co-creator, Iskriva Institute

PROGRAMME

24 September 2026

12.30 PM–1.30 PM

LUNCH of Opportunities and New Partnerships

1.30 PM–3.00 PM

Workshops

Co-Creating Solutions: TURNING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES INTO BREAKTHROUGH PROJECT

Interactive collaboration, active participation, exchange of ideas, and the co-creation of projects.

Introduction:

- **Primož Šporar**, High Impact Designer in CEO, Fund 2740

Workshops

1. Accessibility and Access to Knowledge

The workshop will explore access to knowledge as an important driver of the development of individuals, businesses and regions. We will focus on how to ensure more inclusive and equitable access to knowledge, education, information and opportunities to develop skills and competences, as well as how to bring together different stakeholders within the local community. The aim of the workshop is to identify good practices, key challenges and opportunities for creating environments where knowledge is more accessible, inclusive and better connected to the needs of individuals, businesses and communities.

Hosts:

- **Mateja Softić**, Co-creator, Iskriva Institute
- **Zdravko Kozinc**, Co-creator, Iskriva Institute

Good Practice Example:

- Good Practice Example – Associate Professor Dr **Marjetka Rangus**, Dean of the Faculty of Tourism Brežice, University of Maribor
- PREPLET – **Nataša Grošelj**, Project Manager and Coordinator of the Preplet Project, Toneta Okrogar Primary School, Zagorje ob Savi, Slovenia

2. Culture and Entrepreneurship

The workshop will explore culture and entrepreneurship as important drivers of regional development and new opportunities. We will focus on how cultural content, heritage, creativity and entrepreneurial initiatives can contribute to the creation of new services, products, activities and business opportunities. The aim of the workshop is to bring together different stakeholders and jointly explore potential, good practices and opportunities for development, collaboration and the creation of new value in regions.

Hosts:

- **Urška Dolinar**, director, Iskriva Institute

Good Practice Example:

- Speculum Artium – **Špela Pavli Perko**, Director, Delavski dom Trbovlje
- Šmartinsko Lake – **Klara Herzog**, Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection Service, Department of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Utilities, Municipality of Celje
- Carniolan Bee House – **Maja Lampret**, Director, Public Institute for Culture and Tourism 'Nice and Homely'
- Connecting Regions – **Maja Voglar**, Director, Institute for Cultural Events and Tourism Celeia Celje

PROGRAMME

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3. New Governance for New Development, with the support of ELEVATE

As part of the ELEVATE project, the workshop will bring together key themes of inclusive territorial development, including access to services, quality of life, the inclusion of older people and persons with disabilities, and cooperation among different stakeholders in developing solutions. At the heart of the discussion will be the principle of "nothing about us without us" – exploring how co-creation and collaboration between the public, private and civil society sectors can help us better identify the needs of local communities and translate them into concrete development solutions. Together, we will explore how regions can build on the experience of ELEVATE to take the next step towards creating more inclusive, accessible and resilient communities.

Host: **Irina Alexandra Panait**, Urban Planner, Urbasofia SRL

Good Practice Example:

- FoodBank – **Mariana Balaban**, DGASPC of 6th District of Bucharest
- Support Points for Older People – Intergenerational Community Support – **Anita Molka**, Heart of Slovenia
- Kind Life – **Damjana Pangerčič**, Founder, Institute for Social Gerontology (ISG), Amabilis
- Good Practice Example: Developing Multipurpose Coworking Spaces for Family Caregivers – **Hans Peter Sander**, CoWorkLand

4. Healthcare and Quality of Life, with the support of CE-VITA

The workshop will explore the links between access to healthcare services, quality of life and regional development. We will focus on how more accessible and high-quality healthcare services, supported by digitalisation in healthcare, can contribute to improving residents' quality of life and reducing disparities between regions. Together, we will consider what concrete development steps regions can take to improve access to services and enhance quality of life.

Host:

- **Primož Šporar**, High Impact Designer and CEO, Fund 2740 – High Impact Foundation

Good Practice Example:

- CE-VITA – **Maja Valjavec**, Professional Associate, General Hospital Jesenice
- eEarly – **Tina Brajnik**, Business Intelligence Project Manager, Result
- Froomcare – **Grega Nahtigal**, Founder, DTs HUB

The workshops will be held in English.

3.00 PM–3.30 PM

IMPACT & NEXT STEPS

4.00 PM–4.30 PM

D. Dance Alliance: VR Screening of Dancescapes 360°.

5.00 PM–5.30 PM

D. Dance Alliance: VR Screening of Dancescapes 360°.

The event will take place at Celje Community Centre (Celjski dom), Krekov trg 3, Celje. Join us at the event. REGISTER NOW.

REGISTER NOW

Participation in the event is free of charge, but registration is required. Registration is open until Friday, 18 September 2026. The event will be held in Slovenian and English, with simultaneous interpretation.

Support:



The event is organised as part of the collaboration between the following projects: CE-VITA, supported by the Interreg Central Europe Programme; ELEVATE and CAST, supported by the Interreg Danube Region Programme; and BauNOW, supported by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. All projects are co-financed by the European Union.

The D. Dance Alliance project is co-funded by the European Union under the Creative Europe Programme. The Slovenian participation in the project is also co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Public Administration.