



**TEDEN SREDOZEMSKO OBALE  
IN MAKROREGIONALNIH  
STRATEGIJ**

Izola, Slovenija  
15. – 17. september 2025



**MEDITERRANEAN COAST  
AND MACRO-REGIONAL  
STRATEGIES WEEK**

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**Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2025**

*Stronger cooperation for better future*

**15 – 17 September 2025, Izola, Slovenia**

# Collaboration to Develop and Enhance Blue Skills in Adriatic - Ionian Region

Pact for Regional Skills Partnership for  
Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR

**Dr. Michael Chatziefstathiou**

Coordinator of Pillar 1 (Blue Sustainable Economy)



- The objective of the EUSAIR Strategy is to promote effective multilevel and cross-sectoral cooperation for an economically prosperous, socially inclusive, well connected, more integrated, green, blue and liveable Adriatic-Ionian Region.

## EUSAIR revised Action Plan

- Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights

The EU Strategy for Adriatic & Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is a macro-regional strategy which covers **four (4) EU Member States** (Croatia, **Greece**, Italy, and Slovenia), and, **six (6) non-EU countries** (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, **Montenegro**, North Macedonia, San Marino, and Serbia).

The **Pillar 1 “Blue Sustainable Economy”**, previously called “**Blue Growth**”, is commonly coordinated by **Greece** and **Montenegro**, and focuses on 3 topics:

1. Blue technologies,
2. Fisheries & aquaculture, and,
3. Maritime & marine governance & services

The new **Pillar 1 Coordinators** from **Greece** (Dr Michael Chatziefstathiou) and **Montenegro** (Ms Irina Vukčević) are working together to:

- Promote research, innovation and business opportunities in blue economy sectors, by facilitating the brain circulation between research and business communities and increasing their networking and clustering capacity,
- Adapt to sustainable seafood production and consumption, by developing common standards and approaches for strengthening these two sectors and providing a level playing field in the macro-region,
- Improve sea basin governance, by enhancing administrative and institutional capacities in the area of maritime governance and services.

Priorities of the Hellenic Presidency of EUSAIR  
(1 June 2024 - 31 May 2025)

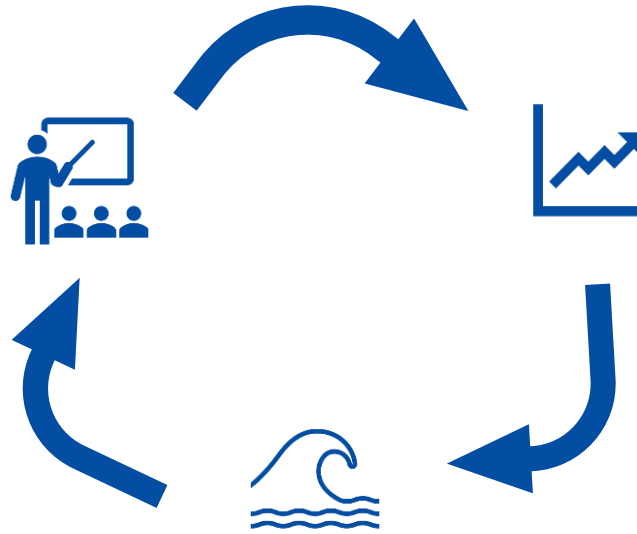
1. EU enlargement and in particular the support to the accession process of the Western Balkans.
2. Cohesion Policy in the post 2027 period interlinked to the EUSAIR Strategy and highlighting the spatial dimension of the Strategy.
3. Green transition and the effects of climate change.
- 4. Blue Economy and the development of the appropriate professional skills, education and specialization in blue professions.**
5. Environmental protection and promotion of environmental quality.

Priorities of the Presidency of North Macedonia  
(1 June 2025 - 31 May 2026)

1. Enlargement and gradual integration.
2. Advancing implementation of the revised Action Plan and importance of macro-regional cooperation.
3. Enhancing cooperation in border regions and stronger regional integration.
- 4. Youth engagement, skills agenda and demographic challenges to counter depopulation and enhance resilience.**
5. Sustainable Tourism and smart growth.

# We need blue skills & ocean literacy for (sustainable) blue growth

**Blue skills**  
are needed to support  
the development of  
the blue economy



**Blue economy**  
demonstrates the dynamism of  
the blue economy and the  
importance of the ocean for the  
economy and society

**Ocean literacy**  
is essential to demonstrate the importance of the ocean  
and make careers in the blue economy more attractive

# The significance of blue professions in EU

Almost 90% of EU's external trade is seaborne, with short sea shipping covering 1/3 of intra-EU trade.

Maritime transport ensures the quality of life on islands and coastal regions, providing needed goods, and supporting over 400M passenger movements annually.

Fisheries and aquaculture provide healthy and nutritious food to EU citizens, ensuring our food security.

Seafarers and port workers maintain supply chains, enable trade, ensure safe passenger travel, and drive technological innovation.

The different blue professions supports economic efficiency, sustainability, career development and social cohesion, particularly in coastal and island regions.

# Challenges for tomorrow

## **Technological evolution:**

- Adoption of automation and artificial intelligence
- Need for upskilling to manage smart ships

## **Environmental pressures:**

- Stricter regulations for reducing carbon emissions
- Skills to operate eco-friendly vessels

## **Social and mental health challenges:**

- Isolation, long working periods in remote areas or at sea, and evolving work-life balance demands

## **Globalization:**

- Increased competition and international workforce dynamics

## **Workforce Shortages:**

- Aging workforce and lack of youth interest in blue careers

# European Skills Agenda

- The European Skills Agenda is a five-year plan to help individuals and businesses develop more and better skills and to put them to use, by:
- Strengthening **sustainable competitiveness**, as set out in the [European Green Deal](#)
- Ensuring **social fairness**, putting into practice the first principle of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#): access to education, training and lifelong learning for everybody, everywhere in the EU
- Building **resilience** to react to crises, based on the lessons learnt

# European Skills Agenda: Action 1 - Pact for Skills

- The Pact for Skills will bring together all stakeholders, private and public, which share the objective of up- and reskilling Europe's workforce to enable people to participate in the twin transitions.
- **The Pact will facilitate public-private cooperation.** In particular, it will set up **Large** and **Regional-scale partnerships**, in strategic industrial ecosystems and priority areas identified in the European Green Deal to achieve ambitious commitments, where stakeholders will be encouraged to pool expertise and resources.
- The Pact for Skills will also facilitate **access to information on EU funding instruments for skills** by offering a single-entry point at EU level.

# What does the EU Pact for Skills offer

All members of the Pact can benefit from three (3) dedicated services:

- Through the **Networking Hub**, members can find partners and relevant EU tools (like Europass, Skills Panorama, EURES and the European Network of Public Employment Services). They can also promote their activities.
- The **Knowledge Hub** organises webinars, seminars and peer learning activities for members. It also provides updates on EU policies and instruments, as well as information on projects, tools, and best practices.
- In the **Guidance Hub**, members can find information about EU and national funding opportunities, and guidance to partnering with national and regional authorities.

<https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu>

[https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/regional-skills-partnerships\\_en](https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/regional-skills-partnerships_en)

# PACT FOR SKILLS

## EUSAIR Regional-Scale partnership for Skills in SBE

### **Why a EUSAIR Regional - Scale Partnership?**

- Upskill / Reskill the Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) workforce
- Encourage and support set-up of EUSAIR regional partnerships members (industry, clusters, trade unions, social partners, VET and higher education, regional and national authorities)

### **What do partnerships do?**

- Regular online meetings to share best practices and information, work towards achieving the RSP objectives
- Frequent networking and other skills-related events & seminars
- Participation in the Pact for Skills Task Force Activities in cooperation with DG Employment, Grow, Mare, Regio

### **How can I get involved?**

- Applications to join the [EU Pact for skills](#) in SBE could be submitted at any time

## Latest development on the drafting of a Regional Skills Partnership for Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR region

During the successful event of the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 in Piraeus (Greece), which gathered **more than 90 participants**, the Pillar Coordinators of Pillar 1 were authorised to prepare a draft document outlining the Blue Skills regional partnership. This draft **was consulted in a series of meetings** with many stakeholders, with the goal to be signed by the interested stakeholders and establish a regional Blue Skills partnership **by the end of Autumn 2025**.

This Regional Pact for Blue Skills aims to bring together all types and sizes of businesses, from EU umbrella organisations, social partners, vocational and education training providers, to regional / municipal authorities, to speak with one voice in supporting specific commitments to reskilling and upskilling the Region's workforce, in an effort to meet the objectives of the twin green and digital transition, and bolster the resilience of the blue sustainable economy ecosystem in the medium to long-term.

This partnership promotes joint actions in order to meet the skills needs of the entire workforce of the Adriatic - Ionian blue sustainable economy ecosystem, ensuring that any new skills are embedded in the overall policy and curricula for vocational education and training.

# GROWTH4BLUE

## Innovation, Skills and Regional Growth for the Adriatic-Ionian Blue Economy

**GROWTH4BLUE** is a transnational cooperation project aiming to transform the regional Blue Economy by strengthening skills, promoting innovation, and enabling sustainable development in key sectors such as shipbuilding, fisheries, maritime transport, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, and coastal tourism.

This project is very helpful to the Coordinators of Pillar 1 for their work on the preparation of the Blue Skills Pact in EUSAIR.

It will be even more helpful after the establishment of Blue Skills Pact in EUSAIR to its members, as has gathered a strong consortium of 10 partners from 7 countries of our Region, aiming to address critical skill mismatches and innovation needs, which supports the transition toward a more resilient, future-ready Blue Economy, and contributes to the much needed labor market analysis.

# GROWTH4BLUE

## Innovation, Skills and Regional Growth for the Adriatic-Ionian Blue Economy

This initiative seeks to bridge the gap between current market demands & the availability of skilled professionals and also to inject new vigor into the region's economy through strategic innovation and technological excellence.

Cornerstone of the GROWTH4BLUE project, **which is also crucial for a successful implementation of the Blue Skills Pact**, is the creation of key Outputs for bridging the current market demands with available skills, which include:

- Comprehensive Analysis of the Blue Economy Ecosystem, identifying key sectors and innovation opportunities.
- Labor Market Analysis Report, offering insights into in-demand skills and competencies, and addressing educational and training system gaps.
- Online Tool for Job Postings Analysis designed using Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology to extract and analyze data for actionable insights.
- Strategic Action Plan, focusing on regional and transnational needs to promote innovation and sustainable employment.

## Latest development on the drafting of a Regional Skills Partnership for Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR region

Discussions were made, and information was shared, including dedicated teleconferences, with the following stakeholders, which express their **initial interest** to participate in a Blue Skills Pact in our region (1/2):

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Balkan and Black Sea Commission

European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Amphictyony

Associazione Cooperative Italiane Emilia Romagna - Settore pesca, Italy

Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Settentrionale, Italy

Casa Matha - Ordo piscatorum Ravenna, Italy

Centro di Formazione per la Logistica e l'Intermodalità, Italy

Consorzio per il coordinamento delle ricerche inerenti al sistema lagunare di Venezia, Italy

ENAIP FVG, Italy

ENDAS Associazione di protezione ambientale, Italy

Fondazione Cetacea - Riccione, Italy

General Confederation of Workers of Greece, Institute of Labor, Greece

Hellenic Aquaculture Producers Organisation, Greece

Hellenic Center of Marine Research, Greece

Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale, Italy

ITS Accademia Nautica dell'Adriatico, Italy

## Latest development on the drafting of a Regional Skills Partnership for Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR region

Discussion were made, and information were shared, including dedicated teleconferences, with the following stakeholders, which express their **initial interest** to participate in a Blue Skills Pact in our region (2/2):

Maritime Innovation Cluster, Croatia

Ministro dell'Università e della Ricerca, Italy

Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Direzione centrale lavoro, formazione, istruzione e famiglia, Italy

Regione del Veneto, Italy

Regione Emilia Romagna, Italy

Unioncamere Veneto, Italy

University of Aegean, Department of Marine Sciences, Greece

University of Aegean, Department of Shipping, Trade and Transport, Greece

University of Montenegro, Faculty of Maritime Studies, Montenegro

University of Montenegro, Institute of Marine Biology, Montenegro

University of Patras, Department of Aquaculture & Fisheries, Greece

University of Thessaly, Department of Ichthyology & Aquatic Environment, Greece

Veneto Green Cluster, Italy

Veneto Innovazione, Italy

## Latest development on the drafting of a Regional Skills Partnership for Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR region

The draft is now **in final stage**, will be circulated to interested parties, and includes the following chapters:

- A) The Challenges
- B) The Proposal
- C) The planned activities
- D) Targets and Key milestones
- E) Partnership rules and arrangements

### Potential Participants

- Institutional stakeholders
- Members of the Thematic Steering or Action Groups of the EUSAIR
- Academia and Clusters in:
  - *fisheries,*
  - *aquaculture,*
  - *maritime governance,*
  - *ports and sea services*



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If you are interested to participate  
to **EUSAIR Pact for Blue Skills**,  
or need further information,  
please send us an e-mail

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