

SUSTANCE

*Sustainable public transport solutions and innovative governance schemes for
improving connectivity in Central Europe*

FINAL CONFERENCE

Venue:

TRIESTE (I)

Dates:

24 March 2026

The Final Conference of the SUSTANCE Project, *“Shaping the Future of Public Transport Connectivity in Central Europe”*, marks a key moment to present project achievements and promote future cooperation on sustainable mobility. The event aims to disseminate results and capitalize on experiences in improving cross-border public transport services and developing innovative ICT-based mobility solutions. High-level representatives from European institutions, macro-regional strategies, and project partners will discuss how SUSTANCE outcomes contribute to broader EU transport and cohesion objectives. The event combines strategic and technical sessions, showcasing transnational action plans, pilot initiatives, and long-term governance strategies.

DRAFT Agenda

Final Conference of the SUSTANCE Project

“Shaping the Future of Public Transport Connectivity in Central Europe”

09:30 – 10:15 Opening Session

Institutional greetings and strategic insights set the framework for the event. High-level representatives and keynote speakers will highlight the importance of transnational cooperation, sustainable mobility, and the role of macro-regional strategies in enhancing connectivity across Central Europe.

- Franco Dal Mas, Secretary General, Central European Initiative (CEI),
- Cristina Amirante, Transport Councillor, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (*tbc*)
- Winfried Ritt, Representative, Joint Secretariat – Interreg Central Europe
- Keynote Speech: *“Strengthening Cross-Border Connectivity in the Adriatic–Ionian Region: The Strategic Vision of EUSAIR”* – Pierluigi Coppola, EUSAIR Pillar II Coordinator (Transport)

10:15 – 10:30 Enhancing Cross-Border Accessibility in the EU: The Role of the Border Focal Point. The intervention will present the role of the EU Border Focal Point in improving cross-border accessibility and public transport connectivity across EU border regions.

- Marlies Peeters, Programme manager, European Commission, DG REGIO - Unit Interreg, Cross-border Cooperation and Internal Borders: *“The experience of the EU Border Focal Point in promoting cross-border accessibility” (video call)*

10:30 – 11:00 Session II – Scaling Up: Transnational Action Plans for Connectivity and ICT Solutions
The core outputs of the SUSTANCE project are presented, showcasing innovative approaches and solutions for enhancing regional and cross-border mobility. Action plans and strategies will illustrate how project results can be transferred and scaled up to benefit other areas across Central Europe.

- *Transnational Action Plan for Better Cross-Border Public Transport Connectivity* - Primoz Kranjec - PIL
- *Transnational Action Plan for Improved ICT Solutions for Flexible, Demand-Responsive, and Intermodal Public Transport* - Denis Grasso - ITL
- *Long-Term Strategy for Promoting Cooperation and Better Governance of Public Transport in Central Europe* - Alberto Dainin - EURAC

11:00 – 11:15 Towards a Common Transport Area in Central and South-East Europe: Regional Perspectives on Mobility in the Western Balkans

Regional integration plays a key role in fostering seamless mobility and strengthening cooperation between Central and South-East Europe. The Transport Community will share perspectives on current priorities and joint initiatives supporting connectivity in the Western Balkans.

- Dejan Lasica, Rail Policy Coordinator, Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community:
“Connecting the Western Balkans: Priorities for Regional Mobility and Integration” (video call)

11:15-11:30 Coffee break

11:30–12:30 Building Partnerships for Sustainable Public Transport

Cooperation among institutions, operators, and experts is essential for shaping a shared vision of sustainable public transport in Central Europe. The round table offers an opportunity to exchange experiences, identify challenges, and explore joint actions to ensure lasting impact and policy continuity.

- Round Table Discussion with experts, institutions, and associated partners of the SUSTANCE Project

Participants: Simon Fletcher, Riccardo Maratini, Helena Luketic, Miladin Peulić, Regione Emilia-Romagna, AMR-Agenzia Mobilità Romagna

12:30 – 12:50 The SUSTANCE Legacy: Project Reflections and Future Cooperation Perspectives: Voices from the Partnership

This session will provide an opportunity for all project partners to share final reflections on their experience within the SUSTANCE project. Beyond technical achievements, partners will briefly reflect on key lessons learned, the added value of transnational cooperation, and how the project has contributed to strengthening professional and institutional collaboration across Central Europe.

The session will also offer a forward-looking perspective, allowing partners to outline ideas, expectations, and commitments for continuing cooperation, building on the network, trust, and knowledge developed throughout the SUSTANCE journey.

- All Project Partners (2-3 min each)

12:50 – 13:00 Conclusions

- Central European Initiative (CEI)

13:00 : Family Photo