

# Meeting of the EU MRS Transport Coordinators

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**1-2 February 2023**

**Joint meeting of the EU macro-regional Transport Coordinators**

[Thon Hotel EU](#), Rue de la Loi 75, B-1040  
Brussels | Belgium





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### Outlines

EU macro-regional strategies (MRS)<sup>1</sup> were initiated by the political leaders of the countries and regions in Europe, aiming to address shared challenges that could not be dealt with sufficiently by a single country or a region. In addition, MRS were proposed to unite Europe and exploit opportunities building on the strength of geographically close territories. While the concept of MRS is generic, the context of MRS implementation differs.

MRS implementation is aiming to create long-term change and impact, and for it, MRS:

- address challenges from a cross-sectoral perspective,
- explore opportunities for alignment of resources (financial, human, institutional, legislative, etc.),
- engage relevant stakeholders in macro-regional actions,
- and build coordinated implementation processes connecting policy objectives and activities on the ground.

However, MRS governance and implementation are not that straightforward. MRS require designing, aligning, engaging, and coordinating a variety of resources, stakeholders, and actions for the benefit of the entire macro-region. MRS framework is built on the principles of the “3 No’s” (no new funds, no new institutions, no new legislation). And to achieve its objectives, MRS collaboration requires strong political commitment and recognition of the macro-regional collaboration value. The above raises the following questions: How do thematic coordinators ensure the implementation and governance of thematic areas? What practical experiences are there to share - what works and what does not? Is there a potential for further cross-MRS collaboration and joint developments? What can thematic coordinators learn from one another?

Having it in mind, the Interact Programme, in close collaboration with the EUSDR priority area 1B “Rail, road and air links” coordinator, is proposing a meeting of MRS Transport Coordinators with a particular focus on inland transport. This meeting will consider conclusions from the earlier two transport coordinators’ meetings held in 2017.

### Objectives

The MRS Transport Coordinators meeting will have two main objectives:

- provide the space for open and informal exchange on MRS implementation and governance progress, practices and approaches, successes, and failures.
- exchange suggestions on further practical cross-MRS collaboration and enhanced political support and recognition of MRS implementation.

The meeting is divided into two parts. Day 1 is inviting thematic coordinators for the MRS and support units of the MRS to exchange practical MRS governance and implementation questions and to have the first discussion on potentials for cross-MRS further collaboration. Day 2 will be open to a wider group of participants, including DG REGIO and DG MOVE, mainly focussing on the role and place of MRS in the EU landscape (e.g. recognition of MRS in EU policies; possibilities for impacting EU legislative proposals) and to discuss options for improved cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> There are four EU macro-regional strategies endorsed by the Council: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, EU Strategy for the Danube Region, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and EU Strategy for the Alpine Region.



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### Day One

**Wednesday, 1 February 2023**

**09.00 – 09.15**

Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

**09.15 – 10.00**

#### **Introduction and welcome to the meeting**

*Interact*

- Setting the scene for the meeting
- Introduction of participants

**10.00 – 12.00**

#### **Brief presentation of the state of play of the thematic area of the MRS**

*MRS Thematic Coordinators*

Briefly presenting to other participants your thematic area:

- Main objectives/targets and actions of the thematic area
- Core issues (thematic) in the focus of your work
- Main thematic achievements
- Some points you would like to bring in for further exchanges

Objectives of the session: to introduce the thematic area to fellow coordinators serving as a background for further discussions.

**12.00 – 13.00**

Lunch break

**13.00 – 14.30**

#### **Thematic area governance and implementation (modus operandi)**

*MRS Thematic Coordinators*

This part of the meeting is devoted to sharing practical issues, questions, and experiences related to thematic area governance and implementation: practices and experiences, successes and failures, and tips and tricks.

- Thematic area steering groups: establishment, representation, management, steering group members as thematic area ambassadors in their home countries.
- Thematic area implementation: practical designing and support to the implementation of actions.
- Engagement of stakeholders in thematic area working groups/networks.
- Thematic area coordination: role, support to the function, open issues and challenges.

Objectives of the session: to share practical experiences, successes, failures, and lessons learnt related to practical implementation and governance of the



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thematic area. The session will be concluded with a practical suggestion for further steps.

**14.30 – 14.45**

Coffee break

**14.45 – 15.15**

### **Continuation of exchange on thematic area governance and implementation (modus operandi)**

*MRS Thematic Coordinators*

**15.15 – 17.15**

### **Exchange on cross-MRS collaboration potential**

*MRS Thematic Coordinators*

During this session, thematic area coordinators will be exchanging ideas about how MRS could contribute to policy-making in the transport field at the EU level and the potential for cross-MRS collaboration.

- MRS and their place in the EU policy landscape: how could the link between the MRS and EU policymaking be strengthened? What can MRS offer to support the implementation of the EU requirements? Is there a common and shared message that all MRS can convey to EU legislators (e.g. TEN-T directive, eFTI)?
- The energy crisis and how the MRS need to respond to support the energy transition in the transport and mobility system (data collection on energy consumption of transport, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches, innovative technological approaches and digital solutions, use of renewable energy sources for transport, measures which target mobility patterns and demand). What could be the MRS role in the process and impact?
- Cross-MRS events and networks: potential for joining forces and mutual exchange (events: e.g. Danube Region Transport Days, potentials for cross-MRS networks).
- Potentials for projects to grow into cross-MR initiatives? How to exchange on such projects?

Objectives of the session: to elaborate proposals related to MRS contribution to EU policy-making in the transport field as well as to discuss options for further collaboration across MRS.

**17.15 – 17.30**

### **Wrap-up and conclusions**

*Interact*



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### Day Two

**Thursday, 2 February 2023**

**09.00 – 09.15**

Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

**09.15 – 09.45**

#### **Introduction to the day**

*Interact*

- Brief introduction to the Day 2
- Introduction of all participants

**09.45 – 12.15**

#### **Role and place of MRS in European policy landscape: potentials for better coordination between the MRS and Commission services**

*Thematic coordinators, DG REGIO, DG MOVE, DG NEAR (tbc)*

- How can MRS be better exploited to facilitate the implementation of core European political initiatives?
- How could MRS implementation be made more prominent?
- How and where concretely is there a need for more regular and practical cooperation between the European Commission services and MRS thematic coordinators?

Objectives of the session: jointly brainstorm on the role and place of MRS in European policy landscape. What could be done better to fully exploit potential of MRS framework.

**12.15 – 12.30**

#### **Conclusions and closing of the meeting**

*Interact*

**12.30 – 14.00**

Closing Lunch



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### **Practicalities**

#### **Venue**

The meeting will be held in [Thon Hotel EU](#), Rue de la Loi 75, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.

#### **Travel and Accommodation**

Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

#### **Other Information**

In case of any questions or uncertainties, please get in touch with Baiba Liepa (baiba.liepa@interact-eu.net, +358 401599430) or Ilze Ciganska (ilze.ciganska@interact-eu.net, +358 503964891).