

WIN

Improving the position of Women in the labour markets of peripheral Industrial regions

WIN NEWSLETTER, december 2025



PROJECT UPDATE

As the year comes to a close, we are happy to share a winter update from the WIN project. The past months have been filled with dialogue, learning, pilot actions, and inspiring stories from across the Danube Region.

This newsletter brings together some of the moments, reflections, and milestones that remind us why improving women's position in labour markets truly matters, especially in regions shaped by transition.

WIN - Empowering women, transforming regions

Learn from inspiring good practices on women's employment in peripheral industrial areas across all 14 Danube-region countries.

▼ About this collection

The Danube Region faces above-average gender inequalities in employment, especially in peripheral industrial areas where labour markets remain shaped by male-dominated sectors such as mining, manufacturing and engineering. Women experience limited job opportunities, persistent stereotypes, skills gaps, and increased unpaid care work—challenges.

The WIN project aims to improve women's position in these labour markets by identifying their specific needs, addressing cultural and institutional



Explore the WIN StoryMap: Good Practices Across the Danube Region

Across the Danube Region, gender inequalities in employment remain above average, especially in peripheral industrial areas shaped by traditionally male-dominated sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and engineering. Women continue to face limited opportunities, persistent stereotypes, skills gaps, and an unequal share of unpaid care work.

To help turn evidence into action, WIN has developed a **StoryMap of Good Practices** from **all 14 Danube Region countries**. It offers concrete examples, inspiring initiatives, and transferable approaches that can support women's inclusion in the labour market, such as local employment measures and training schemes, as well as community-led support models and innovative policies.

The StoryMap is designed for **organisations, policymakers, employers, women, and stakeholders** looking for practical inspiration and proven approaches that can be adapted to their local realities. Discover practices worth replicating in your region!

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Empowering women, transforming regions: WINning together!

Watch the WIN Project Video: Women's Work, Made Visible

What happens when women's skills, experiences, and ambitions meet labour markets still shaped by industrial legacies? The WIN project video captures the reality of women in peripheral industrial regions, where work opportunities are often limited, career paths are shaped by stereotypes, and women remain underrepresented in emerging sectors and leadership roles.

At the same time, the video highlights what WIN is building: **social innovations, pilot actions, new networks, and practical tools** that help women strengthen skills, gain visibility, and access fairer opportunities in their regions.

This video is created for sharing, to spark discussion and remind us that gender equality in labour markets is a foundation for resilient regional development.

Watch the video and share it with your community!

[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



Certificate

DANUBE STRATEGY FLAGSHIP

This certificate is proudly awarded to

WIN – Improving the position of Women in labour markets of peripheral INDUSTRIAL regions

Danube Strategy Flagships are projects or processes that contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), have a clear macro-regional dimension and a multi-level governance approach. They are of high importance for the Danube Region's economic, social and territorial cohesion and for improving the quality of life in the Danube Region.

Danube Strategy Flagships strengthen internal and external communication of the Strategy and the visibility of the topics, initiatives and prospects in the Danube Region. They illustrate the progress achieved in implementing the EUSDR and demonstrate exemplarily significant improvement in the Region that is induced by cooperation.

EUSDR National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators with the respective Steering Groups, in their capacity as representatives and key implementers of the EUSDR, as well as the Danube Strategy Point, are committed to contribute to and promote Danube Strategy Flagships in accordance with the Guidance Paper for identifying and listing Danube Strategy Flagships.

Date: 4 July 2025



Priority Area(s): PA 9 People & Skills

WIN Becomes a Danube Strategy Flagship

We are proud to announce that **WIN has been officially recognised as a Danube Strategy Flagship** under **Priority Area 9: People & Skills** of the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**.

This recognition highlights WIN as a **model of best practice**, demonstrating how cross-border cooperation can improve women's position in labour markets and contribute to more inclusive, resilient regions.



Who Shapes the Future of Peripheral Regions? Geographical Talk on Gender Inequalities in Industrial Environments

On **26 November 2025**, a **Geographical Talk** hosted at **ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana, Slovenia**, opened an in-depth discussion on how industrial heritage, labour markets, and gender inequalities intersect in peripheral regions. The event brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from across Slovenia and the Danube Region.

In his keynote, **Dr. Jörn Harfst (University of Graz)** emphasised that women's participation in the labour market is **not only an economic issue, but a matter of justice**. He highlighted how gender dimensions are often acknowledged but rarely operationalised in development policies and why place-sensitive, long-term approaches are needed.

The roundtable discussion explored gaps between policy and practice, regional labour-market dynamics, and innovative local responses, reinforcing the need to treat gender equality as a **foundation of sustainable regional development**, not an add-on.

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AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN

Šiht Happens: Career Exploration for Young People in Zasavje (Slovenia)

On **15 October 2025**, the WIN project supported the **Zasavje Employment and Career Fair “Šiht happens”** in Trbovlje, with a special focus on young people and their career imagination. Through interactive activities, students explored professions in a creative, hands-on way. Instead of lectures, they learned through play, teamwork, and honest conversations with professionals.

Events like this are especially important in regions undergoing economic transition. They help young people, especially **young women**, challenge stereotypes, imagine diverse futures, and build confidence to explore paths traditionally seen as “not for them.”



Women’s Stories that Inspire: New WIN Podcasts

From Teacher to Hospital Director: Jitka Bureš Samáková

In the latest [INION Talk podcast](#), created in collaboration with WIN, Jitka shares her journey from a shy teacher to director of Sokolov Hospital. Her story highlights resilience, learning through challenges, and leadership rooted in empathy and teamwork.

The Only Woman Among 68 Directors: Klara Sokolova

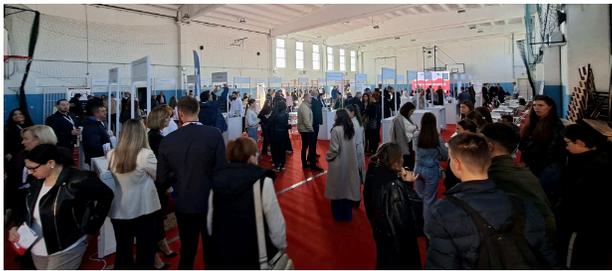
[Klara Sokolova](#), director of the O-I Glassworks plant in Nové Sedlo, shares how courage and openness helped her break barriers in a male-dominated industry. Her message to young women: *"Don't set limits for yourself, you never know where life will take you."*



Job Fair in Livno: Step Out of the Shadows

The Job Fair in Livno demonstrated how awareness-raising activities can become spaces of real empowerment.

By combining employment opportunities with dialogue, workshops, and a strong focus on women's position in the labour market, the event encouraged participants to reflect on hidden potential and untapped skills. It showed that when women are given visibility, support, and access to information, labour markets become more inclusive and communities stronger.



PROJECT TEAM SPOTLIGHT



Connecting People and Ideas: WIN Partners Meet in Livno

The **4th WIN Partner Meeting** took place on **21–22 October 2025 in Livno, Bosnia and Herzegovina**, hosted by **MGK10** and **ZZUP HBZ**, together with the lead partner **ZRC SAZU**.

Partners reviewed progress, shared results from pilot actions and campaigns, and discussed next steps. Highlights included:

- presentation of the **WIN pilot video** and **Sociopoly game**,
- policy discussions led by **University of Graz**,
- preparations for the upcoming **transnational conference**.

A study visit to local initiatives, combined with a **World Café workshop**, created space for reflection and exchange. Beyond the agenda, the meeting was marked by warm hospitality and a strong sense of partnership.

As we step into the final days of December, we would like to thank all partners, contributors, and communities who continue to shape WIN with their commitment, ideas, and openness.

We wish you a restful end of the year and a hopeful start to 2026. Stay connected, and see you in the new year.

**Interreg
Danube Region**



**Co-funded by
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This project is supported by the Interreg Danube Region Programme project co-funded by the European Union



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