

**Interreg
Danube Region**



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Danube GeoHeCo

Newsletter 05

Danube GeoHeCo

Fostering the implementation of
shallow geothermal hybrid heating and
cooling systems in the Danube Region



Directional well drilling
Photo by InnoGeo Research and Service Ltd.

The fifth issue of the Danube GeoHeCo project newsletter has been published!

At the end of the 5th period of the project, we summarized the most important activities and results of the semester in a newsletter!

In this newsletter, you can read about organized meetings and events, and other networking activities, as well as the progress made on pilot investment activities and much more.

Stay updated with the upcoming Newsletters from the Danube GeoHeCo project!

Acknowledgement

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Policy Advocacy for the implementation of the Transnational Action Plan at the 2025 National Conference of District Heating



Photo by InnoGeo Research and Service Ltd.

As part of Activity 2.4, the 2025 National Conference of District Heating was held in Szeged from 10 to 12 November 2025, with a strong focus on policy advocacy for the implementation of the Transnational Action Plan (TAP).

As an associated partner of the project and an active participant in all project-related activities, the Association of Hungarian District Heating Enterprises (MATASZSZ), together with InnoGeo, co-organized this important event. During the conference, the Transnational Action Plan was presented and discussed with key stakeholders, including representatives of municipalities, district heating system operators, and other relevant actors from the energy sector.

The conference gathered more than 100 participants in total. Of these, 25 participants took part in the dedicated workshop on the Transnational Action Plan as well as in the site visit to the GeoHeCo pilot location. These activities provided an opportunity for in-depth exchange of knowledge and experiences and for discussions on concrete steps for implementing the Action Plan's recommendations at national and local levels.

The event in Szeged marked an important step in strengthening cooperation between policymakers, system operators, and experts, aiming to support the uptake of sustainable district heating solutions and the effective implementation of innovative geothermal-based technologies.

Night of the Power Plants 2025: Geothermal Energy opened to the public in Szeged



Photo by InnoGeo Research and Service Ltd.

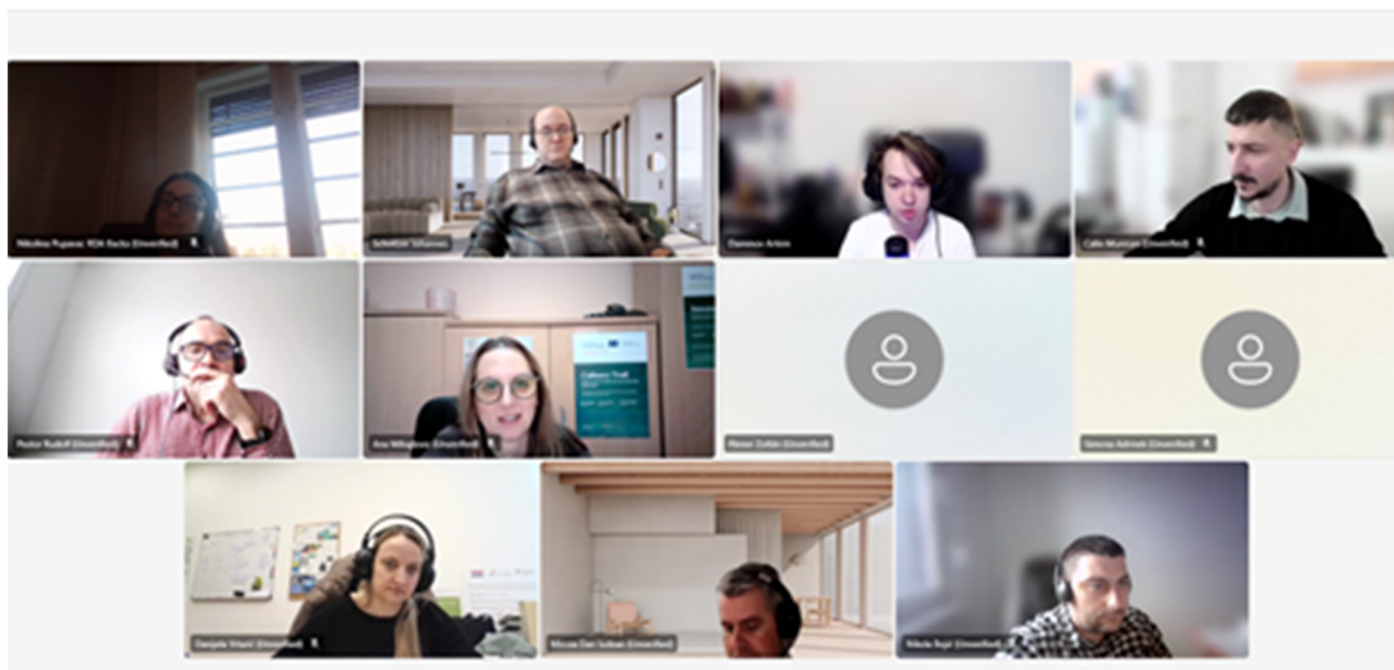
InnoGeo co-organized the 2025 Night of the Power Plants together with the District Heating Company of Szeged on 17 October 2025, offering visitors a unique insight into sustainable district heating solutions based on geothermal energy.

The event welcomed 72 visitors, divided into groups of 15, ensuring an interactive and informative experience for all participants. Each group attended a dedicated presentation on the use of deep and shallow geothermal energy in district heating, followed by a guided visit to the Danube GeoHeCo pilot investment site. The program provided a clear overview of how innovative geothermal technologies contribute to decarbonisation and the transition to sustainable energy systems.

In parallel with the technical program, the event also featured a children's drawing exhibition entitled "The Superhero of Renewable Energy", highlighting the importance of raising awareness about renewable energy among younger generations. More than 100 drawings and paintings were displayed during the event, reflecting children's creative interpretations of clean energy and sustainability.

The Night of the Power Plants once again proved to be an excellent opportunity to connect the public with energy professionals, promote renewable energy solutions, and show concrete examples of geothermal energy in practice.

Online Training of Trainers (ToT) held on the Digital Platform for SGE Hybrid Systems



Online ToT Workshop_Screenshot by RDA Backa

An online Training of Trainers (ToT) on the developed web-based digital platform and virtual marketplace for fostering shallow geothermal energy (SGE) hybrid heating and cooling systems was successfully held on 19 January 2026, led by the Danube GeoHeCo project partner FB (Forschung Burgenland GmbH).

The Danube GeoHeCo project partners participated in the session, which presented the objectives and key functionalities of the digital platform being developed under Activity 3.2, highlighting its role as a central hub for connecting supply- and demand-side stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting market development for SGE hybrid systems.

Participants explored the platform concept, planned features, and stakeholder engagement in design and testing, underlining its contribution to sharing project results and integrating innovative technologies.

The ToT also strengthened trainers' role in future capacity-building activities for SGE hybrid heating and cooling.

Danube GeoHeCo's Pilot Investment Showcased as a Model for Shallow Geothermal Deployment in Medjimurje County (Croatia)



At the regional stakeholder event “Geothermal Energy as a Driver of Sustainable Development and Energy Transition in Medjimurje”, held on 9th of February 2026 in Čakovec (Croatia), one of the highlights was the presentation of the upcoming Danube GeoHeCo pilot investment in Medjimurje County.

Organised by the Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENE) with the support of the University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering (UNIZG-RGNF), the event gathered experts, public authorities and other regional stakeholders to discuss the geothermal potential of Medjimurje County and its role in accelerating the energy transition.

To be implemented within the Interreg Danube Region project Danube GeoHeCo – Fostering the implementation of shallow Geothermal hybrid Heating and Cooling systems in the Danube Region, the pilot investment is focused on modernising the heating system of the Branch School Pušćine. Within the framework of the pilot investment, the existing fossil-fuel-based heating system in the building will be upgraded through the integration of a geothermal heat pump, thereby introducing a renewable and energy-efficient heating solution.

The upgrade foresees the establishment of a hybrid system in which the heat pump will cover the base thermal load, while the existing heating system will operate below a predefined bivalent outdoor temperature, ensuring reliable performance during peak demand conditions. Presented by the Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENE), the pilot investment demonstrates how shallow geothermal systems can be successfully integrated into public buildings.



Photo by Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENEA)

The new system reduces greenhouse gas emissions, lowers operating costs and increases energy efficiency, while ensuring reliable performance throughout the year. Beyond its local impact, this investment serves as a practical example for other municipalities in Medjimurje County as well. It shows that shallow geothermal energy can be a realistic, scalable and immediately applicable solution for decarbonising public infrastructure and supporting the broader energy transition.

The organized event also provided a broader overview of ongoing geothermal initiatives in Medjimurje County. In addition to the Danube GeoHeCo's pilot investment, participants were introduced to the results of three complementary projects: TRANSGEO, focused on the revitalisation of abandoned hydrocarbon wells for geothermal use; InnoGeoPot, which presented innovative methods for assessing geothermal and thermal energy storage potential; and GeoBuilding, aimed at promoting energy renovation through the use of geothermal systems in Hungary-Croatia cross-border area.

Together, these four projects demonstrate a comprehensive approach to harnessing both deep and shallow geothermal resources, positioning Medjimurje County as an active contributor to the green energy transition in Croatia and entire Danube Region.

Presentation of the Danube GeoHeCo Transnational Action Plan at World Sustainable Energy Days 2026 held in Wels (Austria)

From 24th to 27th of February 2026, Wels, Austria became a global meeting point for leading experts in sustainable energy during one of the world's most prominent annual conferences – World Sustainable Energy Days 2026 (WSED 2026).

Traditionally held in Wels, this internationally renowned event brings together renewable energy professionals, policymakers, researchers, and industry representatives. WSED serves as a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, innovation showcase, and international cooperation in advancing sustainable and energy-efficient solutions.



Photo by Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENEJA)

Among the exhibitors, Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. presented the Danube GeoHeCo Transnational Action Plan aimed at promoting the deployment of shallow geothermal energy, which development is funded by the Interreg Danube Region Programme 2021–2027.

The Transnational Action Plan was showcased through an engaging poster presentation that attracted considerable interest from experts across Europe and beyond, highlighting the growing relevance of shallow geothermal solutions in the green transition.

More than just a conference, WSED 2026 proved to be a vibrant hub for innovation, networking, and fresh ideas in renewable energy. Participants explored the latest developments in green transition policies and technologies, gained insights from internationally recognized experts, and exchanged best practices—paving the way for new partnerships and future collaborative projects.

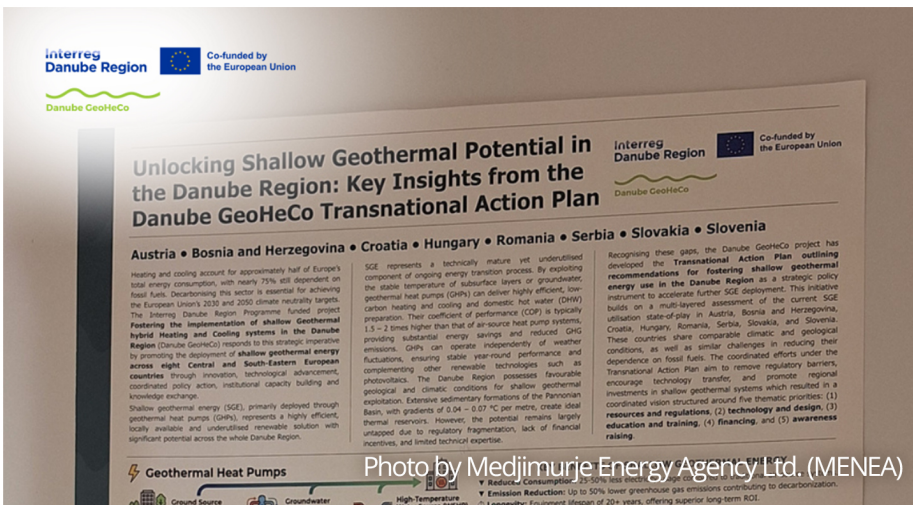


Photo by Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENEJA)

The participation of Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. reaffirms its leading role in advancing sustainable energy solutions and underscores the importance of transnational cooperation in shaping a resilient and climate-neutral energy future.

Presentation of the Danube GeoHeCo Transnational Action Plan in Novi Sad

Novi Sad, March 25, 2026 – At the Science and Technology Park in Novi Sad, as part of the Forum on Regional Development of AP Vojvodina 2026, a presentation of the Danube GeoHeCo project – the Transnational Action Plan (TAP) – was held, focusing on the key priorities and measures defined for the Republic of Serbia.

The presentation was attended by numerous representatives of ministries, provincial institutions, local self-governments, regional development agencies, scientific and higher education institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. On behalf of the partners from the Republic of Serbia, representatives of the project teams from RDA Bačka, REDASP, and FEK presented the main elements of the project and the achieved results.



During the TAP presentation, participants were introduced to the identified barriers to the wider use of renewable energy sources (RES) in Serbia, as well as the defined priorities in the areas of resources and regulation, technology and design, education and training, financing, and awareness raising, along with the planned activities within these priority areas.

The conclusions of the presentation emphasize that, although Serbia has significant potential for shallow geothermal energy, particularly in the Pannonian Basin region, its use remains at a modest level. Findings from the Serbia report indicate that regulatory complexity, institutional fragmentation, and insufficient financial incentives are the main challenges.



The Transnational Action Plan provides a structured framework for overcoming these barriers. Through coordinated simplification of regulations, demonstration projects, financial mechanisms, and strengthening institutional capacities, Serbia can significantly increase the deployment of shallow geothermal energy in the period from 2026 to 2035.

It was emphasized that unlocking the full potential of shallow geothermal energy requires ensuring transparent control mechanisms, compliance with legal standards, and a genuine, not merely formal, commitment to environmental protection.

Focus on Geothermal Cooperation!



Photo by CROST Nonprofit Ltd.

On March 24, 2026., CROST Nonprofit Ltd. held a successful working group meeting and workshop in Budapest at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where the focus was on strengthening transnational cooperation in geothermal energy utilisation.

At the event, Transnational Strategy and Action Plan of the TRANSGEO project, as well as the Transnational Action Plan of the Danube GeoHeCo project was presented. This was followed by the introduction of the IT tool that assesses the reuse potential of abandoned hydrocarbon wells, by Dr. Ferenc Fedor.

In addition, CROST Nonprofit Ltd. staff presented the digital platform of the Danube GeoHeCo project for bringing together supply and demand side actors in shallow geothermal energy utilisation. Finally, InnoGeo Nonprofit Ltd. shared the results of the Szeged pilot project with the participants.

Other organizers of the program included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the University of Pécs (PTE) and Bányavagyon-hasznosító Nonprofit Kft. (BVH).

Danube GeoHeCo at the Energy Summit in Trebinje



Mr. Slaviša Jelišić, Director of LIR Evolution, participated as a panelist at the Trebinje Energy Summit 2026, which once again gathered leading experts, institutional representatives, companies, and organizations from the energy sector.

During the panel, Mr. Slaviša Jelišić presented the key elements of the Transnational Action Plan (TAP) developed under the Danube GeoHeCo project. The focus was on priorities and measures aimed at promoting the use of shallow geothermal energy, as well as addressing regulatory, technical, and market barriers to its wider adoption in the Danube region.

The discussion also highlighted the role of innovative tools developed through the project, such as the decision-support IT tool and the digital platform with a virtual marketplace, which contribute to better planning and implementation of renewable energy projects.

LIR Evolution's participation in this important event underscores the organization's active role in regional initiatives and its contribution to the development of sustainable energy policies and practices.

Now in its seventh year, the Trebinje Energy Summit continues to serve as a key platform for knowledge exchange and experience-sharing in the regional energy sector.

Implementation of a Shallow Geothermal Pilot System begins at Pušćine Branch School



After nearly six months of intensive preparation, Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. has officially launched the implementation of a pilot investment aimed at reconstructing the existing heating system, with future cooling capability, through the use of geothermal energy at the Branch School Pušćine, owned by the Primary School Nedelišće. The pilot investment is being implemented within the framework of the Danube GeoHeCo project.

The investment includes the installation of a modern hybrid energy system in which a ground-source geothermal heat pump (brine-to-water) will cover the building's base heating demand, while the existing natural gas heating system will remain in operation as a backup source during periods of lower outdoor temperatures. This approach ensures an energy-efficient, sustainable, and highly reliable heating solution for the school facility.

As the school currently does not have an installed cooling system, the new solution has also been designed to enable future cooling of the building, should such an upgrade be planned and implemented. As part of the pilot investment, a borehole field consisting of two vertical boreholes, each 120 metres deep and positioned 7 metres apart, will also be constructed, together with the associated piping infrastructure.

Prior to the start of the investment, the main mechanical and electrotechnical design documentation was prepared and completed in October 2025, defining all technical, functional, and safety requirements necessary for the implementation of the new system.

Photo by Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. (MENEA)



The works officially commenced on 18th of March 2026 with an initial coordination meeting held at the branch school premises, attended by representatives of the Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd., the supervising engineer, and the contracted contractors. During the meeting, the contractors were formally introduced to the site, and the agreed implementation timeline was confirmed, covering both drilling and installation works. The drilling equipment was delivered on 28th of March 2026, while the first borehole was successfully completed on 1st of April 2026. Works on the second borehole continued after 7th of April 2026, with the commencement of installation works is planned in the week after 13th of April 2026.

Through this pilot investment, Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. once again confirms its strategic commitment to the development of sustainable energy solutions and the systematic integration of renewable energy sources in public buildings.

The project also represents the first demonstration example of shallow geothermal energy utilisation in public buildings in Medjimurje County. Following the successful completion of the investment, a study visit will be organised for interested stakeholders and project partners.

Updates on the progress of the investment will be regularly published on the official websites of Medjimurje Energy Agency Ltd. and Danube GeoHeCo project, as well as via social media channels.

Participation of Danube GeoHeCo Project Partners at the International Symposium „Energy 2026” – Energy for the Future



Photo by FEK

Representatives of the Danube GeoHeCo Project partners, Faculty of Engineering in Kragujevac, Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje, and Regional Development Agency Bačka participated in the 41st International Symposium “Energy 2026”, held from April 15 to 18, 2026, in Zlatibor, Serbia. This significant event gathered numerous experts in the field of energy from both the country and abroad, with the aim of exchanging knowledge, experiences, and modern solutions within the sector.

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to attend presentations and discussions on key topics such as energy transition, the development and implementation of renewable energy sources, sector digitalization, as well as the application of artificial intelligence in energy. Special emphasis was placed on strategic planning and the implementation of key national documents in the field of energy of the Republic of Serbia.

As part of a professional session held on April 16, 2026, the Transnational Action Plan – priorities and measures for Serbia, developed within the Danube GeoHeCo project, was presented. Session participants, including relevant stakeholders from academia, the business sector, and institutions, actively contributed through the exchange of views and discussion of the proposed measures.

Such events represent an important platform for enhancing cooperation and strengthening capacities in the field of sustainable development and energy efficiency. Participation in the “Energy 2026” symposium further contributed to positioning these organizations as active participants in energy transition processes and in the development of innovative approaches within the energy sector.

Follow the implementation process of the Danube GeoHeCo project through the project web site and related social media:

Project Danube GeoHeCo Web page:
<https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/danube-geoheco>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/danube-geoheco/>



<https://twitter.com/DanubeGeoHeCo>



www.youtube.com/@InterregDanubeGeoHeCo



The Danube GeoHeCo project is funded under the Interreg Programme for the Danube Region 2021-2027, with a total project value of 2,481,000.00 euros (co-financed by the European Union in the amount of 1,984,800.00 euros, or 80%). The project implementation period is from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026.