



# Co4Co – Connected for Cohesion project

*Launching event*

EU and Adriatic-Ionian Macro Region (EUSAIR) dimension

A photograph of the European Union flag, which is blue with twelve gold stars arranged in a circle. The flag is being held up by two hands, and it is waving in the wind. The background is a blurred green landscape with trees.

*South-East Europe Team Leader,  
REGIO D1, Gilles Kittel, 15 September  
2025, Tirana*

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The EUSAIR has a distinct value!

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EUSAIR Master Plan on Transport (EMPT) as an important enabling condition for cohesion policy and development in the Balkans

# 1 EUSAIR – A new EC Communication and a major revision of the action plan adopted on 7 May 2025



# EUSAIR – A new EC Communication and a major revision of the action plan

- **In 2014, more than 10 years ago, the European Commission adopted a Communication and the Action Plan on the Strategy.**
- Since then, no Revision has been done, this is a reason.
- But also:
  1. New challenges (Pact for Competition, War in Ukraine, Energy prices, Green Deal, Demographic shifts, etc.).
  2. Evolution of the governance structure and set-up of the EUSAIR Youth Council.
  3. Need to align the Action Plan with the new EU political priorities.

# Revised EUSAIR action plan

- Main areas of revision:
  - **Social Dimension in the EUSAIR:** A new 5th Pillar on 'Improved Social Cohesion' added in addition to the original four.
  - **A new structure with three horizontal and three cross-cutting topics:**
    - ❖ The three horizontal topics are: **enlargement; capacity building; and research, innovation and development.**
    - ❖ The three cross-cutting topics are: **circular economy, green rural development and digitalisation.**
  - **Other new cross-cutting topics:** skills, smart specialisation
  - **Adaptive multi-level governance** better enshrined in the partnership
  - Mainstreaming of **gender equality and youth involvement**

# Revised EUSAIR action plan

- Main areas of revision:

- A revised instrument:

- ❖ to achieve the **European Green Deal, the Digital Transition and the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas** in the region, beyond Member States
- ❖ to consider green rural development as a **cross-cutting issue**, that emphasises the importance and challenge of balancing the 'blue' and 'green' development of the wider region.
- ❖ to stimulate **Urban-Rural linkages**

-> **Continental (green) component under all five pillars to various degrees**, with emphasis on supporting local fisheries communities, sustainable energy production, mobility, environment and agricultural practices, and preventing brain drain

- **A new coherent system of indicators** with a common methodology

2

The EUSAIR has a distinct value!

# IPA Adrion & EUSAIR MRS facilitating the Enlargement process of the Western Balkans

- A regional dimension that reconnects the WB to the EU;
- A horizontal cooperation based on equal footing;
- A convergence of interests on the enlargement between EU member and IPA countries;
- A capacity building effect;
- An emphasis on the relevance of territorial cooperation and cohesion;
- An inclusive approach towards stakeholders with participatory processes (consultation, engagement and mobilisation).



3

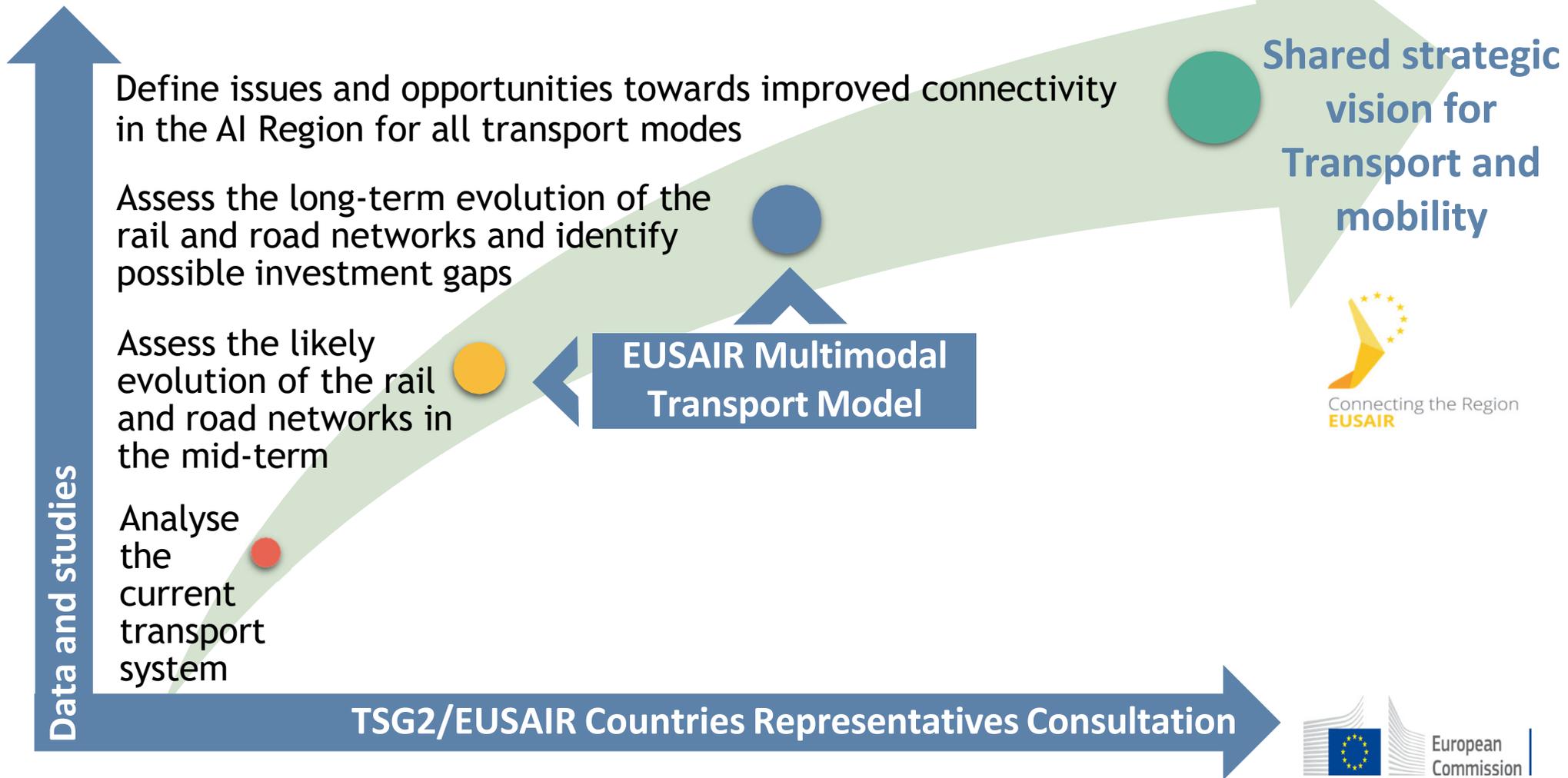
## EUSAIR Master Plan on Transport (EMPT) as an important enabling condition for cohesion policy and development in the Balkans



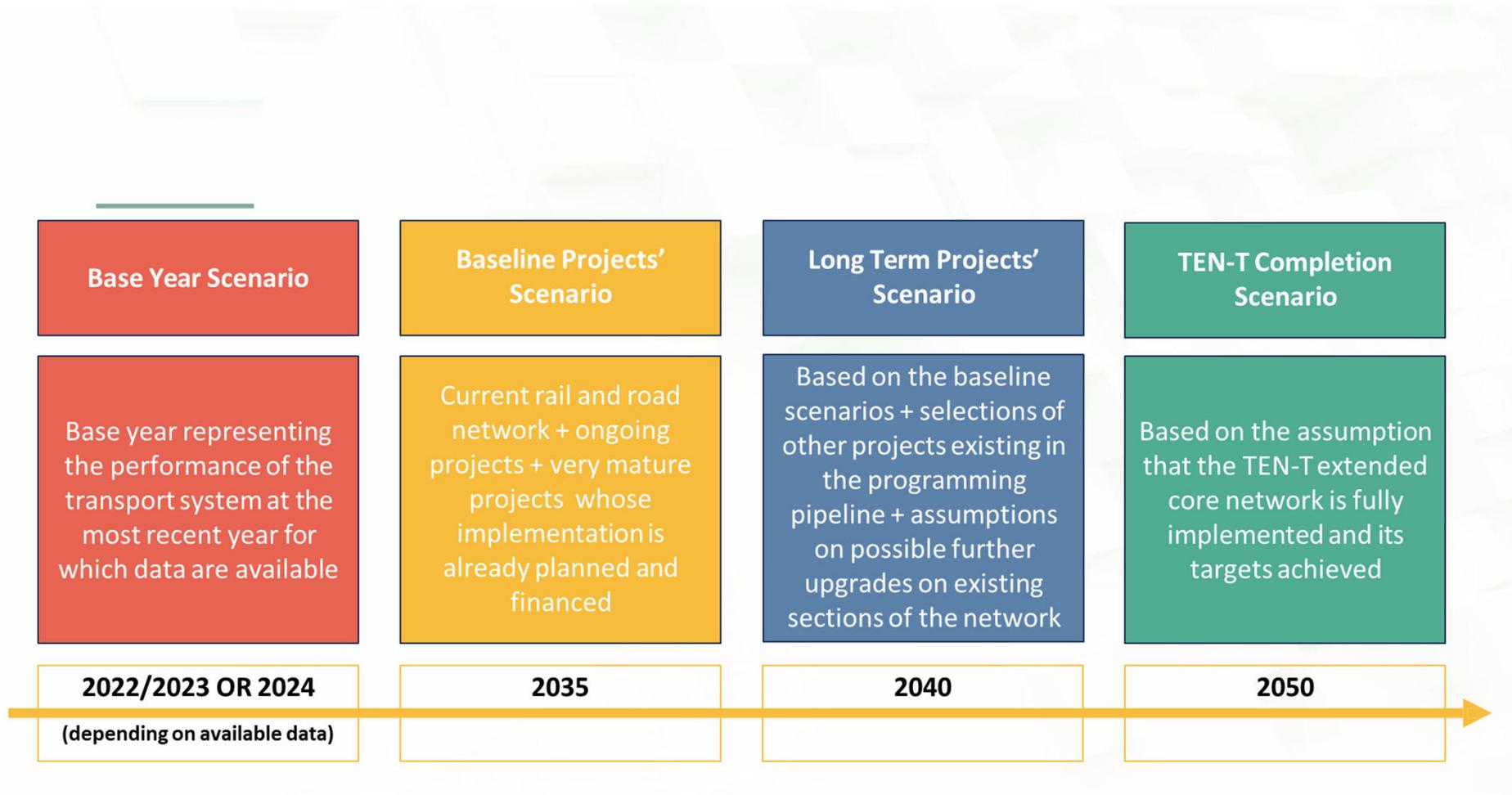
# EUSAIR Master Plan on Transport - Approach



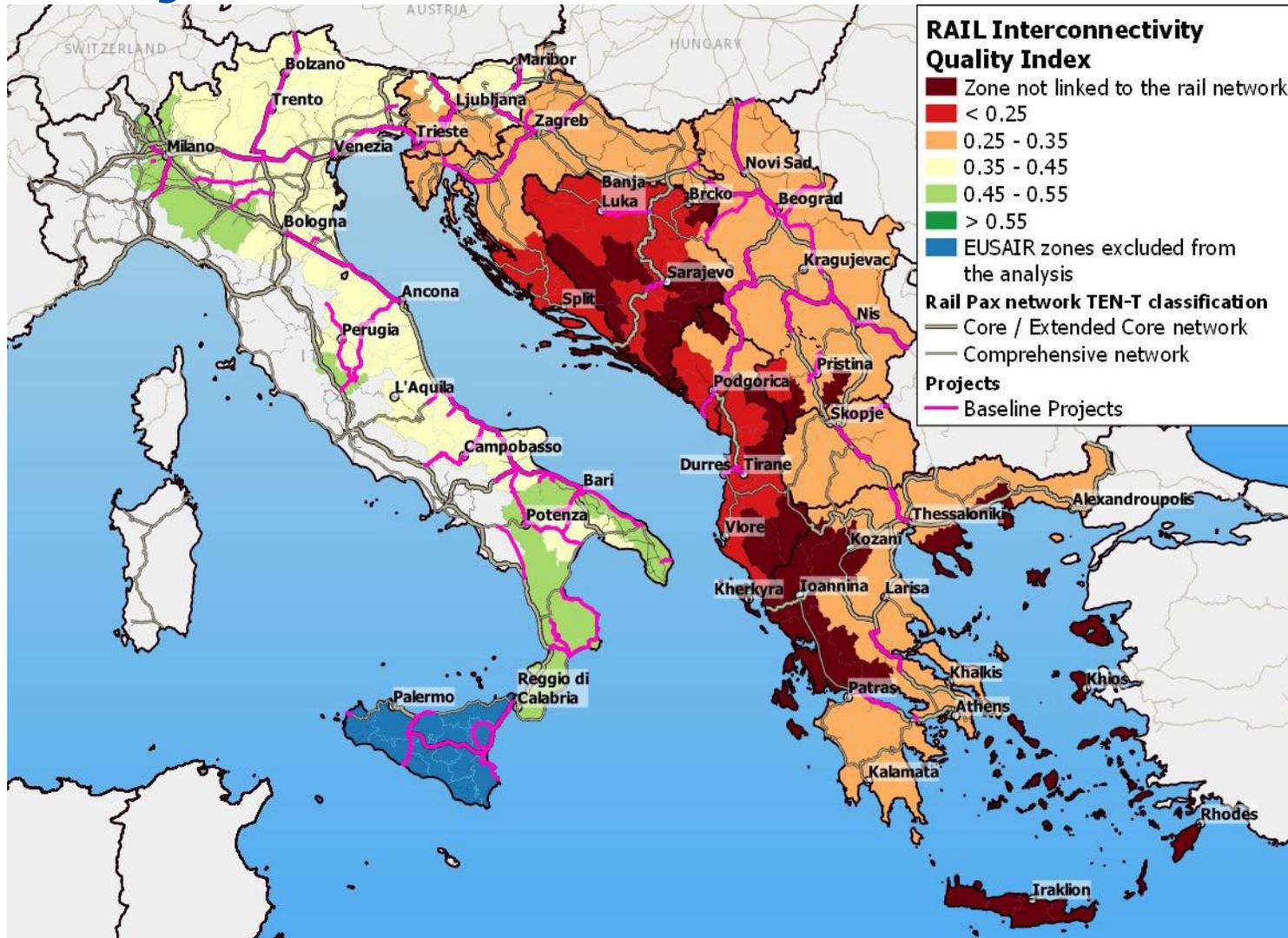
The EUSAIR Transport Masterplan aims to a **SHARED LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION** for transport and mobility in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. / Involvement of EUSAIR countries representatives and stakeholders



# Master Plan transport rail and road infrastructure scenarios (EMTM)



# Rail Connectivity Base Year + Representation of 103 Baseline Scenario Projects



Rail Interconnectivity Indexes are particularly low in Western Balkans, due to the poor conditions of the rail infrastructure and presence of areas not linked to the rail network.



# The European Transport Corridors (ETC)



## New Western Balkan Eastern Mediterranean (WBEM) Corridor

### Key railway infrastructure challenges:

- Gaps in electrification
- Slow ERTMS deployment
- Low commercial speeds
- Lack of maintenance

	Motorways	5 750 km
	Railways	5 853 km
	Seaports	21 locations
	Airports	14 locations
	Multimodal	13 locations
	Freight Terminals	
	Urban nodes	24 locations

# Exploring synergies with other initiatives

- Other EUSAIR governance projects:
  - **Stakeholders' Engagement Platform (StEP)** - EUSAIR Stakeholders Engagement Point (e.g. Updating the EMPT/EMTM knowledge base)
  - **Strategic Projects for EUSAIR (SP4EUSAIR)** - Support to Development and Implementation of Strategic Implementation Formats (e.g. Development of a multimodal and interoperable railway system in the AI Region)
- Cross-pillar initiatives:
  - **Cross-pillar projects** ongoing or planned for implementation to be eventually described in the Master Plan
- Other regional and EU initiatives:
  - Mutually exchange inputs and outputs with other organisations to ensure consistency and maximise **complementarity of studies and analyses** (TCT studies, etc).

Any Questions?



#ThisIsTheEU



#ThisistheEU

The EU is built  
on solidarity

# Thank you

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• Pictures, source: Unsplash

