

PRESS RELEASE

ELEVATE^{CEE} Project Officially Launches to Boost Hydrogen Innovation in Central Eastern Europe

Bratislava, 5 November 2025 – 16 partners from Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, and Belgium gathered in Bratislava today for the official launch of ELEVATE^{CEE}, a European project aimed at *Empowering Local and Cross Border Energy Value Chains and Advancing Technological Excellence in Central Eastern Europe*.

The project brings together national and regional stakeholders from the quadruple helix to develop complete hydrogen value chains, from energy generation and hydrogen production to transport, storage, and end-use applications. ELEVATE^{CEE} will particularly focus on hard-to-abate sectors, driving industrial modernisation across the CEE region and supporting EU climate goals.

Hosted by the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA), the Kick-Off Meeting featured a full day of presentations, strategic discussions, and collaboration sessions, providing an opportunity for partners to align on the next steps for implementing the project's ambitious objectives. **Over the next 18 months, the consortium will concentrate on identifying high-impact value chains, turning them into concrete investment projects, and ensuring active stakeholder engagement** through the organisation of conferences and the establishment of a cross-border investors panel.

“ELEVATE^{CEE} represents a unique opportunity to bring together diverse expertise from across Central Eastern Europe,” said Tajana Karasova, Team Leader at SIEA and Project Coordinator. “By fostering cross-border collaboration among all parts of the quadruple helix, we aim to unlock the full potential of hydrogen technologies and drive sustainable industrial transformation throughout the region.”

Beyond technical discussions, the Kick-Off provided the opportunity for partners to informally exchange ideas and strengthen connections during a networking lunch, setting the foundation for close cooperation in the coming months. The day concluded with a **wrap-up session**, summarising next steps across all Work Packages and reaffirming the consortium's shared commitment to the path forward.

The Kick-off marked a strong start to an exciting journey, driven by a diverse and highly motivated consortium ready to advance hydrogen innovation throughout the CEE region.



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List of the project partners:

Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA) – Slovakia was established as a state contribution organization by the decision of the Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic no. 63/1999 with effect from May 1, 1999. SIEA is acting as coordinator of the project as well as to encourage engagement of the Slovakian quadruple helix stakeholder in the project, hosting events and conferences. <https://www.siea.sk/>



SPP Distribucia – Slovakia is Slovakia's gas distribution system operator and future hydrogen grid operator that is crucial in the country's hydrogen economy. SPP D is a key industry stakeholder in Slovakia and will especially contribute to the mapping and identification of hydrogen and decarbonisation value chains. SPP-D will also be deeply involved in the development of the cross-border projects and be engaged in multiple project teams and potentially leading consortia related to hydrogen distribution grid value chains. SPP-D, together with Eustream will play a key role from the Slovakian side to accomplish the goals of the project. <https://www.spp-distribucia.sk/>



EUSTREAM A.S. – Slovakia is Slovakia's gas transport systems operator and future hydrogen grid operator and will play a key role in EU's and Slovakia's hydrogen economy. EUS will contribute to the mapping and identification of hydrogen and decarbonisation value chains and the development of the cross-border projects. EUS will be a key stakeholder in multiple project teams and potentially leading consortia related to transport grid value chains. Together with SPP-D, EUS will play a key role from the Slovakian side to accomplish goals of ELEVATE^{CEE}.

<https://www.eustream.sk/en/>



Technical University of Košice (TUKE) – Slovakia is the founder of the CVVT (Centrum výskumu vodíkových technológií - Hydrogen Technology Research Center) and is leading research in the field of hydrogen within Slovakia. TUKE will be a crucial partner in the skills development in Policy, Technology, Financing. TUKE will utilize its vast experiences with hydrogen related topics and state of the art knowledge to increase maturity of cooperations initiated during the project.

<https://www.tuke.sk/en>



Wasserstoffinitiative Vorzeigeregion Austria Power & Gas (WIVA P&G) – Austria is an association for the research and development in the fields of application, net and storage technologies for hydrogen and renewable gases. WIVA P&G is the coordinator of the Austrian engagement in the project and will



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lead the mapping and identification of value chains as well as coordinate and compile input to the overview from Austrian side. WIVA P&G will provide targeted project development project development support in active stakeholder collaboration, acting as main communication channel to the Austrian ecosystem of stakeholders. <https://www.wiva.at/>

Hydroeconomy Technology Cluster (HYETC) – Hungary focuses on advancing green hydrogen solutions for industrial applications throughout Central and Eastern Europe. HYETC will act as coordinator of the Hungarian engagement in the project and be the overall leader the project pipeline development providing targeted support in active stakeholder collaborations. HYETC will act as main communication channel to the Hungarian ecosystem of stakeholders. <https://www.hydrotechcluster.com/>



National Development and Funding Coordination Agency (NFFKÜ) – Hungary is a Hungarian semi-governmental institution managing public, sustainable energy funding schemes. NFFKÜ is acting in support to HYETC on national level in the project and contribute in the project pipeline development, especially in support to projects in Hungary to help accelerate the project consortia toward implementation, Individual Business Case development and Financial Concept Development. NFFKÜ will contribute the hungarian side to skills development in policy, technology and financing. NFFKÜ will also contribute to the overall communication and dissemination in regard to the production of media content, such as videos and podcasts for the project and act as a channel to the Hungarian ecosystem of stakeholders. <https://nffku.hu/>



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Győr-Moson-Sopron County Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GYMSMKIK) – Hungary serves as a representative body for businesses in Hungary's Győr-Moson-Sopron County. GYMSMKIK will provide input to the mapping and identifying potential value chains and actively engagement with the stakeholders from the region of Győr. <https://gymsmkik.hu/kezdolap>



Wien Energie GmbH – Austria is the largest regional energy provider in Austria and a subsidiary of the municipal utility company Wiener Stadtwerke. Wien Energie will contribute to the mapping and Identification of value Chains and will play a major role by leading and contribute to project developments. <https://www.wienenergie.at/>



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Energy institute at the Johannes Kepler University Linz (EI-JKU)

– Austria is involved in about 100 R&D projects per year to further develop an energy system that has a positive impact on living, economic and environmental spaces. EI-JKU will lead the work of skills development in policy, technology and financing in the project. EI-JKU will also contribute to the mapping and identification of value chains and contribute to and engage in the development of the project pipeline. <https://www.jku.at/>

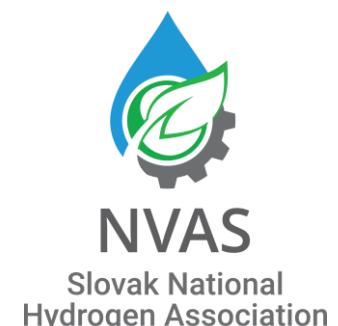


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Hödlmayr Hungária Logistics Kft. – Hungary specializes in the entire transportation supply chain - from receiving vehicles from the factory or port of entry to delivering them to the vehicle dealer or fleet owner. Hödlmayr will contribute by developing projects around mobility and logistics and will also contribute with input and evaluation of the results in the work package on skills development. <https://www.hoedlmayr.com/en/>



Slovak National Hydrogen Association (NVAS) – Slovakia was established in 2015 as a joint initiative of natural and legal persons with the aim of supporting research, development, and deployment of new technologies that actively use hydrogen and fuel cells. It contributes to the transformation of Slovak energy, industry and transport towards a low-carbon future. NVAS supports the organisation of events and conferences hosted in Slovakia as well as increasing the outreach to Slovak ecosystem of stakeholders. <https://nvas.sk/>



Nafta A.S.– Slovakia is the slovakian natural gas and future hydrogen storage system operator that will play a key role in the future hydrogen ecosystem. Nafta is associated partner to the project and are committed to contribute to development of the mapping of and identification of hydrogen and decarbonisation value chains and project development. <https://www.nafta.sk/en>



Košice Self-Governing Region in the Slovak Republic (KSK) – Slovakia is the coordinator of the EASTGATE Hydrogen Valley and is associated partner to the project participant in the investors panel. KSK will act as multiplicator and channel to reach the public and stakeholders in the region and explore new possibilities of the EASTGATE Hydrogen Valley. <https://www.kosickazupa.sk/>



HUN-REN Centre for Energy Research (HUN-REN EK) – Hungary carries out basic, applied, and developmental scientific research of international standards in the fields of nuclear energy, functional materials and nano systems, environmental protection, energy efficiency, and energy security. HUN-REN EK contributes to the implementation of topics addressed in the work package on skills



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development in policy, technology, and financing by virtue of its research community and state of science. <https://www.ek.hun-ren.hu/en/home/>

European Research Institute for Gas and Energy Innovation (ERIG) – Belgium is an international non-profit association promoting gas in Europe's energy transition alongside renewables. ERIG will support SIEA for the organisation and administration of the project and act as work package leader for communication and dissemination in collaboration with NFFÜK and manage the stakeholder engagement. <https://erig.eu/>



The Austrian Association for the Gas and Water Industry (ÖVGW) – Austria is an independent interest group and was founded as an association in 1881. The association is not profit-oriented and represents the interests of its members - these can be natural gas network operators, control area managers or water supply companies. ÖVGW is associated partner to the project and will act as multiplicator and channel to the gas and water grid operators and the gas appliance industry in Austria. ÖVGW will contribute to the skills development in regard to regulation and standards aspects and mapping activities. <https://www.ovgw.at/>



Hydrogen Partnership Austria (HYPA) – Austria acts to support the ramp-up of an Austrian hydrogen economy. The joint platform will ensure a continuous exchange between companies, researchers, administration and civil society, facilitate their networking, offer an international showcase and an overview of funding opportunities, and communicate on current developments in the field of hydrogen. They are a supporting partner to the project and will act as a multiplicator and channel to reach the Austrian hydrogen ecosystem and encourage stakeholder engagement. HYPA will be directly engaged in skills development in policy, technology and financing as well as contribute to the mapping and identification of value chains and support the project developments. <https://www.hypa.at/en/>



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For more information, please visit elevatecee.eu

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*The EU-funded project **ELEVATE^{CEE}** (**Empowering Local and Cross Border Energy Value Chains and Advancing Technological Excellence in Central Eastern Europe**) brings together stakeholders from Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary to develop full hydrogen value chains – from energy generation and hydrogen production to transport, storage, and end-use applications – focusing on hard-to-abate sectors. By connecting certain regions in these countries and engaging national stakeholders, local industries, SMEs, communities, and public authorities, the project aims to build a cross-border innovation ecosystem that accelerates industrial modernization and supports the achievement of EU climate goals. The objective of the project is to build a resilient, interregional innovation ecosystem in the Slovakia-Austria-Hungary border region, develop a pipeline of investment-ready projects and foster cross-border business creation.*



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