



BDT COMMUNIQUÉ

Regional priorities to advance digital transformation discussed at the Regional Development Forum for Europe

Timisoara, 23 May 2023

The annual ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe (RDF-EUR), held from 22-23 May 2023 in Timisoara, Romania, welcomed over 200 participants from 40 countries, to discuss priority development issues for the region, identify avenues to scale-up implementation of the [ITU Regional initiatives for Europe](#).

The Forum enabled the exchange of views between among decision-makers of ITU Member States and Sector Members, including telecommunication/ICT policymakers, regulators, industry, academia, as well as regional and international development agencies, representatives of the UN system and other stakeholders in Europe.

“The Regional Development Forums are important platforms to strengthen cooperation and partnership among key regional stakeholders to advance digital development,” said Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU’s Development Bureau. “The discussions held at the Regional Development Forum for Europe helped align Partner2Connect pledges with specific national and regional telecommunication and ICT needs aimed at propelling regional digital transformation.”

For the first time, the Development Forum featured the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtable aimed at matchmaking between partner pledges and country/regional needs and priorities. A series of Regional Development Forums, incorporating Partner2Connect Roundtables, will be held throughout 2023 in the remaining 5 ITU regions.

“It is encouraging therefore that the Roundtable was successful in building bridges between the challenges faced by countries in the region and solutions presented by multi stakeholders,” said Dr Zavazava.

Ahead of the Forum, ITU Member States, Sector Members and other stakeholders were invited to reflect on the strategic needs of the region for 2023 – 2024 and share their commitments towards concrete actions to advance meaningful connectivity.

Over 100 written contributions were discussed and considered, forging several multi-stakeholders’ partnerships. They were presented at the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtable where challenges met solutions to translate commitments into tangible actions to advance meaningful connectivity in the region.

The Forum was organized by ITU in close collaboration with the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunication Administrations (CEPT) and hosted by the National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications (ANCOM), Romania.

“Only seven months have passed since the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference concluded here in Romania, resolving universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation challenges and setting new strategic goals for the Union” said H.E. Bogdan Dumea, Secretary of State, Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization of Romania and Chair of the Regional Development Forum for Europe. “I am pleased to see how fast the power of partnerships is effectively put at the forefront to address the expectations of Member States and accelerate digital development across the Europe and beyond”.

The Forum reported on the outcomes and implementation of the Kigali Action Plan and the related Regional Initiatives for Europe, adopted by the [ITU Telecommunication Development Conference \(WTDC\)](#) held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2022. The Regional Initiatives for Europe cover the needs of the region in digital infrastructure, digital transformation, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and digital innovation areas.

The Forum gave stakeholders an opportunity to discuss implementation plans, announce financial and in-kind commitments towards ongoing and future work, and exchange experiences and good practices. It also gave participants an opportunity to discuss ITU's role in the UN system and its contribution at regional and country level to foster digital development.

“There is no doubt that this edition of the ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe was a real demonstration of stakeholders’ commitment towards the implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives” said Jaroslaw Ponder, Head of the ITU Office for Europe. “I am confident that the outcomes will help us translate political ambitions into concrete actions at the national and regional level.”

The Forum concluded with the adoption of a set of commitments that will contribute to the overall implementation of the Kigali Action Plan.

New partnerships and announcements

The Regional Development Forum provided an opportunity for special announcements:

- A joint declaration between ITU and Western Balkans Cyber Capacity Centre (WB3C) on collaboration on [Cybersecurity Capacity Building and Gender Inclusion in Cybersecurity in the Western Balkans](#) was signed with the Government of Slovenia, also representing the Governments of France and Montenegro.
- A [new partnership with 5G Techritory](#) was announced to strengthen joint work on 5G technologies, further advance of 5G implementation in Europe, and share good practices on 5G implementation across the world.
- The regional implementation of the new [EU funded project on Universal Meaningful Connectivity](#) was officially kicked-off for Europe.

Resources and background information:

- [RDF-EUR website](#)
- [RDF-EUR photos](#)
- [RDF-EUR highlights video](#)

Discover what others are saying on social media and join the conversation by searching and posting with the hashtag #ITURDF

For questions, please contact:

ITU Office for Europe

Phone: +41 22 730 5111

E-mail: eurregion@itu.int

About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), driving innovation in ICTs together with 193 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations. Established over 150 years ago, ITU is the intergovernmental body responsible for coordinating the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promoting international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, improving communication infrastructure in the developing world, and establishing the worldwide standards that foster seamless interconnection of a vast range of communications systems. From broadband networks to cutting-edge wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, oceanographic and satellite-based earth monitoring as well as converging fixed-mobile phone, Internet and broadcasting technologies, ITU is committed to connecting the world. For more information, visit: www.itu.int