

**Driving
change
for better
cities**

Call for Action Networks

General presentation & how
to build a strong partnership
1 April 2026



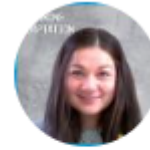
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Overview

1. **URBACT in a nutshell**
2. **What is an Action Network?**
3. **Features and eligibility criteria**
4. **Budget & expertise**
5. **How to build a strong partnership?**
6. **Next steps to apply & infosessions**



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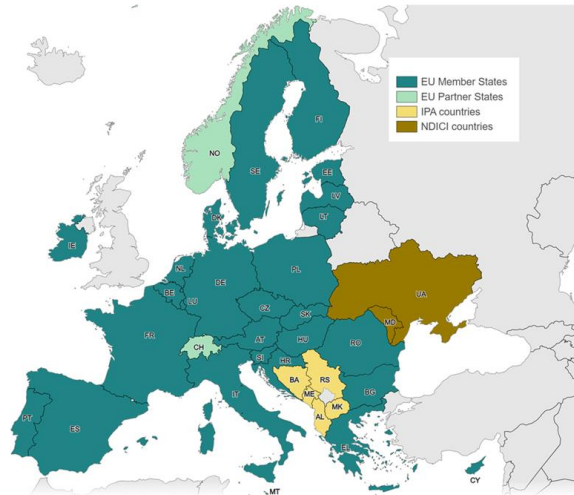
Three main activities

Networks of European cities

Capacity building activities & tools



Programme Area



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Cartographie: Eurostat – IMAGE, 07/2024

Knowledge uptake and sharing



Currently 525 cities involved in 65 networks

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What is an Action Network



WHAT IS AN ACTION NETWORK?

URBACT Action Networks support cities with **strategies on a specific topic to implement actions.**

WHY APPLY TO AN ACTION NETWORK?

- To **build on an existing strategy or policy** framework.
- To take part in **transnational exchange** throughout the network lifecycle.
- To use **co-creation through a participatory approach** with the URBACT Local Groups.
- To refine, **implement** and monitor **concrete actions**.
- To benefit from **visibility & communication activities** at EU and national levels.

- ✓ **Benefit from the support of URBACT experts**
- ✓ **Benefit from the involvement of local stakeholders**
- ✓ **Enjoy a safe space for experimentation**

ACTIONS WITHIN URBACT ACTION NETWORKS

Piloting new services or policy tools:

- Piloting a digital platform for citizen reporting or neighbourhood problem-solving.
- Trialling a temporary mobility service, such as shared cargo bikes for local deliveries.



Piloting new governance or coordination mechanisms:

- Creating a cross-departmental task force within the municipality to coordinate climate adaptation measures.
- Trying new participatory governance formats, such as neighbourhood assemblies or co-design workshops with citizens.

ACTIONS WITHIN URBACT ACTION NETWORKS

Temporary urban interventions and tactical actions:

- Piloting temporary public space uses (pop-up parks, cultural activities or community spaces).



Community engagement and co-creation initiatives:

- Piloting new participatory budgeting mechanisms for small local projects.
- Organising citizen labs or urban living labs to explore innovative solutions.

ACTIONS WITHIN URBACT ACTION NETWORKS

Capacity-building and organisational change:

- Developing and testing new monitoring tools or policy indicators for a city strategy.
- Piloting training programmes for municipal staff on integrated policy delivery.
- Piloting new procurement approaches that support social or environmental objectives.



Piloting the transfer or adaptation of practices from other cities:

- Replicating a local food governance model or urban agriculture initiative.

ACTION NETWORK: 30-MONTH 3-STAGE JOURNEY



- Activation**
 - Contracting & onboarding (First 3 months)
 - Set up of URBACT Local Groups
 - Baseline Study and Network Roadmap
- Develop & Deliver**
 - Development, implementation and monitoring of concrete actions
 - Organization of Actions Labs to mobilise stakeholders to co-design and co-implement actions
 - Support learning with transnational exchange - comparison of implementation approaches, common barriers, action adaptations, resources, longer-term urban transformation etc.
- Finale**
 - Sharing results and future prospects
 - Project closure

• Network Communication Plan • Network Journals, Articles • Actions Playbook

TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL



+ customised E&L activities (in-person / on-line)

Budget Validation for Actions

CITY LEVEL



PROGRAMME SUPPORT Network experts URBACT (University) 8/2027 URBACT Toolbox Digital Gender Green URBACT KNOWLEDGE HUB Co-funded by the European Union Interreg



11/2026

7 months

6/2027

Activation

- **Contracting & onboarding** (First 3 months)
- **Set up of URBACT Local Groups**
- **Baseline Study and Network Roadmap**
- **Deve**
- **Orga**
- **Supp**
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CITY LEVEL

Action Portfolio - Step 1:
Strategic Anchor & Action Scope



Activation



6/2027

20 months

1/2029

Develop & Deliver

- **Development, implementation and monitoring of concrete actions**
- **Organization of Actions Labs to mobilise stakeholders to co-design and co-implement actions**
- **Support learning with transnational exchange** - comparison of implementation approaches, common barriers, action adaptations, resources, longer-term urban transformation etc.

Plan

• Network Journals, Articles



Budget
Validation
for Actions

Action Portfolio - Step 2:
Action Implementation



Action Portfolio
Evidence of

Develop & Deliver



1/2029

3 months

4/2029

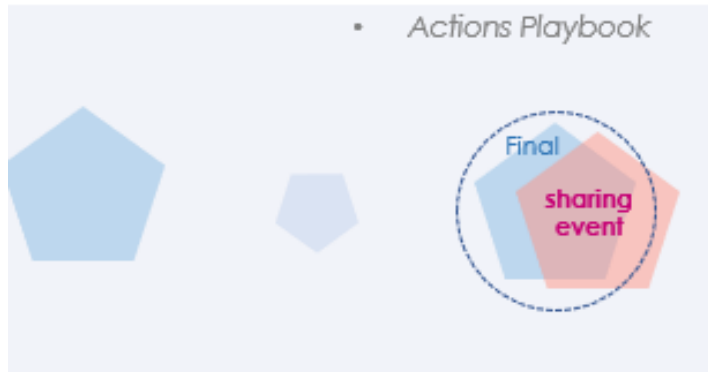


Finale

ent actions

proaches,
etc.

- **Sharing results and future prospects**
- **Project closure**



Finale

Action Portfolio - Step 3:
Evidence of Change & Outlook



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NETWORK DELIVERABLES

Network level

- A Network roadmap (Baseline study)
- A Communication Plan
- Transnational Network meetings (5)
- Network Journals (3)
- Network Articles (3)
- Final Network Output: Actions Playbook

Local level

- A URBACT Local group
- Action Portfolio
- Actions implemented

+ Additional customised set of Exchange & Learning and Communication activities to be decided by the partnership

NOVELTIES OF THE CALL

❖ New type of networks!

Implementation of actions/not
planning or transferring.



❖ Higher budget!

(EUR 1 000 000) from which half
for actions on partner level.



❖ No geographical balance!

Amongst less-more developed

or transition regions.

Questions?



Features and eligibility criteria



Apply to the URBACT call for Action Networks!

Open: 17 March 2026

Closed: 17 June 2026 at 15:00 CET

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CALL FOR ACTION NETWORKS – MAIN FEATURES

Network composition

Cities from the **European Union**, **Norway**, **Switzerland**, **Albania**, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, **Montenegro**, **North Macedonia**, **Serbia**, **Moldova**, **Ukraine**

6-8 partners
(including Lead Partner)



Start of
network activity

1 November 2026

30 April 2029

End of
network activity



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ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES

« CITIES » :

- **Cities, municipalities, towns** (*as defined by national rules*)
- **Local agencies defined as public or semi-public organisations** set up by a city
- **Infra-municipal tiers of government** such as city districts and boroughs
- **Metropolitan authorities** and **organised agglomerations**

No limitations in terms of size and population

« NON - CITIES » :

- **Universities and research centres**
- **Provincial/ Regional authorities**
- **Managing Authorities (EU Cohesion and solidarity funds)**

Institutions from:

1. **27 EU Members States**
2. **Partner States** (Switzerland and Norway)
3. **IPA countries** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia)
4. **NDICI countries** (Ukraine and Moldova)

In case you have a doubt about a potential partner's eligibility

→ **Contact an@urbact.eu**

→ **Assessed by the national authorities**

[PARTNERSHIP - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ **Between 6 and 8 partners;**
- ✓ **A city can be a candidate Lead Partner of one Action Network proposal only** (but can be additionally a Project Partner in another network);
- ✓ **A beneficiary can be a partner in max. 2 approved networks;**
- ✓ **A partnership cannot include more than one partner from the same country;**
- ✓ **1 “non-city partner”** allowed per network;
- ✓ **At least half of the partners must come from EU Member States;**
- ✓ A partnership may include a **maximum of 1 partner from IPA and NDICI countries.**

>>> **It is recommended to build a diverse partnership**

>>> **It is also encouraged to include in the partnership, cities which are newcomers to URBACT**

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PARTNERSHIP ELIGIBILITY QUIZ

No 1	No 2	No 3
Veszprém, Hungary	Veszprém, Hungary	Veszprém, Hungary
Bologna, Italy	Bologna, Italy	Bologna, Italy
Gdansk, Poland	Gdansk, Poland	Gdansk, Poland
Podilsk, Ukraine	Podilsk, Ukraine	Podilsk, Ukraine
Oslo, Norway	Oslo, Norway	Oslo, Norway
Montreux, Switzerland	Montreux, Switzerland	Montreux, Switzerland
	Tetovo, North Macedonia	University of Milano, Italy



PARTNERSHIP ELIGIBILITY QUIZ

No 4	No 5	No 6
Veszprém, Hungary	Veszprém, Hungary	Veszprém, Hungary
Bologna, Italy	Bologna, Italy	Bologna, Italy
Gdansk, Poland	Gdansk, Poland	Gdansk, Poland
Podilsk, Ukraine	Tartu Development Association, Estonia	Podilsk, Ukraine
Oslo, Norway	Oslo, Norway	Oslo, Norway
Montreux, Switzerland	Montreux, Switzerland	
Kosice, Slovakia	Tetovo, North Macedonia	
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia	University of Ljubljana, Slovenia	



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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA *(as set out in the Terms of Reference)*

- Eligible partnership as mentioned above.
- The application package is submitted in English, respecting the procedure outlined in the Terms of Reference and within the notified deadline.
- The application package is complete including the required documents set out in the Terms of Reference.
- The proposal is complete in terms of information and data required in the documents (Application Form and letters of commitment from partners have been properly filled in and signed, are correctly completed; and all letters use the official templates according to the instructions).

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA *(as set out in the Terms of Reference)*

An URBACT External Assessment Panel (EAP) reviews and scores the applications against the following **criteria**:

- Relevance of the policy issue addressed (20%)
- Proposal to address URBACT cross-cutting objectives (gender equality, green transition and digital transition) (10%)
- Quality of the partnership (30%)
- Quality of the proposed methodology and activities (20%)
- Quality of the proposed network management (10%)
- Quality of the proposed budget (10%)



Questions?



Budget & Expertise

FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE NETWORK

Network Budget: EUR1 000 000

(total incl. local co-financing)

Costs covered:

- staff costs
 - admin costs
 - travel & accommodation
 - external expertise
 - equipment
- Subsidy + local contributions
 - To be divided among all partners

Expertise: EUR 127 500

- 170 days in total to support the network
- Support by a Lead Expert for 30 months
- Support by Ad hoc experts on any relevant subject
- Managed directly by the Joint Secretariat

→ Lead partners should foresee 2 full-time equivalent posts for the overall management & coordination / Partners – 1 full-time equivalent

BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS

- **50% of the overall budget** dedicated to the implementation of actions.
- **Mix of budget lines:** staff, external expertise and equipment.
- **Estimation of cost for each action** to be indicated.
- Actions' budget **refined during the Activation stage**.
- **2 options** for the reimbursement of costs: **real costs or simplified cost option** (Draft Budgets).
- At the end of Activation stage the **budget for local actions will be validated** for each network.
- **Budget changes** after validation should be kept **within 20% limit**.

CO-FINANCING RATES

Region type	Co-financing rate
Partners from EU « more developed regions »	Up to 65% by ERDF
Partners from EU « transition regions »	Up to 70% by ERDF
Partners from EU « less developed regions »	Up to 80% by ERDF
Partners from Norway	Up to 50% by Norwegian national funds
Partners from Switzerland	Up to 50% by a Swiss national fund
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia	Up to 95% by IPA Funds
Moldova, Ukraine	Up to 95% by NDICI Funds

EXPERTISE SUPPORT

Additional envelope of 127 500€ for expertise support
> Up to 170 expertise days available

- **Network Lead expert supports** the network over the entire duration of the network (130 days)
- **Several network Ad-Hoc Experts providing specific support** on a particular policy subject, methodology, communications... (40 days)
- **Experts are selected from the URBACT IV pool of validated experts** available on URBACT website in the upcoming months



LEAD EXPERT SELECTION

1. **Expertise needs and criteria for the selection of network experts shall be provided in the application form** based on URBACT expertise framework outlined in the ToR and Guide
2. **After the approval of Action Networks, experts validated in the URBACT pool** will be invited to express their interest in becoming Lead Expert of an AN
3. **URBACT Secretariat will check suitability** in coherence with the Application Form
4. **Final selection agreed with the Lead partner based on interviews with candidates**





Questions?



How to build a strong partnership?

How to find partners – the [URBACT Partner Search Tool](#)

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Country



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Partner Search Tool

<https://urbact.eu/partnersearchtool>

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Identifying the right partners

- ✓ Policy challenge relevant?
- ✓ Shared understanding of the policy challenge?
- ✓ Commitment to tackling the policy challenge?
- ✓ Commitment to develop and deliver actions?
- ✓ Sufficient resources for their network activities?
- ✓ Proposed partnership is eligible?



[Relevance of partners

- ✓ **The challenge addressed must be a priority for all network partners.**
- ✓ The **experiences of all network partners** are relevant and will contribute to the learning process of the whole partnership. Each partner city will contribute to the transnational exchange and learning activities with their own experiences and knowledge. These will be different for each partner depending on the local context, previous experiences.
- ✓ For certain topics the **size and positioning of the city** could be important comparable elements for the coherence check of partners' local situations i.e. maritime cities working on maritime issues.
- ✓ There is a clear understanding of the **added value** an involvement in an URBACT network will bring to the partner in relation to respective capacity building needs.

→ Simple questionnaire template is provided in the Guide for assessing the relevance of the partners

SEVEN tips for Building a “Great” partnership

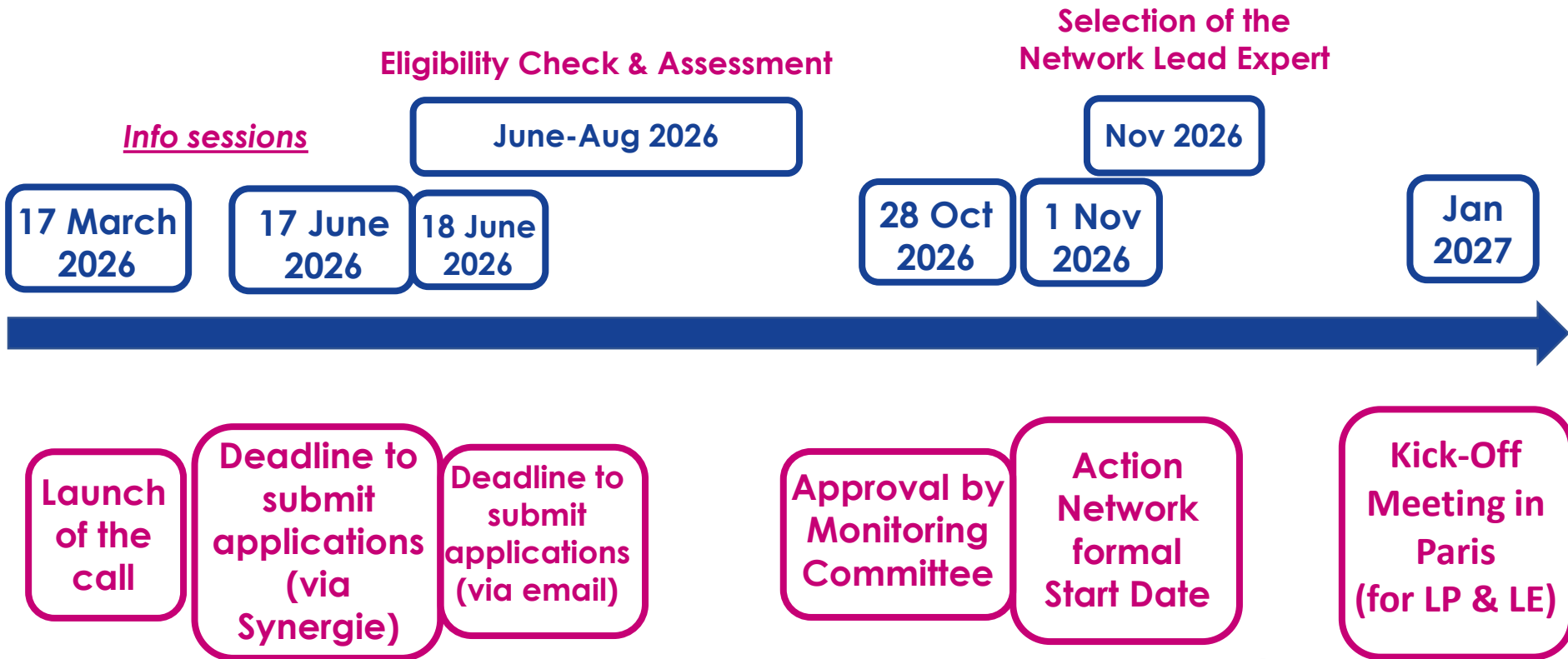
- ❖ There is no such thing as a perfect size (population-wise)
- ❖ Ensuring the (geographical) balance of partnership
- ❖ Welcome newcomers
- ❖ Be demanding, test the commitment
- ❖ Beware of the “sleeping partners”
- ❖ Be smart – connect!
- ❖ The best tip to avoid mistakes





Next Steps/ What to do now?

CALL FOR ACTION NETWORKS TIMELINE



WHERE TO START WITH THE APPLICATION?

Main resources:

- ✓ Terms of Reference
- ✓ Guide for applicants
- ✓ Application Form and SYNERGIE-CTE Practical Guide
- ✓ FAQ
- ✓ Infographic of the call in EN and other languages
- ✓ Programme Manual

All available at: urbact.eu/get-involved



SUBMISSION PROCEDURE (Lead partner's responsibility)

2 steps required to submit your application:

1 - Online submission of the application form through the SYNERGIE-CTE system in English **by 17 June 2026 at 15:00 CET**

- *information on the SYNERGIE system outlined in the Guide to SYNERGIE (available soon on urbact.eu/get-involved)*

2 - Send the application package by email to an@urbact.eu by

18 June 2026 at 15:00 CET

- *including scan of the signed PDF of the application generated through SYNERGIE-CTE, signed letters of commitment and all additional requested documents*

[STATE AID RULES

- Applicants responding to the call for Action Networks must undergo an assessment to determine whether their proposed activities involve a potential risk of State aid.
- **Partners** that are part of network application forms **have to respond (individually) to an EU survey regarding the state aid** issues available at this [link](#) before by 17 June 2026 - 15.00 CEST.
- Specific State aid guidance for applicants is available at the call link.
- This declaration on state aid is analysed by the Managing Authority/URBACT Joint Secretariat in parallel with the project assessment.

SOME HINTS AND TIPS

- Go carefully through the **application form outline** document and the **eligibility** & **assessment criteria** in the **Terms of Reference**
- Check all the aspects for building a **successful proposal** set out in **the Guide**
- Consult FAQ at urbact.eu/get-involved
- Cannot find what you are looking for? Contact an@urbact.eu



Questions?



Next infossessions

JOIN [U]S FOR THE NEXT ONLINE & NATIONAL INFO SESSIONS!

- **12 May 2026 - 10:00-11:00 CET: Exchange and learning during the network journey**
- **27 May 2026 - 10:00-11:00 CET: Time to submit your application: tech & troubleshooting (for candidate Lead Partners)**
- **29 May 2026 – 10.00-11.30 CTE: How to write good applications using storytelling techniques**
- **9 June 2026 - 10:00-11:00 CET: Final troubleshooting (for candidate Lead Partners)**

Details: urbact.eu/get-involved

Contact: an@urbact.eu

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- **Austria:** [25 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **Belgium:** 16 April 2026, info session in Brussels, more information [in French](#) and [in Flemish](#)
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia:** 7 April 2026, online info session, more information will follow
- **Croatia:** [7 April 2026, online info session](#)
- **Czechia:** online info sessions on [24 March 2026](#) and [15 April 2026, in-person info session in Ústí nad Labem on 22-23 April 2026](#)
- **Denmark:** [14 April 2026, online info session](#)
- **Estonia:** [24 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **Finland:** [26 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **France and Luxembourg:** [26 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **Germany:** online info sessions on [23 March 2026](#) and [28 April 2026](#)
- **Hungary:** [14 April 2026, online info session](#)
- **Ireland:** [25 March 2026, info session in Dublin](#)
- **Italy:** info session on 8 April 2026, more information will follow
- **Latvia:** [16 April 2026, online info session](#)
- **Lithuania:** 27 March 2026, online info session, more information will follow

- **Moldova:** [26 March 2026, info session in a hybrid format - in Chisinau and online](#)
- **Montenegro:** [27 March 2026, info session in Podgorica](#)
- **Netherlands:** [online info session on 7 April 2026](#)
- **Poland:** [17 March 2026, info session in Warsaw](#)
- **Portugal:** [21 April 2026, info session in Lisbon](#)
- **Romania:** [26 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **Slovakia:** [online info session on 24 March 2026](#) and on 21 April 2026
- **Slovenia:** [8 April 2026, info session in Ormož](#)
- **Spain:** [24 March 2026, online info session](#)
- **Sweden:** online info sessions on [13 March 2026](#) and [27 April 2026](#)
- **Ukraine:** online info session on 16 April 2026, more information will follow

JOIN YOUR NATIONAL INFO SESSION!

Find out info days in your country on:
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