

## **Plenary Keynote: Goran Krajačić**

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### **Opportunities for increasing energy efficiency and decarbonisation of heating in the Eastern and Southeastern Europe**

#### **Abstract**

Energy efficiency in the building sector has been constantly increasing in the Southeast and Eastern Europe region. However, the rates of renovation and initial conditions were relatively low. This, combined with financial barriers and subsidized energy, resulted in a lower impact than expected. Despite the presence of numerous district heating systems in the region, heavily subsidized fossil fuels hindered necessary investments, efficiency improvements, and fuel switching. Furthermore, the expansion of district heating was often impeded by influential lobbying from the fossil gas industry.

Given the European Union's objective of achieving a net-zero scenario by 2050 and complete decarbonization, now is the opportune time to tap into the vast potential for increasing energy efficiency and integrating renewables into the heating sector and buildings. The current geopolitical situation, specifically the war in Ukraine, has raised awareness among many people about the importance of ensuring security of energy supply. Therefore, it is crucial to advocate for solutions that promote the highest efficiency and utilize locally available renewable energy.

This presentation will provide a brief overview of the situation in the region, highlighting the opportunities for future improvements.