



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

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**Address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar
at the plenary session of the 8th Three Seas Initiative Summit**

Bucharest, 6 September 2023

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*Mr President,
Esteemed colleagues,
And a special welcome to partner countries and representatives of international
organisations and financial corporations,*

*I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the representatives of
countries that did not hesitate to aid Slovenia in August, when it was hit by devastating
floods that cut off villages and destroyed roads, houses and infrastructure. You helped
us build physical bridges, but your help for the affected people also strengthened the
bridges of friendship among us.*

*You proved that solidarity is not an empty word. Solidarity connects the countries of
this region. Together, we can do more and build faster and more effectively. Thank you
all.*

*Solidarity, gratitude and help were the words of this summer in Slovenia, as well as
bridges. If never before, now we saw how everything stops when bridges and
transmission lines fall down. How important is the connectivity of villages and towns,
let alone the connectivity of countries. Our countries are connected through
cooperation within the EU, cooperation at the regional level and cooperation in nature
conservation. They are connected by people and they are connected in terms of
energy and infrastructure. More than that.*

*The strategic infrastructure connectivity of Member States is vital for the economic
efficiency of our countries. A better infrastructure connectivity is also the answer to the
challenges brought on by the altered geopolitical reality following Russia's attack on
Ukraine. In light of this, I wish to extend a special welcome to Greece as a new full
member of the Three Seas Initiative.*

Slovenia also welcomes Moldova's request for deeper involvement in the activities of the Three Seas Initiative, and for all their hard work in reform processes on their path to joining the EU.

We must also not overlook the Western Balkan countries. They are moving towards the European Union, and this process must include reforms, as well as the improvement of road, railway, energy, digital and other forms of connectivity among the citizens and political leaders.

Slovenia joined the initiative in 2015 to close the infrastructure gap between the 3SI region and Western European countries by investing in the modernisation of existing and the construction of new transport, energy and digital infrastructure in the region, especially on the North–South axis.

In addition to air, water and land transport connections, the future of young generations is inextricably linked with innovations and the digital transformation.

Central and South-Eastern Europe has great potential for economic development and digital breakthrough, and I welcome the exchange of good practices in the region, which will benefit all Three Seas Initiative countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the representatives of financial institutions and invited countries that recognise the potential of investing in the region of the Three Seas Initiative. One of the initiative's key moments was the establishment of the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund (3SIIF), to which Member States pledged contributions. However, there seems to be much room for a more ambitious involvement of international financial institutions and private investors.

Allow me to end my brief address by congratulating Romania for its excellent preparation and organisation of this year's summit.

I wish many creative and realisable ideas to all the participants in the Business Forum. The discussion topics are the topics of our time: the green transition in the light of climate change, digitalisation, and the challenges brought on by the war at the edge of Europe that has shocked Europe and the world. I wish you the most creative debates that will bring solutions for a sustainable management of nature and natural resources and for a better connectivity of people and countries.

Thank you.