

# inter act



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winter 2014/2015

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## feature interview

### commissioner corina crețu

04 "I will give concrete examples to illustrate our policy wherever I go"



## INTERACT services 2015

### at a glance

06 2015: boost your everyday work with INTERACT!

### tools

- 12 HIT tools: bound to be a hit!
- 14 eMS – a monitoring system tailored to the needs of interreg cooperation programmes, projects and partners all over europe!
- 16 KEEP in touch with territorial cooperation programmes, projects and partners all over europe!

### studies

- 09 capacity and competence to work across programmes?
- 10 reaping the benefits of cooperation

### communication initiatives

- 18 european cooperation day 2014: highlights and figures
- 20 spreading the use of the interreg brand
- 20 coming up in 2015: communication toolkit!



## cooperation simplified

### EU regulations made easier

- 21 designation procedure for interreg programmes – a good start is half the job done
- 22 are "delegated and implementing acts" unclear and complex procedures? not really!

### overview of new cooperation tools

- 24 a fresh look at our territories, not seeking new ones, but having new eyes

### new cooperation tools in practice

- 26 EGTC GO goes for an "integrated territorial investment" for the interreg italy-slovenia programme!



## meeting point

### MEPs talk Interreg

29 mercedes bresso

### meet the team

30

### event highlights

31

## editorial



Credit: INTERACT

Laura Belenguer  
INTERACT, Valencia

With a new year underway, Interreg, like the European Union, finds itself at a crossroads between two different periods. This challenging moment entails new opportunities for all. For Interreg: to demonstrate what has been achieved in the past and its potential for 2014-20. For the EU institutions: to be made even more visible in the new terms at the European Commission and Parliament; and in this respect they should make the best use of Interreg's results to further promote cooperation and the European values they embody.

In order to accomplish these tasks, Interreg requires the appropriate tools. To this end, INTERACT is developing new services and tools to support capacity building across programmes, with the concurrent objective of capturing and showcasing the fruits of this cooperation. This edition of the newsletter is therefore dedicated to introducing and explaining these new additions committed to enhancing programmes' future success.

One such example is the joint electronic monitoring system, or eMS. This will provide the Interreg programmes with a common tool capable of encompassing the entirety of both project and programme life cycles. The positive impact of the eMS will be immediately seen in the day-to-day management and will yield two significant benefits: programmes saving time and money, and project applicants no longer facing unnecessary complications associated with multiple systems. Related to this drive to enhance the efficiency

of the common instruments employed in pooling and sharing resources, a package of tools is now available to effectively manage the intricacies of an Interreg programme: HIT. It stands for "Harmonised Implementation Tools", and is seen as one of the principal simplification measures to reduce the administrative burden for both programme bodies and beneficiaries. Consequently, programmes will be implemented more effectively and will more quickly be able to focus on achieving quality and results.

We also have to bear in mind that talking about harmonisation is talking about improved and more coordinated communication of Interreg achievements. Thus, INTERACT is in the midst of implementing a joint Interreg brand that will more effectively convey a unified message to the world of what Interreg is about. This branding effort seamlessly aligns with our primary concern of ensuring a consistent flow of information among EU institutions, cooperation programmes and society in general, and dovetails with the yearly launches of Europe-wide campaigns to further disseminate this information, such as European Cooperation Day.

Briefly put, the fifth generation of Interreg programmes will be more strategic, result-oriented and focused; they will allow better exploitation of EU potential and better boost jobs and growth. INTERACT will do its best to make sure the EU institutions know about the achievements of Interreg. In this issue, European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu will present the new approaches along with other details about what can be expected during the 2014-2020 period. Rounding out the discussion of what is new, Mercedes Bresso, member of the European Parliament in Italy, will share some insights into the new European parliamentary term.

We hope you'll find the read interesting. Enjoy!



# “I will give concrete examples to illustrate our policy wherever I go”

Corina Crețu has been recently appointed as the European Commissioner for Regional Policy. She is a well-known politician in Romania, but few know that in her beginnings she worked as a journalist and political commentator for some Romanian newspapers. Here, she gives us some hints about what can be expected from the regional policy during the new period and she also gathers the courage to go through a more personal questionnaire!

By Laura Belenguer, INTERACT Valencia



“I will give concrete examples to illustrate our policy wherever I go”



You were described as a very engaged politician in Romania, where you were born. Why did you choose to become a European politician?

I studied Economics and Computer Science in university but I followed my passion and became a journalist after the Romanian Revolution in 1989. During an official visit to the United States in 1993, I had the incredible chance to get a declaration from President Bill Clinton and that caused quite a stir in Bucharest. The spokesman of the Romanian President invited me to join his team as press officer and I accepted. Seven years later, I became a spokeswoman to the President and, at the end of that mandate, I felt that I had proved myself sufficiently in my own country and I was looking for a different challenge. When the opportunity to join the European Parliament as an observer appeared, I took it without blinking.

Now, I can't say that I was dreaming of becoming a European politician when I was a kid, because the concept did not exist in Romania at the time. But ever since I joined the European Parliament, I became convinced that I had found my professional calling. I have seen firsthand the results that European policies have in improving the lives of the common people and I am proud to have been able to contribute to those policies.

Interreg can make a crucial contribution to the next Commission's main priorities of jobs and growth. How do you see the role of Interreg in delivering these objectives?

The 5<sup>th</sup> generation of Interreg programmes will be key to President Juncker's 10 points agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change. The programming phase is currently at full speed. Interreg V programmes will be more strategic, result-oriented and concentrated; they will allow better exploitation of the potential of the Internal Market, develop mutual trust and rely on partnership and multilevel governance. With over EUR 10 billion over 7 years, they will boost jobs, growth and investment in the border regions (for their cross-border component) and they will foster investment on common issues across Member States and in macro-regions with a common interest (for their transnational component).

During your confirmation hearing in the European Parliament you stated: “We have to do a better job explaining the effects of regional policy on the real economy. People are reaping the benefits of these funds without understanding that this is a European policy”. How do you think this can be better translated to society?

Communicating the results of thousands of projects of huge diversity across the Union and at its external

border is quite a challenge. But if we have the will to demonstrate results, with the help of INTERACT and the systematic recording of projects via the KEEP database, with the help of the Inform network of programmes communication officers, I am sure we can. Gone is the time when the Commission relied solely on Member States to communicate results. Interreg is managed under shared management, so let us take our share of communication on results as well. And I intend to lead by example. I have asked my services to prepare systematically good concrete examples to illustrate our policy and I will use them wherever I go.

In this context, how do you see the communication of Interreg towards citizens?

2015 will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Interreg instrument. This is a great communication opportunity we cannot afford to miss when over one third of our citizens live along the 10.000 km internal and external EU borders. I rely on my services and INTERACT to mobilise our 107 Interreg programmes to be part of it in a mode that is prone to effective communication. We can and we will make the buzz. Work is under preparation and should culminate at the EC day next September.

## the proudest questionnaire in brief

Your favourite virtue: Faith

Your main fault: Impulsiveness

Your idea of happiness: A quiet evening in Jerusalem

Your favourite food and drink: Chocolate and Cola light

If not yourself, who would you be? A Sister of Charity

Your favourite writer: Milan Kundera

The motto that drives your actions: “Ideologies separate us. Dreams and anguish bring us together.” Eugène Ionesco



# 2015: boost your everyday work with INTERACT!

Helping programmes understand EU rules defined in the 2014-2020 legal framework remains a key issue for INTERACT in 2015. In this respect, the INTERACT team will provide you this year with some 60 events, no less than 10 new publications, networking opportunities, online exchange platforms and new learning options.

By Sylvie Godard, Communication Manager, INTERACT

## Finance and programme management

Control systems, eligibility of expenditure, financial flows, programme closure 2007-2013 and state aid will be at the core of the financial issues tackled by INTERACT this year. These will include anti-fraud measures, public procurement error risks, expenditure outside the programme area, revenue generating projects, de-commitment, irregularities, financial corrections, technical assistance, the new general block exemption and de minimis regulations, and public procurement in IPA CBC programmes, among others. INTERACT will organise events and provide written material in this respect, but also advisory services on request about the eligibility of expenditure, financial flows and state aid.

Programme management events and publications will focus on the following topics: results indicators, launching of calls, drafting of application forms, assessment of applications based on the result-oriented and thematic concentration approaches, quality of projects and project management, evaluation, but also strategic and horizontal issues (e.g. human resources), EGTCs and new cooperation tools. INTERACT will also provide advisory services to individual programmes or groups of programmes willing to use HIT tools (see page 12).

## Capitalisation

Two years ago, INTERACT created a maritime network to provide cross-border cooperation programmes with borders to the sea with an opportunity to exchange and work together. Philipp Schwartz, Project Manager,

is currently fine-tuning the support activities that will be offered to the network in 2015. "To define the scope of the network's activities for 2014-2020, we will take into account the various studies carried out in this field. We are considering organising thematic training sessions for instance and involving an expert on maritime issues to facilitate the next network's meeting".

lewa Kalnina, Network and Knowledge Manager, added: "Programmes have asked us to increase thematic work and thematic exchanges. We will therefore carry out a sector study to investigate the achievements of Interreg programmes in a particular field. The focus could be on transport and accessibility, labour market, risk management, cross-border health services... but we will decide on the topic once we finalise our scoping study (see page 11)." How can Interreg make a difference in a specific sector? What works? What doesn't? This is what experts will analyse in selected cross-border and transnational areas. To complete the study, INTERACT will also organise seminars and visits to offer programme managers and decision-makers opportunities to go to different cooperation areas and learn from their colleagues' experiences. Finally, INTERACT is in the process of developing a new version of the KEEP database adapted to the needs of the 2014-2020 period (see page 16).

Do not miss any news, event or publication by visiting our website [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net) and by subscribing to our bimonthly newflash!

2015: boost your everyday work with INTERACT!

of single macro-regional strategies to promoting strategic cooperation and exchange across macro-regional networks" Baiba Liepa, Project Manager, explains. "After five years of experience and increasing requests from the European Commission and macro-regional stakeholders, we need to "build bridges" across macro-regions. This is a new challenge for us, but it has been INTERACT's task always! Certainly, it requires INTERACT to develop new kinds of services aiming at increasing cooperation and coordination among broad stakeholder groups." These new services will focus on getting to know each other, identifying and addressing questions of joint interest, sharing ideas and approaches, and finding the most effective ways for further cooperation.

## E-learning

It's sometimes difficult for programmes to find time or budget to attend the many events organised by INTERACT. "It is fair to give all an opportunity to participate" Ulf Wikström, Project Manager, says. "This is why we will start proposing e-learning services in 2015. Right now we are planning an online webinar about programme closure, together with the European Commission. Already last summer we offered online training modules about facilitation and presentation skills for participants in our project management summer camp". Interactive workshops, videos, additional study material, webinars: this is what INTERACT plans to offer online in the coming months. "We have started on a small scale and we are not aiming at transforming everything into an e-learning environment. But this new option gives a fantastic opportunity to develop and offer more training when participants are spread all around Europe as in the case of Interreg, IPA and ENPI staff."

## Communication

Last but not least, INTERACT will continue to help programmes gain visibility and acknowledgement at the European level. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of European Cooperation Day will be held on 21 September 2015. 2015 will also mark the celebration of the 25 years of Interreg. Based on the success of the joint branding and the development of a common Interreg logo, INTERACT will also develop a portal dedicated to promote opportunities offered by Interreg programmes throughout Europe.

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Since late 2009<sup>1</sup> INTERACT has been supporting the implementation of macro-regional strategies, becoming a contact point for Interreg programmes but also for many other institutions and funding sources. INTERACT started with facilitating discussions about coordination questions among key macro-regional stakeholders, bringing together senior experts from Interreg, mainstream and ENPI programmes, international financial institutions, and national and regional authorities. Later, INTERACT put resources to promote and communicate the strategies through various events, dedicated websites, newsletters and social media. "Considering that there are 4 macro-regional strategies established at this point, in 2015 we will re-focus our services from supporting the implementation

<sup>1</sup> There are 4 macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2009), the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (2011), the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (2014) and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (the European Commission is currently elaborating this strategy in cooperation with Member States and should present it by June 2015).

## Willing to exchange on programme practices on a daily basis?

More than 800 members have already joined one of INTERACT's thematic online networks (on eMS, eligibility of expenditure, joint branding for Interreg, capitalisation, IPA CBC HIT tools, maritime affairs, preparing 2014-2020 programmes...). Why don't you join too? You can share files, discuss, collaborate on documents, assign tasks and check deadlines. To become a member of a group, please send an email to [ip.viborg@interact-eu.net](mailto:ip.viborg@interact-eu.net).

In 2015, INTERACT will also compile 3 comprehensive overviews of practices developed by Interreg programmes on different issues: capitalisation and cluster initiatives 2007-2013, eligibility rules (including simplified cost options), use of the regional and national contact points to support the work of JTS in 2007-2013 and JS in 2014-2020.

## Upcoming INTERACT publications from A to Z

- Cooperation methods and tools applied by ESIF<sup>1</sup> programmes to support implementation of the EUSBSR<sup>2</sup> (study)
- Guidance material on different topics related to eligibility of expenditure
- HIT<sup>3</sup> Guidance and Summary Report
- INTERACT newsletter: special issue on the 25 years of Interreg
- IPA CBC programmes public procurement manual
- Programme Management Handbook
- Project Management Handbook
- Questions and Answers on: Designation, Evaluation Plan, Financial Flows
- Sector Study on Interreg achievements
- Study on new cooperation tools: integrated territorial investment (ITI), joint action plan (JAP) and community-led development (CLLD) (see page 24)

<sup>1</sup> European Structural and Investment Funds

<sup>2</sup> European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

<sup>3</sup> Harmonised Implementation Tools

## INTERACT services 2015 at a glance

### Upcoming INTERACT events for:

Audit Authorities and Groups of Auditors  
6<sup>th</sup> meeting

EGTC<sup>1</sup> Representatives  
Introduction to Interreg programmes (training event)

Cross-Border and Transnational Programmes

- Capitalisation
- Designation of authorities
- Drafting an evaluation plan
- How to coordinate and cooperate with other programmes and funds (training event)
- Impact evaluation
- Programme closure
- Project monitoring and reporting
- Project generation and development
- Project management camp
- Roles of and relation between Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and Joint Secretariat, and between Joint Secretariat and external offices / antennae / National Contact Points

IPA II Cross-Border Programmes

- Financial management (2 events)
- Programme implementation (2 events)

Monitoring and Steering Committees  
Thematic concentration, result orientation and decision-making on project applications (training event)

Thematic Networks

- Support services to implement macro-regional strategies (for transnational programmes only)
- Maritime issues (for maritime programmes only, possibly with thematic training)
- Communication (for communication officers only)

Regional Networks

- 2 regional events on structural approach and human resources (North and South Europe)
- Regional workshops on eligibility of expenditure
- Regional meetings and seminars on financial flows
- Meetings of INTERACT Points' zone networks (Turku, Valencia, Vienna, Viborg)

Macro-Regional Strategies  
6<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EUSBSR<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

<sup>2</sup> European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

## INTERACT studies

# capacity and competence to work across programmes?



INTERACT recently published a study on Inter-programme Capacity and Competence – on if and how working across programmes and funds is mastered and implemented by 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 ETC/Interreg programmes' staff, and if and how it is anchored in the programmes' human resource management.

By Philipp Schwartz, Project Manager (Programme and Project Management), INTERACT

In a tweet, it was recently asked if the staff of the Joint (Technical) Secretariats is ready to cooperate with other funding programmes in and beyond Interreg. This short 'max 140 character message' actually reflects what the recently published INTERACT study on 'Inter-programme Capacity and Competence in ETC/Interreg' is all about.

The 2014-2020 thematic concentration, result orientation and the integrated approach (with reference to macro-regional and sea basin strategies) demands from programme staff and especially those in the secretariats dealing directly with projects a good understanding of the different funding sources. It requires good understanding of their own funding programme in the overall context, of the linkages and possible overlaps and finally of the possible synergies of cooperation and coordination between different funding sources in and beyond Interreg. In short, it demands inter-programme capacity and competence. But for staff members to get and use such competence, it first and foremost demands that the management level supports such an approach, to dedicate time and human resources on something beyond their own programme. It starts with providing staff with necessary skill development possibilities, but also to encourage the staff to use their skills for a close cooperation and coordination with other programmes in and beyond Interreg.

The INTERACT study is based on a Europe-wide online survey conducted in March-April 2014 among three target groups: the JTS staff directly dealing with projects like Programme/Project Managers/Officers and alike; the Heads of 2007-2013 Secretariats; and the MAs/Heads of Secretariats involved in the 2014-2020 programming process. That inter-programme and capacity and competence is a relevant issue was proven by the overwhelming response as contributions had been received from 178 persons from all across Europe - with 2007-2013 JTS Project staff, mainly from CBC programmes being the biggest group.

The study and its main findings then had set the scene for the kick-off event for INTERACT activities in the field of inter-programme capacity and competence held on 26 November in Brussels. The event was titled 'The WHAT, the WHY and the HOW of Inter-programme Capacity and Competence' - with the WHAT presenting a wide portfolio of different funding sources to enlarge the knowledge of the participants beyond their own programme; the WHY to present a few examples of the added value of coordination and cooperation between funding sources; and the HOW presenting concrete examples on both the structural-management level as well as on the staff competence level on how inter-programme capacity can be created, supported, further developed and implemented for the benefit of both the programme and the programme beneficiaries.

The INTERACT study which was also presented to the public at this event provides a lot of thoughts both for the programmes' staff and at management level. At the same time, it also gives a clear message from the programmes to INTERACT on where it can support programmes in developing and implementing inter-programme capacity and competence. For this purpose, INTERACT has planned among others two regional follow-up events in 2015 - to present further best practice examples on how inter-programme capacity and competence can be supported on both the structural-management level as well as on the staff competence level. If after reading the study, you would like to share such a best practice example from your own working environment, or for any other feedback regarding the study or inter-programme capacity and competence in general, please contact Mr Philipp Schwartz at INTERACT Point Turku ([philipp.schwartz@interact-eu.net](mailto:philipp.schwartz@interact-eu.net)).

You can download the study on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net) under the Thematic studies section.



# reaping the benefits of cooperation

2014 is a year of harvesting for Interreg. The 2007-2013 Interreg programmes and projects are being finalised and results are becoming visible. INTERACT seized this moment and launched several studies to investigate what has been achieved so far, to look into what works well in Interreg, and into what could be the future priorities for cooperation.



By Ieva Kalniņa, INTERACT

In this article we will share (subjectively) selected snapshots of findings from the studies. We hope that these snapshots will provoke your interest to learn more and explore further.

reaping the benefits of cooperation



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## energy study



The energy study looked at 424 energy projects financed from the 2007-2013 Interreg programmes and analysed in which areas and what kind of activities have been supported.

The study revealed that cooperation projects address the full range of sustainable energy topics and are generally very well aligned to the objectives of EU energy policy. Typical activities financed from Interreg projects are conducting studies, carrying out pilots, delivering meetings, informational events, trainings etc. Common outputs are, among others, baseline studies, feasibility studies, management plans, handbooks and guidelines, policy recommendations, action plans and strategies, networks and clusters, etc. Over 50% of project activities either involve investments or aim at triggering such.

One of the conclusions is worth a careful reflection - how to avoid overlaps and create synergies between the often similar activities financed by the Interreg and also other EU programmes?

## maritime study



The Maritime Study investigated 15 cross-border cooperation programmes encompassing sea borders and analysed the projects dealing with marine and maritime topics.

The particularly interesting findings of the Maritime Study concerned the added value produced by the marine and maritime projects financed from the 2007-2013 cross-border cooperation programmes. The study revealed that projects contributed to the improvement of accessibility in the Mediterranean,

to better-integrated coastal zone management in the North East Atlantic, to the mitigation of environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea. In all sea basins there were cross-border projects supporting coastal and maritime tourism sectors, and projects contributing to implementation of international agreements.

One of the conclusions from the study is that maritime cross-border cooperation programmes can play a greater role in promoting cross-border discussions on sensitive topics.

## study on labour market integration



The study looked at the long-term developments in the field of the European labour market integration and analysed the developments in four cooperation areas: cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region and between Austria and Slovenia, and transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and in the Alpine Space.

The study points out that (successful) cross-border cooperation programmes have typically supported interventions aiming at:

- eliminating or mitigating persisting obstacles to cross-border mobility of workers,
- further developing the capacity of the border region workforce to access opportunities across the border,
- establishing specific cooperation structures or networks which help to further deepen the level of cross-border labour market integration.

On the transnational level the particular focus, albeit only relatively recently, has been on tackling the

wider demographic change (ageing population, talent attraction and retention, women employment etc.).

## scoping study



The purpose of the Scoping Study is to determine what role can cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation play to deliver each Thematic Objective and Investment Priority of the 2014-2020 ESIF framework.

Experts carrying out the study also looked at the environment, climate change, accessibility and sustainable transport trends on a European level over a longer time period (1990-2020) and compared them with the Interreg activity.

The findings in the field of transport revealed that the connectivity is relatively well developed as far as cross-border and transnational stakeholders can influence and Interreg can finance. The Interreg funding trend in this sector has a diminishing character. Experts have pointed out that the future focus of Interreg programmes should shift towards sustainable transport - tackling the negative effects of density, congestions, road safety, and addressing environmental implications.

In the field of environment and climate change the funding trend in Interreg programmes is an increasing one. There is a wide scope of actions which can and should be undertaken by cooperation programmes, most obvious being the joint management of cross-border and transnational natural assets (river and sea basins, mountain ranges, protected areas) and the prevention and mitigation of natural hazards and climate change effects (floods, draughts, forest fires, coastal erosion, etc.).

## data analysis



The experience with the preparation of 2014-2020 Interreg programmes, as well as the sector studies mentioned earlier, all point at a lack of data as one of the key challenges in analysing cross-border and transnational developments. One of the reasons for this is that a noticeable part of territorial programmes focus on flows of people, goods, knowledge, environmental assets between regions and across borders. Yet another significant area of intervention is the one related to the processes, such as learning and capacity building. Measuring these processes requires quite an effort, and the data for this is often not collected by the national statistical offices. Also, the process and flow-related data usually is programme specific and therefore cannot be obtained through a harmonised EU-wide approach.

In the framework of the data analysis the experts looked at a number of draft 2014-2020 Interreg programmes, at what result indicators these programmes have selected and what approach to collecting data had been chosen. Experts found out that almost half of all proposed result indicators are to be based on data collected via surveys and / or focus groups. Such an approach is good and reliable, but does require relevant capacities and more resources. The study points out at the importance of sample selection and questionnaire design. Experts also indicate the possibilities for collaboration between different programmes. A cautious remark is made towards coordinating the implementation of surveys and focus groups - with most programmes choosing them there may be a risk of "survey fatigue" among stakeholders.

The Energy and Maritime studies have already been published on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net). The Scoping Study, the Study on Labour Market Integration and the Data Analysis will be posted there in February 2015.

# HIT tools: bound to be a hit!

The administrative and eligibility checklist, quality assessment criteria, application form, progress reports, first-level control certificate, fact sheets on eligible expenditure and budget lines - all of you use these forms, checklists, reports and templates to manage your daily work. Over the past four years, INTERACT has worked on harmonising all these tools to help you save time and resources. Polona Frumen, Developer and Trainer at INTERACT, was in charge of the development process known as HIT.

By Polona Frumen, Developer and Trainer, and Sylvie Godard, Communication Manager, INTERACT

## What does HIT stand for?

HIT stands for Harmonised Implementation Tools. It is a package of tools needed to manage an Interreg programme. HIT is seen as one of the main simplification measures to reduce the administrative burden for both programme bodies and beneficiaries. HIT makes your programme's implementation easier

and allows you to focus on quality and results. Harmonisation is also meant to collect information to tell "the Interreg story", to feed into Interreg related policy-making and legislative processes, and to ensure that the overall achievements of Interreg are better communicated.



Credit: INTERACT

*"The HIT process has been an amazing cooperation experience to make a very big step towards harmonisation of Interreg tools used across Europe."*

**Polona Frumen**

Developer and Trainer, INTERACT

It entails a mutually agreed set of minimum expectations towards data collection and processing, based on the requirements of relevant EU policies, legal framework and Interreg specificities. The whole HIT package includes the simplification of eligibility rules and control provisions: this should

help programmes ease their efforts for monitoring financial and technical progress and focus more on the results and quality of the projects they are funding.

## What are the key objectives of the HIT package?

I would say result-orientation, simplification and harmonisation: result-orientation refers to linking project results and outputs to programme results and outputs. This requires a change of focus - away from excessive administrative and control procedures, and towards a more risk management based approach and a focus on the quality of project outputs and results.

Simplification concerns financial management as well as project management, and applies to both beneficiaries and programmes. Examples are simplified cost options, providing more flexibility in case of changes during the project lifetime by keeping the application form "slim" and specifying the details in the project partnership agreement.

Harmonisation refers to the standardisation of data, terminology, budget lines and indicators as well as streamlining procedures. All of this helps Interreg become more transparent and accountable and provides sounder evidence of what Interreg delivers. Yet I would like to stress that not all tools used for implementing programmes could be harmonised and simplified because of the different national legislations in the Member States.

## Who is HIT for?

HIT is for both programmes and projects. For programmes, this means simpler procedures, easier exchanges of information and possibilities to create cross-programme synergies. It will also simplify the aggregation of data, especially results and benefits at the EU level, and thus create better inputs for evaluating programmes and capitalising on a project's results. For projects, harmonisation should help

project partners focus on project content rather than on the different rules and forms applied by different programmes. The tools have been developed for all three strands of Interreg programmes, and can be used by all programme bodies involved in designing and implementing programmes.

## How were HIT tools developed?

We developed the tools through a wide consultation process involving more than 40 Interreg programmes. All tools are based on a comprehensive analysis of the practices used by these programmes and by other EU programmes in the 2007-2013 period, while taking into account the legal requirements for 2014-2020.

Over 15 meetings involving INTERACT and programmes were held between 2011 and 2014 to discuss and develop these tools. Between 2010 and 2012, we organised a number of working groups to create the tools. In 2013, we started the process of adjusting the tools by looking for a unanimous agreement from all relevant programmes. We adapted the tools for instance to the needs of transnational and cross-border programmes.

Tools were shared with several Interreg stakeholders and we took on board their opinions: first-level controllers, audit authorities, European Commission experts, and also beneficiaries of Interreg projects. The HIT process has been an amazing cooperation experience to make a very big step towards harmonisation of Interreg tools used across Europe.

## Should all Interreg programmes use HIT tools?

Yes, definitely, but here a few things that you should know before using them:

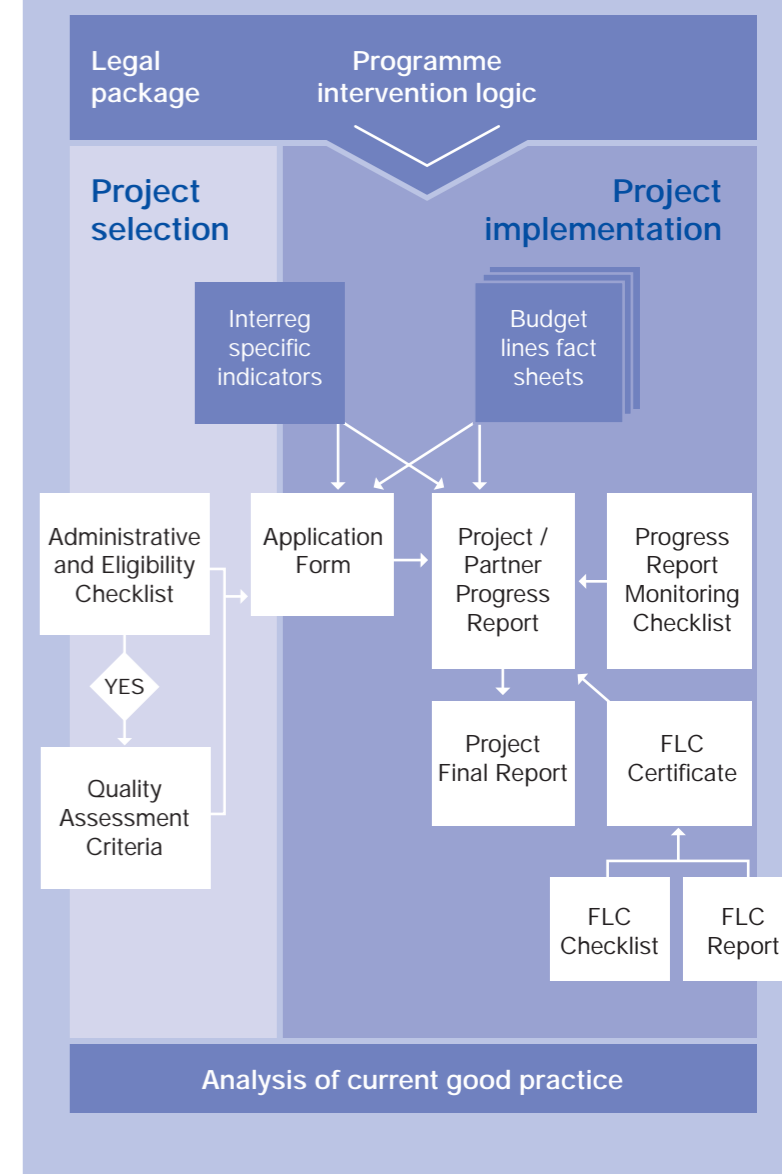
Templates are models which can be used for different programmes procedures. The procedures as such have not been harmonised. The templates have been developed for the most typical types of projects. When dealing with flagship or strategic projects, programmes may consider adjustments. Equally, for people-to-people or small scale projects, less demanding requirements should be established.

Harmonisation does not mean "identical"! It is a common basis that programmes can still adapt to their very specific needs if these could not be taken into account in the harmonisation process. Yes, some parts are mandatory, because otherwise there is no harmonisation and consistency between programmes. This is why we propose to use harmonised fields, data sets and agreed terminology, while the sequencing and technical formats remain programme decisions. The tools are based on the one-entry-rule: once you enter one data in a tool (project name for example), this data will be automatically duplicated in other parts of the same tool and in the other tools.

All HIT tools are on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net)!

You can download HIT tools - from project selection to financial control and audit through project implementation - in the 2014-2020 section of the INTERACT website. The HIT process also led to harmonising the terminology used by Interreg programmes. The definitions of more than 100 words used for the 2014-2020 period have been harmonised. They are now available in English on the INTERACT website under the Glossary section. And the website's translation tool will help you find HIT words in German, French, Italian, Polish, Slovenian, Slovak and Spanish.

Here is an overview of some of the tools available:



Are you willing to use HIT tools or learn more about them? Please contact Polona Frumen at: [polona.frumen@interact-eu.net](mailto:polona.frumen@interact-eu.net)



## eMS – a monitoring system tailored to the needs of interreg

Which modules can you find in the eMS? When will the eMS be ready to use? Why choose the eMS? More than 20 Interreg programmes attended the meeting organised in Vienna on 9 December 2014 to discuss the joint electronic monitoring system - eMS – developed by INTERACT. Nearly all of them are considering using the tool to manage and monitor their programmes in the 2014-2020 programming period. Some of them haven't made a decision yet. What about you?

By Tsveta Aleksandrova, Project Manager, and Sylvie Godard, Communication Manager, INTERACT

"We have been working for more than a year on creating the eMS with the support of many Interreg programmes involved either in our Core Group or in our Observers' Group<sup>1</sup>" said Tsveta Aleksandrova, Project Manager at INTERACT. "The idea behind this is to have one common tool for all Interreg programmes for three major purposes: to harmonise our practices, help programmes save time and money, and ensure that project applicants no longer have to deal with different systems." INTERACT is now testing the tool. "Any programme can access our demo (see info box). We also hired two additional persons from November 2014 to April 2015 to test the system and speed up the process of delivering the eMS to programmes for their first calls."

The eMS covers the whole project and programme life-cycles: project assessment, decision by the Steering Committee, contracting, requests for changes, first-level control, project reporting, programme reporting, monitoring of indicators, payment, irregularities and recoveries, technical assistance and audit. "We included a wide range of checklists developed within the HIT process (see page 12) so that you can fill them in directly in the system. There is also a ranking system for the project assessment process: if several JS members fill in the assessment grids, the system automatically calculates the average ranking."

### eMS: How do I get it and what will it cost me?

Christoph Werner, IT Manager at INTERACT, explained: "The eMS is delivered for free. After your programme has signed the licence agreement with INTERACT, you will be able to install the software according

to the installation instructions. The only costs that you need to plan are the renting of a server and the maintenance of the eMS." The maintenance agreement should include bug fixes and security updates for the technologies used. "You can also include the development of additional functionalities as part of the maintenance agreement: in view of the diversity of programmes and projects, we wanted the system to remain flexible." The service level agreement for renting the server should include guaranteed uptime, back-up and restoration of data, among other clauses. "I would also advise programmes to procure server renting and maintenance separately", Christoph added.

What is the licence agreement about? "It is an agreement that will be signed both by INTERACT and by each Interreg programme willing to use the eMS" said Katrin Stockhammer, Project Manager at INTERACT. "We are now working with legal advisers to prepare the document that will describe the purpose of the eMS: a free to use and non-for-profit software developed by INTERACT and Interreg programmes for Interreg programmes." The question of roles and responsibilities will also be raised in the agreement to avoid different interpretations of the legal situation or the technical requirements. "Each programme will have to test the software carefully before using it, and then take an informed decision".

The whole eMS will be ready by April 2015: do not hesitate to test the tool, exchange with other programmes on Basecamp or get in touch with Tsveta, Christoph or Katrin at INTERACT to get more information.

<sup>1</sup> The eMS Core Group is made up of INTERACT staff and of 4 programmes: 2 transnational programmes - North-West Europe and Central Europe - and 2 cross-border programmes - Austria-Hungary and Central Baltic. In just a year, the group met 8 times to progress on developing the software. INTERACT also created an Observers' Group involving some 25 Interreg programmes who exchange on a regular basis over Basecamp and met twice in 2014.



eMS – a monitoring system tailored to the needs of interreg

Testing is under way with plans to launch the eMS in April 2015

## test the application form!

You can now test the application form from the applicant's point of view by going to INTERACT's demo system <http://ems.interact-eu.net/demo>. Just create your user name and password and test it! You will be able to fill in several sections: project summary, partners, work plan with five types of work packages (preparation, management, communication, implementation and investment), project focus and a

detailed budget overview (per partner, period, work package and budget line).

N.B.: The application form is based on the harmonised application form developed by INTERACT within the HIT process (see page 12). To ensure a higher adaptability to the different calls and types of projects, the form is very flexible and offers a high number of adaptations, already implemented in the eMS. There is also a functionality linking the eMS to KEEP - a database of Interreg projects also developed by INTERACT (see page 12).

## what do finnish, estonian, latvian and swedish project applicants have in common?



Credit: INTERACT

They will be the first ones to use the eMS application form. The cross-border Central Baltic programme 2014-2020 decided to test the eMS when launching its first call for projects from 18 December 2014 to 9 February 2015. Veli-Pekka Suuronen, IT Officer for the programme, has been very much involved in developing the eMS all over 2014 as a member of the eMS Core Group<sup>1</sup>.

Did you adapt the eMS to specific needs within your programme?

We have just reformulated some texts and questions and there were some options which we did not choose. Although the application form can be made available in several languages, we only use English because it is our programme's only official language.

Is your Joint Secretariat ready to use the tool?

I organised joint training sessions for our staff on the eMS. Now they are in the process of testing and getting familiar with the whole system before the first projects are submitted.

And what about training project applicants?

My colleagues organised several project development seminars: the first ones on 18 December in Tallinn and Stockholm, the second ones in Helsinki and Riga on 13 January. Lead applicants therefore got the chance to see the software.

Any concerns about being the very first programme to use eMS "in real life"?

From a technical point of view I completely trust the system. Should there be any issues, we have formulated ways to work around them. Our challenge will be to cope with the questions from our applicants once they start filling in the form. But we are ready for it! Nearly 350 people registered to our project development seminars, and they will bring up more than 230 project ideas. So yes indeed, we are facing a real challenge here, but we are confident that eMS will make everyone's life easier and help us keep a positive spirit in the office!

Will you use eMS after the call is over?

Yes, we are counting on the system to be ready when projects start reporting their costs! Our first projects will probably only start in July or August 2015 so that gives us and INTERACT time to finalise the tool.



# KEEP in touch with territorial cooperation programmes, projects and partners all over europe!

Imagine if, just by running a simple query on a website, you could know which Interreg, ENPI CBC and IPA CBC projects are currently ongoing in your country? Or how many projects were funded on energy efficiency, scientific cooperation and tourism in 2007-2013? Or which organisations are involved in Interreg, ENPI CBC or IPA CBC projects in a given country? This would be great, wouldn't it? This website actually exists and many of these queries are already possible. Just visit [www.keep.eu](http://www.keep.eu)! Rafael Agostinho, Project Manager, and Janne Kiilunen, Project Officer, are in charge of developing the tool within INTERACT.

By Rafael Agostinho, Project Manager, Janne Kiilunen, Project Officer, and Sylvie Godard, Communication Manager, INTERACT

## What is KEEP about?

KEEP is the only source of aggregated information about the projects and beneficiaries of EU programmes dedicated to cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in Europe: Interreg, IPA CBC and ENPI CBC. The KEEP database developed by INTERACT covers both the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 periods. Regarding 2007-2013, KEEP includes data about all programmes - so more than 90 in total - and about 85% of the projects financed by these programmes. Data about thousands of organisations involved in over 8,000 European cooperation projects is also available. We will soon launch a new KEEP website, which we improved based on the feedback from our users (see info box).

## What are KEEP's main assets?

You do not need to go to each programme's website to find information on projects and partners, because the aggregated information covering several programmes can be found in KEEP. With all the search possibilities, KEEP users can seamlessly look for the



*"Making KEEP a progressively better and useful tool should be a priority for the whole Territorial Cooperation community."*

projects and partners that match their information needs. Mostly, KEEP aims to be a valuable service to the whole Territorial Cooperation community: it shows what the community produces and makes it easier to learn from others' experiences. Making KEEP a progressively better and useful tool should be a priority, not only for INTERACT but also for the whole Territorial Cooperation community.

## What about KEEP in 2014-2020?

Now INTERACT, together with Interreg, ENPI CBC and IPA CBC programmes and the European Commission, is working on an evolution

of KEEP in order to cover the programmes, projects and partners of the 2014-2020 period. We created a specific working group made up of these entities. The group met twice in 2014, once in July and once in October. The contribution of this group to the evolution of KEEP has already been invaluable. We managed to achieve a joint understanding of the ambitions that the sector as a whole has for the tool. Participants gave us feedback on what can be immediately changed - and what needs to be in place in the medium and long runs.

## How can KEEP help you?

Potential beneficiaries can get an overview of the EU programmes that exist to fund Territorial Cooperation projects, check if their project idea is new or if similar projects are already in development, and search for relevant project partners.

Project lead partners and partners can use it as a tool to promote their projects at the EU level.

Managing Authorities and Joint Technical Secretariats can use it during project assessment or project monitoring processes to check the existence of similar projects in Europe or the project partners' capacity;

they can also increase the visibility of their programmes and promote the projects funded by their programmes at EU level; they can also extract data for the press or for official briefs (e.g. chart showing the number of EU-funded projects in one specific country).

European, national and regional institutions and anyone interested in Territorial Cooperation (students, researchers...) can use it for research or statistical purposes. INTERACT for instance has used KEEP for developing capitalisation studies about projects on the issues of maritime security and creative industries.



## What will change compared to the current version of KEEP?

The 2014-2020 period comes with a different regulatory background so the first thing to do is to adjust KEEP to the new reality. The new KEEP database will still cover 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 but also 2014-2020. Its structure will therefore be enlarged with quite a few new fields based on the fields harmonised in HIT tools for 2014-2020 (see page 12). The fields "theme" and "keywords" will be replaced with "thematic objectives" and "investment priorities". We will also ensure that clustering can be made by combining projects from all the programming periods featured in KEEP (since 2000), even though the fields will be different for the current period.

## Facing any challenges?

Programmes are the sole providers of information on their own projects and partners, so sending information to KEEP means filling out an extensive set of fields. The data is standardised, because that's the only way it can be searchable and useful. We cannot adjust the collection of data to each programme's format, or we can do so but in a very limited way. And, since KEEP is a live database (it covers both finalised and ongoing projects), programmes need to send information more than once in order to keep their data as updated as possible.

## Will it be easy for programmes to submit data, for instance by enabling automatic updates?

Our priority is to free the contributing programmes from the extra work required to deliver data to KEEP. So yes, we will set up an automatic update procedure

## New KEEP website available in the first half of 2015! What's new?

- Direct access to quick search on the homepage
- New interactive map with information on programmes, projects and partners per country
- Information about the latest updates to the database
- Faster loading of search results
- Faster export of Excel spreadsheets
- All projects and partners per programme at a glance
- New tool for creating unique reports using any data in KEEP

Go to [www.keep.eu](http://www.keep.eu)!

based on a simple add-on that each programme will easily make to its own monitoring system. And all the fields required should already be covered by each programme's monitoring system (The list of fields is available on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net)). The creation of this feature will be easy: it is about periodically sending an XML file via FTP to us. This will allow us to replace old data in KEEP with the new data sent. If you are using the electronic monitoring system (e-MS) developed by INTERACT (see page 14), this feature is already part of it.

## So what happens next?

We are now contacting each programme to make sure that they will all take up the automatic update system. And we will keep our users and stakeholders up-to-date at all times regarding the process of developing KEEP for 2014-2020.



# european cooperation day 2014: highlights and figures

Credit: INTERACT



After two successful editions, INTERACT organised this year's third edition of the European Cooperation Day (EC Day) campaign. EC Day took place on 21 September and throughout the surrounding weeks more than 120 local events were celebrated in 32 different European and neighbouring countries!

By Sarie Bongers, Communication & Project Development Officer, INTERACT

EC Day is about showing citizens from the EU and its neighbouring countries how European cooperation across borders has impacted the quality of life for the population in different areas. With this aim, the organised local events covered a wide range of activities: from project fairs to circus performances, from bike rides to film festivals, and from music concerts to diverse competitions.

The campaign, supported by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, was launched in Milan on 16 September 2014.

More than 800 people witnessed the kick-off event hosted by the Lombardy Region, either in person or via live webstreaming. The kick-off event was attended by Maurizio del Tenno, Sub-Secretary of Lombardy Region; Lena Andersson Pench, Director of Territorial Cooperation, Macro-Regions and North-West Europe, DG Regio, European Commission (on behalf of Commissioner Hahn); Martín Guillermo, Secretary General, Association of European Border Regions and a welcoming video of Stefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The kick-off event largely focused on the European Cooperation Day local events as these are the campaign's visible elements across Europe. Kaspars Ruklis from the CBC Estonia-Latvia Programme, Petra

*“Organising the local event was a lot of work, but seeing all the people coming together was a lot of fun. It's work that requires more creative and independent thinking of what we can do to promote territorial cooperation and the programme.”*

**Peggy Seidel**  
CBC DE/PL Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Brandenburg-Zachodniopomorskie Programme

Polaskova from the INTERREG IVC Programme, Nikoletta Tatari from the IPA CBC Greece-Albania Programme and M. Gianluca Quartulli from the ENPI CBC Italy-Tunisia Programme were invited to present their local events from previous editions of European Cooperation Day. In addition, special attention was given to a variety of this year's local events across Europe and its bordering regions.

## EC Day video contest

A novelty this year was the launch of the video contest 'Border issues, border solutions'. European

projects and programmes (Interreg, Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI CBC)), and individual film-makers were invited to share their videos highlighting the results and benefits of cooperation in Europe. We received an impressive total of 214 entries for the contest, of which 93 videos qualified for participation. Subsequently, 15 060 votes were cast by the public for the people's choice awards. The four award winners (two public choice awards and two jury awards): one for the CBC, IPA CBC, transnational and interregional programmes and projects and one for the ENPI CBC programmes and projects) were handed their awards during the kick-off event of the campaign in Milan on 16 September. All participating videos can be watched on the EC Day website at [www.ecday.eu](http://www.ecday.eu).



The Spain-France-Andorra cross-border programme (POCTEFA) organised this local event with the performance of the "Circ que o!", a EU-funded project which involves circus companies from Spain and France.

Credit: Guzmán Barrio

In order to share the videos with an even larger audience, a selection of 90 videos in which the benefits of cooperation in the European Union and its borders were highlighted, was submitted to the EC Day video contest, and showcased at the Committee of the Regions Cinema room during this year's Open Days.

## Plans for 2015

INTERACT carried out an evaluation to hear from the programmes what improvements should be taken into account for European Cooperation Day 2015 and what ideas the programmes wanted to share with us. When asked for their interest in participating in EC Day 2015, all but one respondent stated that they are planning to participate, even the ones that did not take part in this year's campaign.

Also, since the video contest has proven to be a great tool to increase the visibility of the campaign

*“We take it as a challenge each year to present our projects to as wide an audience as possible, using a small budget and not too much time but trying to ensure sustainable results.”*

**Giedrius Surplys**  
ENPI CBC Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus Programme



## MAIN FIGURES EUROPEAN COOPERATION DAY 2014

Over 120 local events were celebrated in more than 30 countries and over 100 cities of the European Union and neighbouring countries

More than 800 people witnessed the kick-off event hosted by the Lombardy Region 214 videos were submitted for the EC Day video contest of which 93 videos qualified for participation. Subsequently, 15.060 votes were casted on the EC Day website by the public for their favourite video

The EC Day mobile app was downloaded 410 times, the EC Day Facebook page received 1780 likes and the EC Day Twitter account gathered 768 followers

and the achievements of European cooperation, we will organise another contest this year. Stay tuned for the latest news and make sure you participate!

The 2015 edition of EC Day will be closely linked to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of INTERREG. In the last 25 years, cooperation has been placed more and more at the heart of EU Regional Policy. It is definitely time to celebrate and we are working on different ideas to make next year's edition of EC Day an even greater success, in combination with the celebration of 25 years of INTERREG. We will keep you informed so that you can be part of it!

More information on [www.ecday.eu](http://www.ecday.eu) and on [www.facebook.com/CooperationDay](http://www.facebook.com/CooperationDay).



## spreading the use of the interreg brand



European Territorial Cooperation can now be communicated throughout Europe with one single word: Interreg. This was the first step of creating a harmonised brand for ETC. The second was the development of one joint brand mark.

By Guillaume Terrien, Communication Manager, INTERACT

Up to 40 programmes have already chosen to adopt it to create their own logo. The process would not have been successful without the involvement of all of them from the initiation of the process to the design of the logo. The programmes' input resulted into increased adaptability of the logo and therefore increased the chances of more widespread use.

To help promote this achievement, INTERACT has produced a video and published two brand design manuals: a Full Brand Integration manual, for all programmes and projects which base their own logo on the Interreg brand mark, and a Co-branding manual, for

programmes and projects that wish to use the Interreg brand mark but are still using their own logo.

The next step regarding brand harmonisation will naturally be to offer access to all programmes to information and opportunities in one single place, and creating an Interreg web portal. We hope that programmes will show the same enthusiasm but INTERACT will come back to all programmes about this new project.

You can watch the video and download the brand design manuals on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net) under the 2014-2020 section / Communication initiatives.

## coming up in 2015: communication toolkit!

It's important to raise awareness by explaining what Interreg does and how it helps citizens and regions. However, communicating Interreg and showing results is not always easy! INTERACT is working on a communication toolkit to help programmes save time and resources while getting ready for the 2014-2020 programming period.

By Sarie Bongers, Communication & Project Development Officer, INTERACT

### New communication requirements

For the new 2014-2020 period, a reform of Cohesion Policy includes new legal requirements concerning communication by Managing Authorities (MAs) and beneficiaries. Articles 115 to 117 and Annex XII of the EU common provisions regulation (CPR) No 1303 / 2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 are related to information and communication rules within the programming period 2014-2020.

The European Commission will pay increased attention to communication as well as to results and outcomes. Simplification, increased transparency and accessibility is sought and clearer definitions of responsibilities (of the Managing Authority and the beneficiaries) are expressed. Communication strategies must no longer

be seen as an add-on, but rather as a framework document outlining goals of cooperation programmes for the entire programming period.

### Communication toolkit

INTERACT is designing a communication toolkit for Managing Authorities and Joint Technical Secretariats to facilitate their communication work in the new programming period. This toolkit will include information about key messages and possible target groups, powerful communication tools (such as social media and storytelling techniques) to communicate in a more persuasive and accessible way about Interreg achievements, and how to deal with communication throughout the whole programme and project lifecycle. The toolkit will be available early 2015 on [www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net).



Credit: Sarie Bongers

## designation procedure for interreg programmes – a good start is half the job done

The designation procedure is nothing else but the necessary exercise to obtain assurance regarding the setup of management and control systems. The main concern of Interreg programmes is to keep the systems reasonable and proportionate. INTERACT is offering support to achieve exactly this.

By Marta Roca, INTERACT

The designation procedure for 2014-2020 programmes has many similarities to the 2007-13 compliance assessment of the description of management and control systems. To assess the adequacy of the functions and procedures in place for the Managing and Certifying Authorities (MA and CA) and other bodies involved in the Interreg programmes management (meaning Joint Secretariats, intermediate bodies, etc.), an independent audit body (IAB) has to issue a report and an opinion based on their audit work carried out. The European Commission encourages Member States to maintain systems that have worked well during the 2007-13 period. The legal provisions for the designation are set out in Article 123 and Article 124 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) N° 1303/2013 and Article 21 of the ETC regulation (EU) N° 1299/2013. The models for the report and opinion on the compliance of the systems of the designated bodies are set out in the Implementing Regulation (EU) 1011/2014. Furthermore, a Designation Procedure Guidance for Member States and Programme Authorities exists (Ref:EGESIF\_14-0013-final of 18/12/2014) providing a helpful checklist for preparing this exercise.

Apart from the similarities, the difference with the last programming period is that for 2014-2020 neither the report nor the description of the functions and procedures in place for the MA and CA being designated need to be submitted to the Commission. Only when the total amount of support from the Funds to an operational programme budget exceeds EUR 250,000,000, the Commission may request them, on the basis of its risk assessment, within one month after the notification. There is also the possibility that the MA of its own initiative, submits the report and the description, within two months of the notification. In order to do so, two conditions have to meet: first, the total amount of support from the Funds to an operational programme budget has to exceed EUR 250,000,000; and secondly, there has to be significant changes in the function and procedures of the MA or where appropriate of the CA.

The designation is granted on the basis of the fulfilment of four designation criteria: internal control environment,



risk management, management and control activities and monitoring. Most of the novelties of the 2014-2020 programming period fall under the risk management and the management and control activities criteria.

The requested risk management procedures are procedures that may already exist but may not have been explicitly written down. So now it is asked to already identify potential risks and foresee actions plans for them and also decide who would regularly perform this risk assessment exercise.

In respect of management and control activities, there are new responsibilities for Managing Authorities: they have to set up effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures, draw up the managing declarations and annual summary/accounts and ensure the reliability of data on indicators/milestones/progress of the Operational Programme in achieving its objectives. Regarding anti-fraud measures, the concern of Interreg programmes is not only to establish anti-fraud measures but also to keep these measures proportionate to an Interreg specific context.

Finally, even if the European Commission is providing guidance on the main elements of the designation procedure (fraud risk and anti-fraud measures, management declarations/annual summary, assessment of management and control, etc.), INTERACT is there to help Interreg programmes find the right way to comply with the requirements stated under each designation criterion.

In this sense, and on the occasion of an INTERACT seminar about "Designation for ETC", many controversial questions were raised such as the need to designate first level controllers or national points and how it should work; the fact that short term staff contracts could be a problem when assessing the criterion of an internal control environment; questions about durability and revenues after closure, etc. INTERACT foresees publishing the Questions & Answers of this seminar elaborated in close cooperation with the European Commission.



# are “delegated and implementing acts” unclear and complex procedures? not really!

The Lisbon Treaty brought some substantial modifications as regards the delegation of powers to the European Commission. It modified the functioning of „Comitology“. Articles 290 and 291 in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union regulates the „Comitology“ and have put in place two ways of delegating powers to the Commission.



By Fausta Corda, Quality Management Officer, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

## What is the difference between the two systems?

The „**Delegated Act**“, referred to in Article 290 TFUE, confers to the Commission the power to complete or modify elements that are not essential to the basic act. The Commission notifies simultaneously the Delegated Act to the Council and to the European Parliament. The Delegated Act enters into force if no objection has been expressed either by the Council or the European Parliament within the period set by the legislative act or before if the European Parliament and the Council inform that they will not object.

The „**Implementing Act**“, dealt under Article 291 TFUE, modifies slightly the „old“ Comitology system

applicable before the Lisbon Treaty. Like the delegated act, the implementing act is a non-legislative act which aims at implementing the legislation. Before adopting an implementing act, the Commission submits it to the formal committee composed of national experts. Depending on the content, the Commission exercises implementing powers in accordance with either the advisory procedure which is a lighter procedure compared to the examination procedure. There are several delegated and implementing acts which have been adopted since the entry into force of the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy legislative package. Most of these acts are applicable also to European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) but a few of them are specifically dedicated to ETC/ Interreg.

## delegated act (da)

*COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes (OJ L138 p.45 of 13.5.2014)*

The objective of the DA on eligibility of expenditure for Interreg programmes is to set out specific rules at European level with regard to five categories of expenditure (1) staff costs, (2) office and administrative expenditure, (3) travel and accommodation costs, (4) external expertise and services costs, and (5) equipment expenditure. This Delegated Regulation applies without prejudice to the eligibility rules applicable to all ESI Funds set out in Articles 65 - 71 of the Common Provisions Regulation No 1303/2013 and to the specific flat rate for staff costs set out in Article 18 ETC Regulation No 1299/2013 of 17 December 2013.

## implementing acts (ia)

*COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 16 June 2014 setting up the list of regions and areas eligible for funding from the European Regional Development Fund under the cross-border and transnational components of the European territorial cooperation goal for the period 2014 to 2020 (2014/388/EU) (OJ L183 p.75 of 24.6.2014)*

The objective of this IA is to define the geographical scope of cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes, it establishes the lists of cross-border and transnational areas eligible for funding from the ERDF, broken down by Interreg programme.

*COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 16 June 2014 setting up the list of cooperation programmes and indicating the global amount of total support from the European Regional Development Fund for each programme under the European territorial cooperation goal for the*

are “delegated and implementing acts” unclear and complex procedures? not really!

*period 2014 to 2020 (2014/366/EU)(OJ L178 p.18 of 18.6.2014) + COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 17 November 2014 amending above Decision (2014/805/EU)(OJ L332 p.31 of 19.11.2014)*

These IA set up the list of cooperation programmes and indicate the global amount of the total ERDF support for each Interreg programme and set out the contribution from the ERDF to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) within the scope of Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the contribution from the ERDF to cross-border and sea-basin programmes under the European Neighbourhood



Instrument (ENI) within the scope of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

*COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 288/2014 of 25 February 2014 laying down rules pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down*

*common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with regard to the model for operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal and pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal with regard to the model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal (OJ L87 p.32 of 22.3.2014)*

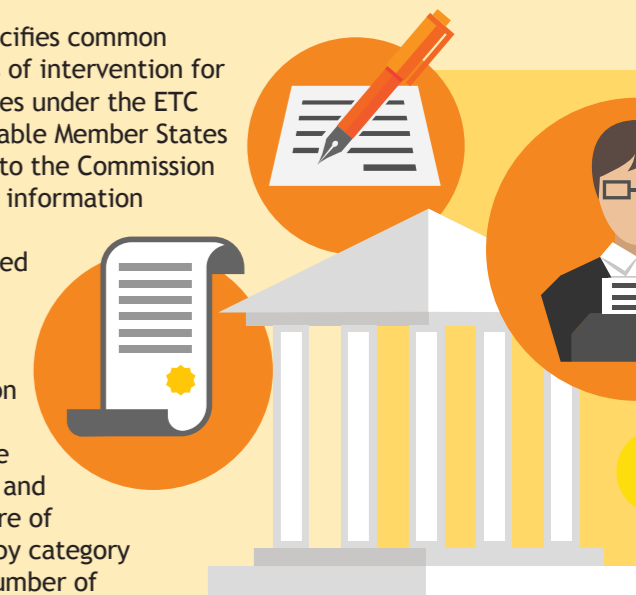
The second part of this IA lays down the model for Interreg programmes under the ETC goal. The model sets out uniform conditions for the presentation

of information in each section of the Interreg programmes. This is necessary to ensure that information is consistent, comparable and, where necessary, can be aggregated.

*COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 184/2014 of 25 February 2014 laying down pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the terms and conditions applicable to the electronic data exchange system between the Member States and the Commission and adopting pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, the nomenclature of the categories of intervention for support from the European Regional Development Fund under the European territorial cooperation goal (OJ L57 p.12 of 27.2.2014)*

The IA specifies common categories of intervention for programmes under the ETC goal to enable Member States to submit to the Commission consistent information on the programmed use of the ERDF, as well as information on the cumulative allocation and expenditure of the ERDF by category and the number of operations throughout the implementation period of a programme. This is to enable the Commission to inform the other Union institutions and citizens of the Union in an appropriate manner about the use of the ERDF.

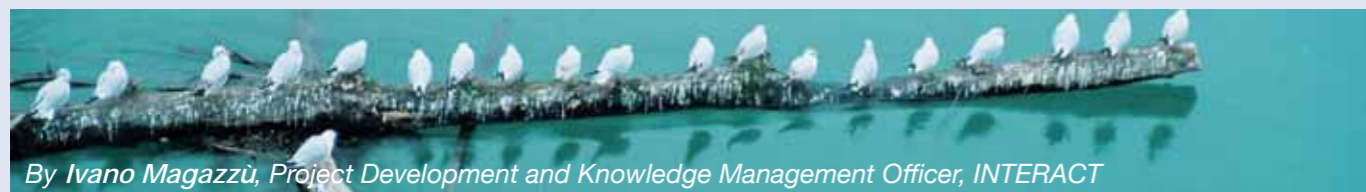
*For the first time there is a dedicated regulation for the European Territorial Cooperation and together with the above mentioned implementing and delegated acts, the implementation of Interreg programmes should be facilitated and developed in a coherent and harmonised way.*





# a fresh look at our territories, not seeking new ones, but having new eyes

One year ago the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament adopted the legislative framework for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. One year has quickly passed: Partnership agreements have been adopted, many Programmes have been discussed and finalised for submission, with a few of them already approved - but the voyage of discovery is still long.



By Ivano Magazzù, Project Development and Knowledge Management Officer, INTERACT

Sometimes words from the past are more current than ever. Marcel Proust wrote: “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Even if it's hard to say, it's not only time to discover and seek new landscapes, but also the time to start and act, to convert words into action. For this policy, one year is a relevant step, and 2014 has been the year for setting new ideas and now they should be translated into reality. In this light 2015 would be the first implementation year of a new generation of programmes facing difficult territorial challenges and socio-economic conditions: ESI funds and proper planning and management are meant to help this task and achieve impact solutions to these challenges.

To do this some tools are needed (and are already available) to achieve the best from Cohesion Policy and ESI funds themselves. It's time to build and to achieve the future of our territories all over Europe. The new 2014-2020 Regulations allow improving the efficiency of territorial development through new tools and innovative possibilities. The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) and the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) provide the legal and technical background for the tools.

INTERACT has the mission to support Interreg programmes in the planning and use of tools such as Community-led Local Development (CLLD), Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Joint Action Plans (JAP). Furthermore there's a specific provision to

support ‘cooperation actions’ in the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal (IGJ) according to Article 96.3 (d) (of Common Provisions Regulation 1303/2013).

The ITI is a framework for regional policy where a stronger bond is created between Member State, region and city and between the various programmes involved. The community, represented by the mayor and its city, can take responsibility for the activities to be implemented at an urban level and for their financial implications. It will be up to the cities to draft a development plan and its administrative steps, to make sure that the objective is reached. These activities will still be carried out after agreeing on its contents and main elements with the Member State: an example is the proposal for an ITI to be implemented by EGTC TRITIA in its area<sup>1</sup> in the field of connectivity and accessibility of the member regions, tourism, energy and environment.

The CLLD is not a new element, but for the first time it is being adopted within structural funds and for the purposes of cohesion policy. The original idea, the LEADER approach, has been hailed to be extremely useful and effective, because it could merge the bottom-up approach of smaller communities to find suitable solutions for a small territory, especially in cross-border contexts. We now hope that with more resources and with a different objective, the possibilities of the CLLD will prove to be even higher. The JAP is a combination of a tool allowing the bundle of funds and at the same time encouraging a simplification of the administrative management,

<sup>1</sup> See presentation at Open Days 2013 Workshop - 09A08 “New territorial features (ITI, JAP, CLLD) and European grouping of territorial cooperation in European territorial cooperation programmes, 9 October 2013 - Brussels, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2013](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2013) and [www.egtctritia.eu](http://www.egtctritia.eu).

<sup>2</sup> See presentation at Open Days 2013 Workshop - 09A08 “New territorial features (ITI, JAP, CLLD) and European grouping of territorial cooperation in European territorial cooperation programmes, 9 October 2013 - Brussels, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2013](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2013) and [www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu](http://www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu).

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION FACTSHEETS

European Commission Factsheet on CLLD  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf)

Common guidance of the European Commission's Directorates-General AGRI, EMPL, MARE and REGIO on Community-Led Local Development in European Structural and Investment funds - 29/04/2013 [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/pdf/preparation/clld\\_guidance\\_2013\\_04\\_29.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/pdf/preparation/clld_guidance_2013_04_29.pdf)

European Commission Factsheet on ITI  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/iti\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/iti_en.pdf)

2014 -2020 Guidance for Implementation - Joint Action Plans EC Guide on complementarity in ESIF  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/guides/synergy/synergies\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/synergy/synergies_en.pdf)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information/guidelines/index\\_en.cfm#17](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/guidelines/index_en.cfm#17) - see ‘cross-cutting thematic guidance’

thanks to the simplified cost option: one example on possible implementation is the JAP PAMINA 2020 proposed by Eurodistrict Regio PAMINA<sup>2</sup> dealing with cross-border labour market issues.

Such instruments are meant for the benefit of especially limited areas of European territories, in some cases cities, trying to develop sustainable interventions that are coherent with EU2020 strategy. This new approach would imply a better use and eventually a combination of the funds with a rationale and focus for the benefit of citizens. Some of these tools are brand new and include a large amount of commitment and responsibilities, like the Integrated Territorial Investment. Other instruments are actually a new generation of older practices, like the Community-led Local Development, which is borrowed by the LEADER approach.

So far, there is no real case or example of programmes having implemented operations according to these tools within Interreg. In order to share specific issues related to the implementation and management of these tools, INTERACT is willing to promote pilot activities and a network of interested stakeholders.

INTERACT's aim is also to help regions wanting to implement new territorial development tools and ‘cooperation actions’ under article 96.3 (d) to acquire information, examples and support from a growing network. This would also mean to disseminate knowledge and information about these tools and support the EU in its purpose. In this framework, 2015 will be the moment for implementing the tools that can deliver positive effects to territories.

These tools are going to be implemented concretely for the first time and by several programmes, but they nevertheless need to be applauded as they do

## INTERACT ACTIVITIES AND RELATED EVENTS

Website sections:  
[http://www.interact-eu.net/tools\\_and\\_guides\\_for\\_programme\\_start\\_up/tools\\_and\\_guides\\_for\\_programme\\_start\\_up/588/17409](http://www.interact-eu.net/tools_and_guides_for_programme_start_up/tools_and_guides_for_programme_start_up/588/17409)

[http://www.interact-eu.net/governance\\_2014\\_2020/cooperationigj2014\\_20/581/16997](http://www.interact-eu.net/governance_2014_2020/cooperationigj2014_20/581/16997)

Events on these topics:  
[http://www.interact-eu.net/events/kick\\_off\\_96\\_3d\\_milano/14/16978](http://www.interact-eu.net/events/kick_off_96_3d_milano/14/16978)

Open Days 2012: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2012](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2012)

Open Days 2013: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2013](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2013)

Example EGCT TRITIA: [http://apps.drachsoft.be/webfiles/opendays\\_2013/event\\_documents\\_09A08/11381611342616520.zip](http://apps.drachsoft.be/webfiles/opendays_2013/event_documents_09A08/11381611342616520.zip)

try to adopt a more concrete approach to territorial development in a practical way. Their value is the encouragement towards a new governance model, where there will be more opportunities for smart spending, more coordination and joint activities and less administrative tasks.

For all these reasons, INTERACT will continue to foster a network of European regions sharing know-how and experience in the implementation of projects under art. 96.3 (d). Also, this experience will be reviewed in the light of the new Cohesion Policy framework, with one objective: to make visible good examples started up by regions that succeeded in implementing the link between the “mainstream” and “European Territorial Cooperation/Interreg” goals of Cohesion Policy and other programmes in the 2007-2013 period.

There's so much to share and no need to reinvent things: the only need is the will of a close cooperation between European (and beyond) territories with a learning-supportive approach. Just looking at our regional potentials and on what these territories can learn each other would be the key for implementing positive and useful actions.

European territories do not need to be featured differently, but only to look deeply to their potentials and think about innovative ways to use the funds in a smart way. It's time to join efforts and knowledge, to look at issues with new eyes for our territories, looking concretely to the real and specific needs we want to address through more effective and participative solutions.

For more information on ‘cooperation actions’ and new territorial development tools - [ivano.magazzu@interact-eu.net](mailto:ivano.magazzu@interact-eu.net)



# EGTC GO goes for an “integrated territorial investment” for the interreg italy-slovenia programme!

EGTC GO was established in 2011 on the Italian-Slovenian border to enable joint strategic programming for the area of the three participating municipalities. One of its main goals was to develop a cross-border local development plan - the EGTC GO Area Strategy. With the new legal possibility for a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) to become an intermediate body for the integrated territorial investment (ITI), the EGTC GO and the Task Force of the Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Cross-border Cooperation Programme recognised their chance to jointly work on sustainable development of the area. Sandra Sodini, Director of the EGTC GO, provides an overview of the benefits that the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation offers to its members.

By Aleksandra Rapp, Project Manager, and Mauro Novello, Coordinator, INTERACT



Credit: EGTC GO

## What does the Interreg Italy-Slovenia programme expect from the ITI managed by the EGTC GO?

Laura Comelli (Managing Authority)  
*“We hope the ITI creates a framework for a stable and strategic cooperation in an urban area which currently is divided by a border. At the same time, it is a pilot project which can be hopefully replicated in the current and future programming periods.”*

Tatjana Renner (Monitoring Committee Member)  
*“After years of sporadic cooperation, though certainly important from the point of view of neighbourhood relations, we are finally seeing a strengthening of relations between the communities joined in EGTC GO. EGTC managed to design a long-term cross-border strategy for the benefit of citizens that are divided by administrative borders. A certain amount of funds was allocated to the EGTC GO for the implementation of two priority actions through the new mechanism ITI within the Cooperation Programme IT-SI 2014-2020. Hence, the Programme (still in a draft stage) first responded to the clear needs of the functionally connected urban areas, and secondly decided to test a true EU principle of multi-level governance. Now, it's up to all players involved, not just of the EGTC GO partnership, to justify the practical solutions of the intensified cooperation.”*

Flavia Zuccon (Monitoring Committee Member)  
*“Both the choices to have an ITI and an intermediate body to manage it were political decisions. The ITI financial size goes beyond the scale of a pilot project. A multi-funds approach using ETC and Investment for Growth and jobs programmes, under the urban policy, would have been more apt. The projects outlined inside the ITI proposal do not show a strategy, yet. The challenge is to demonstrate, also to the stakeholders, that it can produce positive effects on the overall programme area and that it won't be a totally separated sub-programme.”*

## EGTC GO exists for already 3 years - what does it mean to be an EGTC?

In case of our EGTC which was established by three municipalities governing three “facing cities” it means:

- To be a unique point of governance of cross-border matters for citizens and institutions, instead of the piecemeal approach we had in the past;
- To be a point of discussion, comparison and solution of problems effecting EGTC territory thanks to the Assembly and the Committees, where Italian and Slovenian representatives participate in a balanced way and thus are perceived as a common body;
- To be an innovative tool to provide new perspectives and a new cultural approach towards common challenges: to improve the life of citizens in a concrete way.

That sounds impressive. With such a background, involving EGTC GO into the implementation of the Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Cross-border Cooperation Programme must have come quite naturally. How did the idea of EGTC GO being responsible for management and implementation of an ITI for that programme actually start?

The life and the economy of the three cities have been influenced by the border for 60 years. When Slovenia joined the European Union, no one imagined that the fall of the border meant the end of an economic and social model. Therefore, to meet the challenge of common growth, it was necessary to act on more objectives in order to integrate the two territories.

An ITI represented the integrated delivery mechanism of this challenge, being able to act on the necessity of sharing services, of strengthening the economic potentials and of exploiting the common cultural and natural heritage of the EGTC GO area.

An ITI concept is not included either in the Italian or Slovenian Partnership Agreements since the individual Cooperation Programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation objective do not constitute part of them. However, the ITI is mentioned in the document (draft version) of the Cooperation Programme Italy Slovenia 2014-2020 in Section 4 “Integrated Approach to Territorial Development” with Reference to Article 8(3) of ETC Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. Moreover, the EGTC GO is mentioned in the Joint Declaration signed by the two governments on 27 May 2014, as a “pilot case in building joint and sustainable development of urban area composed of three towns”.

## How did the EGTC’s preparation process for being involved in implementation of the ITI look like? How did it start?

Three main pillars have been taken into consideration when finalizing the EGTC GO Area Strategy:

- Capitalisation of the two European programming periods of the Italy - Slovenia Programme, in order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of public investments;
- Revitalisation of the “border economy” - thanks to an innovative approach converting the point of strengths of the area;

*“Only a qualitative leap in cross-border planning can lead to the achievement of tangible results and with the ITI we are ready to GO for it! ”*

Sandra Sodini  
 Director of the EGTC GO

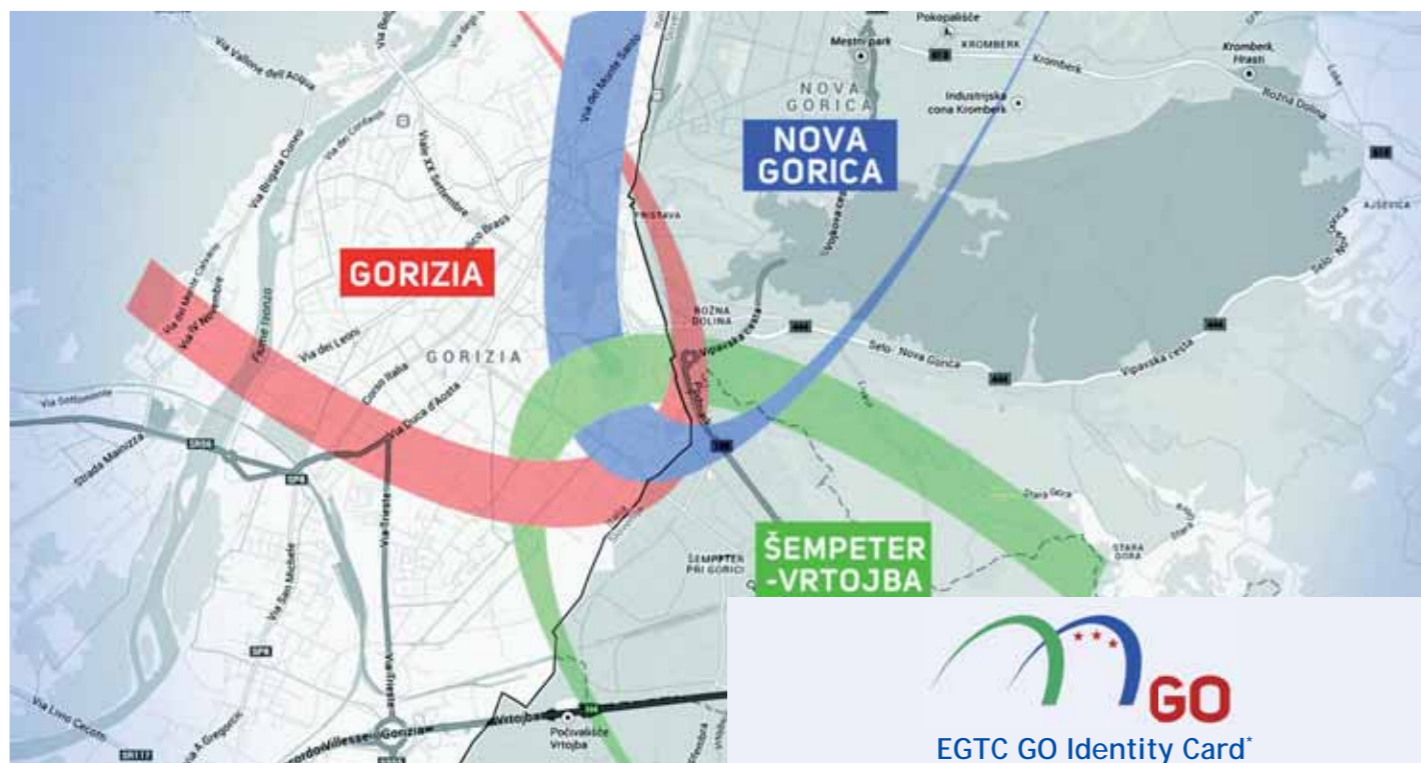
- Growth of joint local services to the citizens of the three municipalities, enhancing the excellence of the territory.

On the basis of these three pillars, EGTC GO started to work concretely taking advantage of the “work on the field” developed by its Committees (Health, Culture, Energy, Urban Planning, Youth, Transport). From late April to November 2012, we carried out the first public consultation of the three citizenships called “Your voice in the EGTC GO”. Next, the results were presented during a public conference in the framework of the “Open Days - Local event” still in 2012. After that, we collected all the feedback from local public and private stakeholders and elaborated the document “Objectives, actions and planning proposals for the EU Programming Period and the establishment of the Strategic Plan”. It was accepted unanimously by the EGTC GO Assembly

in November 2013 and presented officially a month later to the President of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the President of the Republic of Slovenia, on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the EGTC GO Premises in Gorizia.

On the basis of the Strategic Plan endorsed by the Assembly, EGTC GO started to elaborate the pilot actions in accordance with the public authorities. We decided to go for a strong participatory approach. In June 2014, EGTC GO formally asked the Task Force of the OP to present the Strategic Plan on one of the Task Force meetings. In July 2014 we got the confirmation from them and from that moment together we were working on implementing it within the ITI. In September 2014, the Task Force officially decided to take the idea on board.





**How did the Member States participating in the programme react?**

The decision to include an ITI by EGTC GO was deeply discussed at several Task Force meetings. The positions of the members were various: some were absolutely against, some in favour. In the end, considering the high added value and the innovative approach of the work performed by EGTC GO, the Task Force decided to allocate 10 million euro for the realisation of the pilot actions connected to two of the three measures of the strategy. That allocation was the result of a negotiation between EGTC GO and the Task Force of the Cooperation Programme, taking into account the pilot actions to be performed. EGTC GO operation may represent the first “EU cross-border laboratory” to understand the real value of the tools provided by the new EU regulations in achieving the objectives of the 2020 Strategy.

**So summing up, what in your opinion was the key success factor for including the EGTC in the implementation of the ITI in the programme?**

The awareness at all decision-making levels! Everyone is aware that in the previous programming period interventions got fragmented into single projects that were carried out without a real cross-border strategy of the area covered by the EGTC GO. Only a qualitative leap in cross-border planning can lead to the achievement of tangible results and with the ITI we are ready to GO for it!

**Members:** Gorizia (IT), Nova Gorica (SLO) and Šempeter-Vrtojba (SLO)

**Headquarters:** Gorizia (Italy); temporarily c/o Informest

**Operative office:** Gorizia (Italy); Trgovski Dom, Corso Verdi 52

**Established:** 2011

**Duration:** unlimited

**Objectives:** Supporting and developing the territorial cooperation programmes aimed to reinforce territorial and social cohesion in different fields: energy, environment, transport, culture and tourism, urban planning. Main task of the EGTC is the strategic coordination of development policies related to the metropolitan area.

**Legislation:** Italian

**Juridical form:** Recognised non-profit association with juridical personality operating under public law

**Territorial jurisdiction:** Members’ territory; Participation to the EGTC is open to other public institutions or operating under public law as ‘associated members’ - conditions settled by the Assembly

**Working languages:** Italian and Slovenian

**Webpage:** [www.euro-go.eu](http://www.euro-go.eu)

Source: “EGTC Monitoring Report 2013. Towards the New Cohesion Policy”, Committee of Regions

**Do you have any recommendations for other EGTCs that would like to be involved in ITI?**

- Work on a territorial strategy connected to real needs through a strong participatory approach;
- Convert strategy into concrete territorial actions with clear results and indicators;
- In order to achieve results within the EU programming period, go for operations whose decision-making process depends on local actors.



Credit: European Parliament

**mercedes bresso**

She has an impressive background. For example, she served as President of the Province of Turin and President of the Piedmont Region, both in Italy. She held the Presidency of the Committee of Regions, being the first woman ever in reaching this achievement. In July 2014 she was elected Member of the European Parliament in Italy. Under these lines, Mercedes Bresso shares with us some aspects of the new European parliamentary term.

*By Laura Belenguer, INTERACT Valencia*

**You are an expert in environmental economics, having published many books and essays. How did you end up in the European field?**

I would prefer to say that from the beginning I wanted to be active at the European level. In both my academic and political career, my commitment to Europe has been absolutely central. One of the first books I wrote, in 1979, a few years after becoming professor for Economics and Environmental Economics at the Faculty of engineering in Torino was about the structural policy of the European Communities. 1979! It was the real beginning of the European structural policies after the founding of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975. I wrote this book with other authors but one can see that already back in 1979, I was focused on the European topic and especially on structural policies.

At the same time as an environmental economic expert, I have the certitude that our European continent is the best framework for the economy to develop its full potential. Ecological policies cannot be efficient if they are created inside national borders since resources, such as groundwater tables, don’t know national borders. I love my region - that’s why I have been President of the Region Piemont- but I always understood that the future of Europe lays in the subsidiarity and our capacity to integrate the local level of political action within the European mechanisms.

**Working on bringing Europe closer to society is a constant in your career. In this sense, how would you like to address this objective in your work as a MEP?**

I truly understand the growing critique of people saying that Europe creates too much regulation. From my point of view as a legislative actor I don’t think this is always the case because we are working on very concrete issues which make the life of European citizens better. Maybe these issues are too specific like the power of light bulbs or the size of some vegetables. Nevertheless, this is the perception of the majority and we have to act to change. Otherwise, all the efforts since 1957 will be sunk in a massive Europhobic wave.

As a MEP I have two concerns. The first one is to make my work understandable by the majority and to keep in mind that every report or project that will become a European law needs to have a direct effect on the population. The European Union will earn more credibility through concrete actions and a better communication of what Europe is and does for its citizens. The second key factor is re-orientating the direction that Europe is taking. For many people the European Union is perceived only as an economic alliance and this is obviously a problem because the European Union is far more than that. We need to re-write the European project in order to make it understood and truly accepted by the population.

**Interreg just became Goal 2 of the Cohesion Policy. In your long experience, you have witnessed the evolution of Territorial Cooperation. How do you see its role in the 2014-2020 period?**

Interreg becoming Goal 2 of the Cohesion Policy was a big step forward because territorial and cross-border cooperation was beginning to be taken seriously by the European Commission. In the EU 28, more than 62% of the territory of the EU is in the cross-border zone, which means all have connections -economic, social, political or cultural bindings with the neighbour country or region. Making the continent more united and coherent is mainly to not suppress the differences but to suppress the negative side-effects of still having borders. Cooperation is about solidarity and understanding, values we absolutely need in this period of political, social and economic crisis.

**Interreg should be more present in the political debates. How do you think this can be achieved in the specific debates at the European Parliament?**

2014 and 2015 are two years that are crucial for Interreg and broadly for the territorial and cross-border policies of the Union. In 2014, the Parliament judged the last programming period and gave recommendations for the next programming period. One focus will be to push forward the Goal 2 of the Cohesion Policy because especially in times of crisis the synergies created between regions can bring better results than the action at a local level in a national context. As former president of the Committee of the Regions, I will especially focus on this issue.



## meet the team

Coming from over 20 different countries and having a wide range of backgrounds, the INTERACT team is a diverse group of people who are passionate about cooperation in Europe. The purpose of this section is to let you know a bit more about us by introducing you to a different team member in each issue of the newsletter.

By Maria Baetti, Communication Manager, INTERACT



**Name:** Fabrizio Rossi  
**Nationality:** Italian  
**Working at INTERACT Point Valencia since:** September 2014

**Can you tell me about a cross-border experience that has impacted your life?**

The cross-border experience that impacted me the most was probably more of a cross-cultural experience. When I was 18, I left Sardinia to work in a French restaurant in London for the summer. It was my first real working experience, and I worked alongside people from five different countries. It was definitely a turning point for me. It was like I was discovering the outside world for the first time.

**Why did you decide to work in the field of territorial cooperation?**

When I finished my degree in political science I got a scholarship to do a traineeship in Scotland. I worked for the Ministry in the Structural Funds Department, and that's how I got started in the field. I really feel that territorial cooperation is the key to a better Europe, and I'm happy to be able to contribute to it.

**In your job, what is your favourite part and what part is the most challenging?**

My job is routine-less and I like that. I'm working on many different tasks in one day and I find that amazing. In terms of challenges, I try very hard to have a client-oriented approach, and that's not always easy. I always have to think of what Interreg actors expect from us, and I try to put myself in their shoes. Although it can be difficult, I think it leads to the best results.

**What has been your favourite project at INTERACT so far?**

Right now I'm carrying out a survey on capitalisation



Credit: ©Stockphoto.com/VLADGRIN

practices in Interreg, and it's very interesting. I have gained a lot of practical knowledge on how cooperation programmes have dealt with knowledge management in the 2007-2013 period. I feel like I understand the full picture of activities going on in Interreg, and that has been an enriching experience.

**What is your professional goal for this year?**

My next task will be to reactivate the Mediterranean lab group so my goal this year is to do that as best as I can.

**What do you like to do in your free time?**

I love traveling and reading. I also enjoy playing sports, particularly football and boxing.

**What is your favourite movie and why?**

It's not easy to pick, but I'd say 'The Great Dictator' by Charlie Chaplin. It impacted me a lot when I first saw it. It's the first Charlie Chaplin movie where characters are speaking, which was revolutionary for the time. I also find it curious that Charlie Chaplin later said that he wouldn't have made that film (it was released in 1940) if he had known what horrors would follow during World War II. It's amazing to think about what a visionary he was.

**What type of music do you like to listen to? What is your favourite band?**

I like all different kinds of music, but in the last months I have started listening more and more to classical music. One of my favourite bands is Depeche Mode - I just went to see them in concert in Paris. That was a great show!

**What is your favourite book and why?**

'A Long Road to Freedom' by Nelson Mandela. I'm reading it now actually, but I had the feeling from the beginning that this book represents something very important.

**If you could have one super power, what would it be and why?**

I would love to fly. Whenever I board a plane I feel like a child. So I guess in my next life I will be a pilot.

## event highlights

1st meeting of the working group on risk assessment and anti-fraud measures  
19 February 2015 | Lille (France)

Evaluation Plan event: how to draft a programme evaluation plan, guidance and exchange  
24 February 2015 | Paris (France)

Certifying Authorities network meeting  
4 March 2015 | Rome (Italy)

INTERACT event on "Anti-fraud measures for Interreg programmes"  
25 March 2015 | Brussels (Belgium)

Interreg Communication Network Seminar  
24-25 March 2015 | Edinburgh (UK)

Project reporting and monitoring  
25-26 March 2015 | Bruges (Belgium)

Interreg for EGTC  
14 April 2015 | Madrid (Spain)

Project generation and assessment seminar  
15 April 2015 | Madrid (Spain)

Inter-programme capacity and competence  
April 2015 | Riga (Latvia) and Barcelona (Spain)

Designation event  
29 April 2015 | Barcelona (Spain)

VI Annual Forum of the EUSBSR: Achieving e-quality by connecting the region  
15-16 June 2015 | Jurmala (Latvia)

Project Management Summer Camp  
23-26 June 2015 | Dublin (Ireland)

6<sup>th</sup> meeting of Interreg Audit Authorities and members of Groups of Auditors  
24-25 June 2015 | Dubrovnik (Croatia)

You can check out all INTERACT events on:  
[www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net)



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# Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

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the European Commission and INTERACT invite you to

*celebrate together the 25 years of Interreg*

Discover achievements, reflect and be inspired

*See what Interreg has changed*

*and what Interreg can achieve within and outside the EU*

Mark the date: **15-16 September 2015**

Join us at Campus Belval, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

Participation will also be possible via  
live streaming and Twitter

Interreg  
project slam,  
exhibition of  
programme results  
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