

WHAT IS EGTC GO?

EGTC GO

The EGTC GO (**European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation**) was founded in 2011 by the municipalities of **Gorizia (Italy)**, **Nova Gorica** and **Šempeter-Vrtojba (both in Slovenia)**. This public body has jurisdiction over the territory of all three cities, and a cross-border mission: supporting the three founding municipalities in defining and implementing a joint development strategy for the territory.

From its founding, the European ITI - Integrated Territorial Investment projects Salute-Zdravstvo and Isonzo-Soča, the winning of the European Capital of Culture 2025 title, the kickoff and management of the small projects fund (SPF) GO! 2025 (Interreg Italy-Slovenia) and the redevelopment of the Transalpina/Europe Square have all been projects with a great impact.

GORIZIA / NOVA GORICA / ŠEMPETER-VRTOJBA

Our territory is located in the extreme east of Italy (in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region) and in the extreme west of Slovenia (Goriška), it embraces the Soča/Isonzo river and lies between the hills of Brda/Collio and the Karst. The area has a total of roughly 80,000 inhabitants.

The Gorizia/Goriška region is geographically uniform, just as historically its path has been common. Under various rulers and dominations, the population has lived together, proudly interpreting three civilisations: Latin, Slavic and Germanic. In the 20th century, a border was drawn that changed the face of the territory and the lives of the inhabitants. Since 2007, this wound is being sewn up, breaking down concrete and abstract borders.

DIALOGUE WITH THE TERRITORY

The work of the EGTC GO is made possible by the continuous dialogue and support of institutions at all levels: European Union, ministries, regional and local authorities. The constant comparison with the experiences of the (profit and non-profit) realities that work and animate the three cities where the EGTC GO mainly operates is also fundamental.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LOCAL AREA

The region of Gorizia comprises the area between the Isonzo/Soča river and its tributaries Vipava, Iudrio and Idrijca, and the Collio and Karst regions. The area gained political-administrative unity thanks to the patriarchs of Aquileia and the Counts of Gorizia. From the 11th century onwards it went through several geopolitical changes and only after the extinction of the dynasty of the Counts of Gorizia, it gained its territorial structure that remained unchanged until 1918.

At the beginning of the 15th century, the land of the patriarchs of Aquileia came under the rule of the Venetian Republic. Motivated by the intention to claim the succession rights of the extinct Counts of Gorizia, in 1508 the Venetians started the war against the House of Habsburg. The battles ended only in 1521, when the Habsburgs won and inherited the territories of the Counts of Gorizia. In 1809 most of the territory of Gorizia was annexed to the Illyrian Provinces, while a minor area was already part of the Napoleonic Empire since 1807. With the demise of

Napoleon boundaries were redefined and remained unchanged until the end of World War I.

Although in the mid-eighteenth century the first industrial plants began to settle in the area, the region maintained its predominantly agricultural tradition for a long time. One hundred years later, due to the new rail link and the strategic location by the border, trade flourished until it was interrupted by World War I and the Isonzo Front in May 1915.

In November 1918 the area was occupied by Italian military forces and, after the Treaty of Rapallo (1920), became part of the Italian territory. In 1923, the Province of Gorizia was abolished and its territories were annexed to the Provinces of Udine and Trieste. In 1927 the boundaries were redefined and the Province of Gorizia reintroduced.

After World War II, the area of Gorizia was conquered by partisans. Following the Belgrade and Duino agreements (1945), the area was divided into the A Zone, which was managed by the American and British armies, and the B Zone, which was managed by Yugoslavia. The area of Gorizia became the reason of a political and diplomatic dispute. Following the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), most of the territory was annexed to Yugoslavia, while a smaller part, including Gorizia, was annexed to Italy.

The new border - almost insurmountable in the early years - ran along the edges of the city of Gorizia and separated it from its hinterland which was traditionally connected to the city. In 1948, on the Slovenian side a new city was built. It was called Nova Gorica. Following the Udine Agreement (1955), signed by Italy and Yugoslavia, a new border was created. In the following Iron Curtain years it regulated trade across the borders for those who hold a specific permit and the farmers whose lands were crossed by the boundary line. Following the Treaty of Osimo (1975), the land and sea borders between the two countries were finally settled, while the agreements for economic promotion and cooperation gave impetus and contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the population along the border.

In that period, the border area was extremely important for both countries, since it fostered mutual development (trade, transportation and shipping, customs, police and army, etc.). Despite the significant differences between the two countries, on both sides many were willing to cross the border, especially those involved in sports and cultural activities. In the following decades the two neighbouring cities and their surroundings developed as two adjacent and connected urban areas.

In 1990, Yugoslavia began to fall apart and, following the proclamation of independence of Slovenia, the Yugoslav army tried to forcefully prevent the creation of an independent Slovenian state. The war lasted ten days and was followed by negotiations and the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Slovenia. Over the following years, the Slovenian state adopted democratic standards and gained international recognition. In 2004 it became a member of the EU and in 2007, exactly ten years after Italy, became part of the Schengen area.

Due to these new conditions, great opportunities for joint collaboration and cohesion in the border area arose. Although it was clear that cross-border cooperation should be redefined, the opportunities were not seized.

Nevertheless, the neighbouring provinces felt the need to collaborate and carried out several initiatives such as the establishment of a joint bureau for the coordination of the three municipal administrations. The establishment of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is a qualitative leap compared to the previous forms of collaboration, and is based on the principles of the new European legislation.

The legal basis on which the EGTC was established is represented by the Regulation (EC) no. 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Implementation Act, by the Regulation of the Republic of Slovenia on the establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (OJ no. 31/08 and 9/11) and by the Law of the Republic of Italy no. 88/2009 of 7 July 2009 on the adoption of the Regulation (EC) no. 1082/06 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Implementation Act.

The preparatory work for the establishment of the EGTC GO began in late 2009, when the Italian-Slovenian working group began to examine the European legislation and the regulations applied by both states. This initial phase was then followed by the negotiations regarding the location of the main office, the organizational bodies, the operational methods and the drafting of the statute and of the agreement. In early 2010, the municipal councils of the three founding municipalities approved the founding acts. On 19 February 2010, in Gorizia the mayors of the three founding municipalities signed the Convention on the establishment of the EGTC. The Slovenian government approved the establishment of the EGTC in June 2010, the Italian government in May 2011. The Group was registered as a legal entity on 15 September 2011. The first meeting of the Assembly was held on 3 February 2012, and on this occasion Mr Franco Frattini was elected as President and Mr Robert Golob as Vice-president.

WHAT DOES THE EGTC GO DO?

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

Redevelopment of Transalpina/Europe Square

The official inauguration ceremony of the European Capital of Culture GO! 2025 took place on February 8th, 2025 in the Transalpina/Europe Square, a square which sits half in Italy and half in Slovenia. Just a year earlier, in February 2024, the construction site for the redevelopment of the square and its surrounding had opened. This cross-border investment, worth over 4 million euros, was managed by the EGTC GO at the request of the two municipalities, the Municipality of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and the Municipality of Gorizia (Italy). It represents one of the most important infrastructural works within the so-called ECOC District, which was the main venue of the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica-Gorizia.

This is a cross-border investment for which - thanks to the constructive cooperation of the two municipalities, the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Republic of Slovenia - EGTC GO has obtained EU funding under the FVG Regional Programme (PR FESR 2021-2027) as 'Europe 27 Programme' and the Slovenian National Operational Programme (OP 2021-2027).

Furthermore, in order to overcome the bureaucratic barriers involved in organising events in a space located between two EU countries, EGTC GO turned to the B-solutions initiative as early as 2023 with the 'GO! Borderless Square'. Participation in this initiative, which aims to tackle legal and administrative obstacles on the internal borders of the EU, led to the creation of schematic and clear instructions for the organisation of events on the square, listing the rules to be followed and the necessary forms, with the ultimate goal of making the square itself more usable.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/transalpinatrgevrope/transalpina-trg-evrope/>

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-attivi/b-solutions-go-square/>

The online platform GO2025.EU

The go2025.eu website, or Borderless Wireless Platform, was one of the pillars of the bid book, the document which won Nova Gorica and Gorizia the title of European Capital of Culture. It was planned and is being implemented by the EGTC GO.

In addition to being the Capital's official platform for events, projects and news, it also includes accommodation and sightseeing information in the cross-border area, offering tourists a one-stop-shop for all the information they need. They can find details on what's on, where to stay, eat and what to see in a vast territory that extends far beyond the perimeter of the cities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, and includes the area of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Slovenian border regions, from Collio - Brda to the Slovenian Karst, from the Vipava Valley, Idrija to the entire Soča Valley.

The platform, which has been built through an articulated participatory planning process, has among its stakeholders both Italian and Slovenian tourism promotion institutions of the border area. After GO! 2025, the website is continuing its mission as a key element of the legacy of the European Capital of Culture, evolving to meet the changing needs, thus ensuring a lasting impact on the area and a valuable added value for tourism and cultural promotion.

For further information:

www.go2025.eu

BorderLabs CE: Participatory cross-border governance for transition management in central European cross-border regions (Interreg Central Europe)

With this pilot action, the EGTC GO aims to formulate a cross-border development model of sustainable slow-tourism, providing benefits not only to the municipalities of the EGTC GO (Gorizia, Nova Gorica, Šempeter-Vrtojba) but to the whole cross-border area between Slovenia and Italy, i.e. 27 Italian and 13 Slovenian municipalities. The strategic objective is to take advantage of the great visibility given by the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2025, to generate a long-term positive impact on this area full of natural attractions.

To implement the pilot activity, the route of an extensive cross-border cycle network including public bike sharing and the corresponding investment needs will be analyzed. To support this process, a network of bicycle counters will be installed and used for mapping cycling flows in the cross-border region. Moreover, there will be an assessment of the feasibility of the creation of sustainable accommodation facilities across borders. This aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the specific strategies and requirements needed to develop an integrated cross-border model of sustainable tourism in the area. The result of the pilot activity, which is based on a participatory process involving local, regional and national stakeholders, tourism organisations and service providers, will be a consolidated and integrated model bringing sustainable cycling tourism closer to some places which are still not well-known but are rich in cultural and natural heritage.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/governance-transfrontaliera-partecipativa-la-gestione-della-transizione-nelle-regioni-transfrontaliere-delleuropa-centrale/>

Isonzo-Soča project (Integrated Territorial Investment, Interreg Italia-Slovenija)

The Isonzo-Soča project, which the EGTC GO managed, included the construction of a cross-border network of walking and cycling routes that constituted a cross-border urban park; this park improved the sustainable mobility of the inhabitants of the area. Consequently, the area also has become more attractive for citizens and tourists and this positively affected the economy of the area. Furthermore, a communication campaign promoted and identified the territory as a new touristic destination.

Specifically, the project aimed to the construction, in the territories of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, of a cross-border network of cycle and pedestrian paths along the Isonzo river and along the State Border that connects Solkan to Šempeter-Vrtojba. By 2021 substantial infrastructure works were completed, which improved the usability of the area and increased its attractiveness for citizens and tourists.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/altri-progetti/progetti-iti-isonzo-so%C4%8D/>

INVESTMENTS IN LOCAL CULTURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES

Small Projects Fund GO! 2025 (Interreg Italia-Slovenija)

The main objectives of the GO! 2025 Small Projects Fund are and have been preparing the cross-border territory, supporting the programme and carrying forward the legacy of the European Capital of Culture.

The fund, financed by the European Union through the Interreg Italy-Slovenia 2021-2027 programme, is managed by EGTC GO on the cross-border territory including the province of Venice and the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region on the Italian side and five regions, Osrednjeslovenska, Primorsko notranjska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška, on the Slovenian side. From 2023, the EGTC GO has financed over 60 small cross-border projects distributed among three calls, to which associations, enterprises, organisations, educational institutions and universities, public and private bodies, from the cross-border area of the programme have participated. Overall, the fund is worth around 10 million euros; aside from the EU, the EGTC GO has received some additional funding from the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/spf/documentazione-di-programma/>

BeWop (Interreg Italia-Slovenija)

The BeWoP project (Beyond Walk of Peace: from Crossborder Historical Research and Cultural Heritage to European Trail and Stories) addresses the common

challenge of developing an integrated and sustainable cultural-tourism offering in rural and suburban areas. BeWoP builds on the results of two cross-border projects: the strategic WALKofPEACE project, awarded Best Interreg Project in 2020, and the capitalization project Walk of Peace+. At the same time, it will foster synergies with the GOV4PeaCE project, implemented under the Interreg Central Europe program. The EGTC GO is one of the project partners.

The World War I sites near the border have already been enhanced through various research, investment, and tourism promotion activities. Despite the creation of the 500 km cross-border cultural-tourism route Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic, and the restoration of many monuments, there are still many opportunities to promote and further develop this unique cross-border tourism product, which combines slow/sustainable, cultural, and outdoor tourism.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-attivi/bewop/>

INVESTMENT IN HEALTH AND EMERGENCY COORDINATION

Salute-Zdravstvo project (Interreg Italia-Slovenija)

The project “Construction of a network of cross-border health services” aimed at improving the use and the performance of social-health services within the cross-border territory of the EGTC GO, through a work of integration between the services and health facilities involved in the project.

The project contemplated the constitution of a network made up of excellences from both territories, considering the needs of the citizens and the necessity to renew the programming of the services in order to have an efficient system that will ensure the universal right to healthcare. It included the establishment of three cross-border medical teams in the field of mental health, autism and physiological pregnancy and the creation of a single centre for the booking of social and health services shared by Italian and Slovenian health facilities.

It also looked at some solutions for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in order to integrate social assistance services. The project was developed in collaboration with the Slovenian Ministry of Health and the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/altri-progetti/progetti-iti-salute-zdravstvo/>

Sanitas project (Interreg Italia-Slovenija)

The SANITAS project addresses the common challenge of adapting to climate change through more comprehensive, coordinated, and strengthened cross-border

cooperation. It aims to improve equipment, skills, and the speed of response to natural disasters by implementing preventive measures in the cross-border area of the program. The expected outcomes of the project include the signing and implementation of the Cross-Border Protocol in the field of primary healthcare in the wider cross-border area between Slovenia and Italy, continued cross-border cooperation among project partners to secure as many co-signatories as possible, and ongoing collaboration of healthcare and rescue teams in activities that will enable them to be properly prepared for a rapid response to natural disasters. The EGTC GO is one of the project partners.

For further information:

<https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-attivi/sanitas-cooperazione-transfrontaliera-predisporre-unazione-congiunta-materia-di-assistenza-sanitaria-essenziale-durante-le-catastrofi-naturali/>

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Online channels

We share weekly news from our cross-border area in multiple languages. Follow us on your preferred platform and stay up to date:

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