



European Week of Regions and Cities

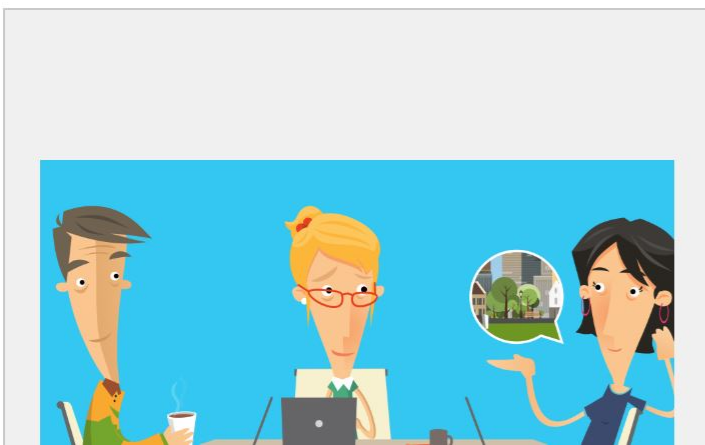
7-10 OCTOBER 2019 | BRUSSELS



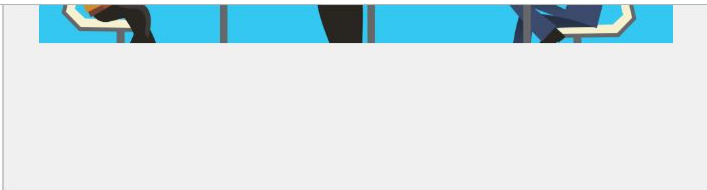
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Stories about the impact and added value of interregional cooperation

October 9, 2018 from 14:30 to 15:00



Europe is full of solutions. Sharing them benefits us all. Interregional cooperation is the engine that makes this happen. At this very moment, over 2000 project partners in more than 200 regions across Europe are exchanging experiences and learning from each other. What comes out of all this? At best, cooperation sparks innovative solutions that are transformed into actions and lasting results in the regions. Are you looking for inspiration or new ideas? Join us for three short talks with concrete examples of the impact, results and added value of interregional cooperation.



Code: 9TK120

Format: [EURegions talks](#)

Moderator: [Nicolas Singer](#)

Speakers: [Lilita Sparāne](#), [Ian Bloomfield](#)

Thematic cluster: [Territorial development \(regional, urban, rural\)](#)

Organisers: [Interreg Europe](#)

Languages: english (en)

Venue: Building SQUARE - Brussels Convention Centre, Room 213

Session summary

This session focused on three key benefits of interregional cooperation:

1. Addressing **local needs**
2. Accessing new knowledge and getting **inspiration** from other regions
3. Bringing **concrete benefits** that can lead to **long term impact**

Nicolas Singer (Interreg Europe) opened the session by outlining the impressive [results achieved](#) by hundreds of interregional cooperation projects and their spin-off activities over the years.

The added value of interregional cooperation was demonstrated with two concrete examples:

- **Lilita Sparane** (Ministry of Culture in Latvia) shared the inspiration drawn from an Interreg Europe project **Design4Innovation**;
- **Ian Bloomfield** (Durham County Council in UK) shared the lessons learned and impact of an INTERREG IVC project **REENERGY**.

Photos



Please, click on the image to see the photo gallery, you will be redirected to an external site.

Additional information

- [📄 Session slides](#)
- [🖼️ descriptive picture from the session](#)

In Latvia, the Ministry of Culture was looking for ways to turn their Design Strategy into action. Exchange of experiences with European partners in an Interreg Europe project '[Design4Innovation](#)' has helped with that. Besides sharing good practices, this cooperation has helped to integrate design thinking in strategies and policies.

Interregional cooperation has inspired tangible actions. For instance, a visit to Flanders (Belgium) to discover design support instruments inspired the Latvian Investment and Development Agency to create their own design voucher programme to encourage design-driven innovation in SMEs.

The importance of design thinking is now recognised on all levels of decision making, marked by the '[Latvia Design Strategy 2020](#)' introduced in 2017. This interdisciplinary strategy transcends traditional sectoral boundaries. It reflects the learnings from interregional cooperation, including the understanding that design is a strategic process, an approach, and a way of identifying and solving problems.

In Durham (UK), the County Council was looking for ideas on how small communities can make use of renewable energy. To find new solutions, they joined the INTERREG IVC project '[REENERGY](#)'.

During REENERGY, a study visit to Denmark helped staff and stakeholders from Durham plan a project supporting local SMEs to cut CO2 emissions. Stakeholders also understood what a small community can accomplish by creating their own renewable energy source.

- [Latvia Design Strategy 2020](#) ↗
- [Design 4 Innovation project website](#) ↗
- [Effects of interregional cooperation](#) ↗
- [More information on Interreg Europe website](#) ↗

These stories illustrate the richness of and variety of results achieved with interregional cooperation projects. The story from Durham shows how sharing inspiration sparks bottom-up action in a local community, while the story from Latvia demonstrates how regions can change strategies and policies thanks to interregional cooperation.

Take away message

Interregional cooperation provides a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from other regions. By starting from a local challenge or issue to be addressed and involving the relevant stakeholders, cooperation across regions can yield new inspiration. When this inspiration is transformed into actions, interregional cooperation leads to long term benefits. At best, these benefits go well beyond the project and the immediate partners and stakeholders, ultimately benefiting the region or even the country as a whole.



Political and stakeholder involvement has not only improved community awareness, but has left a legacy which has seen the development of future ERDF projects. (Ian Bloomfield)



Design is a process of strategic development, a way of identifying and solving problems, a tool for innovation and for overall well-being. Design is a verb. And design thinking can help us in all sectors and fields. Nowadays design skills should become equal to digital skills. (Lilita Sparane)