



21st edition of the #EURegionsWeek

Reaching out to new regions - Solidarity and cohesion through interregional cooperation

Cohesion through cooperation: the European context



*Gilles Kittel, REGIO D1, IPA/EUSAIR/EU
Accession Negotiation team leader, 10
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- 1 Main convergence-supporting EU instruments available to SEE6
- 2 A new generation of Interreg programmes
- 3 Interreg Europe's widening

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Main convergence-supporting EU instruments available to SEE6

Main convergence-supporting EU instruments available to SEE6:

- EU's revised enlargement methodology adopted in February 2020:
 - Accelerated integration measures, e.g.
 - intra-regional economic cooperation and trade,
 - connectivity agenda,
 - Erasmus+, etc.
- An **Economic and Investment Plan** for the Western Balkans and the **Green Agenda** for the Western Balkans adopted in October 2020:
 - 9 Bn€ in grants and investment guarantees for bringing the Western Balkans closer to EU.
 - Large-scale investments / endorsed Flagship Projects under the WBIF.
- **Institution building instruments** TAIEX and Twinning

Main convergence-supporting EU instruments available to SEE6:

- The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (**IPA III**):
 - 14 Bn€ over 2021-2027
 - More synergies with a wide range of EU internal policy programmes to maximise impact on key priority sectors such as security, migration, research and innovation, environment and climate action, transport and energy connectivity.
- **Multilateral initiatives and platforms** in the WB region:
 - Horizontal: the Berlin Process, the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Western Balkans Regional Economic Area (REA), the Open Balkan, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII), the Central European Initiative (CEI), etc.
 - Sectoral : the Energy Community, the Transport Community, Cultural routes of the Council of Europe – Routes4U, etc
 - Bilateral technical assistance from MS and third countries (NO, CH, etc)
- **Upcoming initiatives:** European Political Community, Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, etc.

*“We need to set out a **vision for a successful enlargement**. (...) We need to move past old, binary debates about enlargement. This is not a question of deepening integration or widening the Union. We can and we must do both. And, yes, that means including through a European Convention and Treaty change if and where it is needed. But we cannot – and we should not – wait for Treaty change to move ahead with enlargement. This is why the Commission will start working on a series of **pre-enlargement policy reviews** to see how each area may need to be adapted to a larger Union.”*

*Extracts from **2023 State of the Union Address** by President von der Leyen*

2 A new generation of Interreg programmes

PASSION LED US HERE

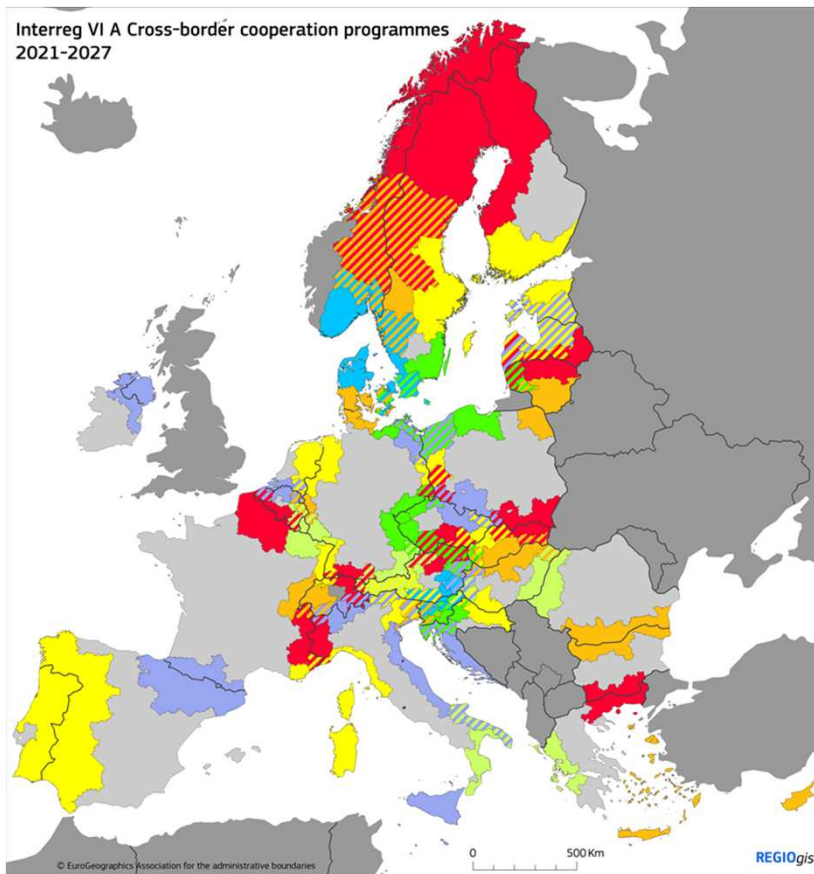
“You can’t solve a problem on the same level that it was created. You have to rise above it to the next level.”

Albert Einstein

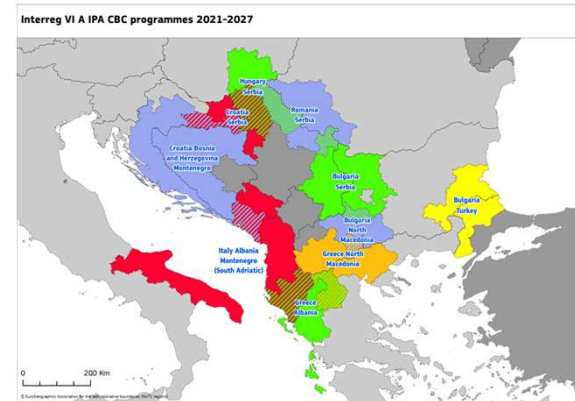
#EUbudget, #EUSolidarity, #StrongerTogether

STRAND A – Cross-Border Cooperation

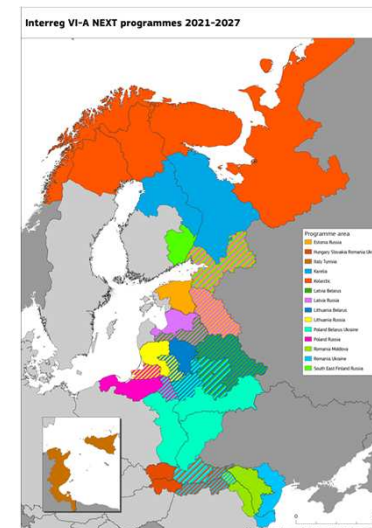
48 internal CBC and PEACE+



10 Interreg IPA CBC programmes

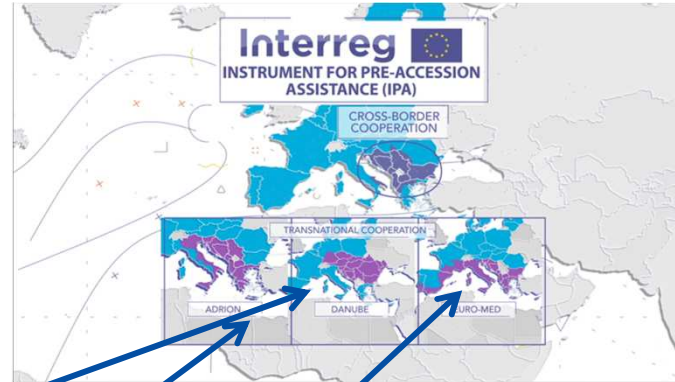
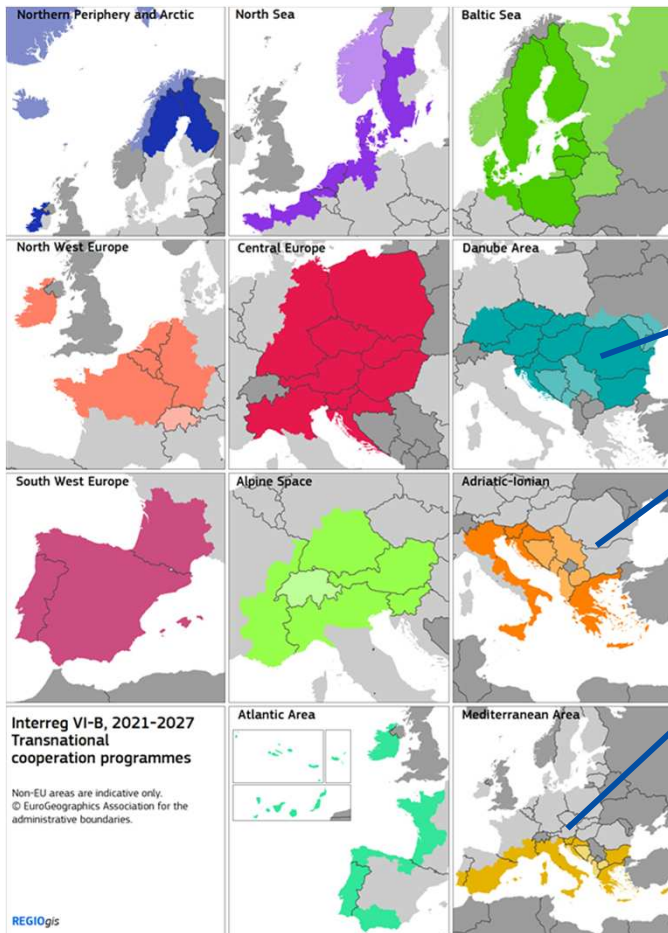


7 NEXT CBC (7 OPs with Russia cancelled)

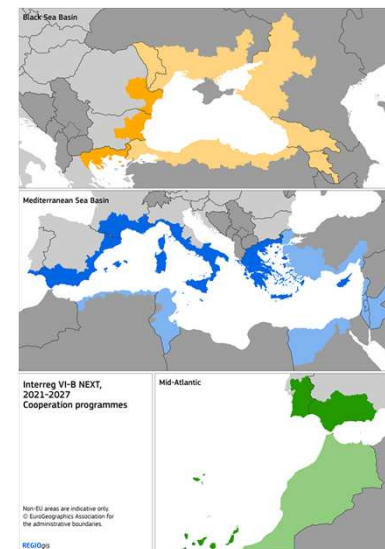


STRAND B - Transnational Cooperation

11 INTERNAL/IPA TN, out of which:



3 NEXT TN (2 at this moment):



STRAND C - Interregional cooperation



Improves Interreg programmes implementation



Inspires policy-making by territorial evidence



Fosters integrated urban development – URBACT IV programme was enlarged to 5 IPA countries.



Capacity building programme to improve regional development policies – To be widened to 7 candidate countries (work in progress).



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Interreg Europe's widening

Interreg Europe's widening rationale

- **Specific added-value** – main source: evaluation carried out in the 2014-2020 period :
 - By May 2021, the amount of **funds influenced by projects** had already **exceeded EUR 1.3 billion** (through the funding of new initiatives or new calls in the regions inspired by interregional cooperation).
 - and Interreg Europe projects have achieved **936 policy improvements**.
 - OP different from the more classic cross-border or transnational cooperation and creates instead **direct links** with the Investment for Jobs and Growth (IJ&G) programmes (i.e. ERDF, ESF+, and the Cohesion and Just Transition Funds), **both at project and platform levels**.
- **IPA III Window 3** 'Green agenda and sustainable connectivity' and **Window 4** 'Competitiveness and inclusive growth' actions in the 5 IPA beneficiaries:
 - could benefit in the same manner from the interregional policy learning opportunities offered by Interreg Europe.

IPA III Window 3 specific support

- **Interreg Europe could support the Green Deal for the Western Balkans** through the dissemination of results from European Green Deal's specific instruments:
 - the Resource Efficient Europe Flagship Initiative,
 - the Circular Economy Package,
 - the Zero Pollution Ambition,
 - the Life Programme,
 - the EU Biodiversity Strategy,
 - the EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure, the Knowledge and Innovation Community on Climate
 - and the new approach on Sustainable Blue Economy.

IPA III Window 4 specific support

- **Interreg Europe** operations can support in the **policy learning process** leading to **improved skills** for:
 - smart specialisation
 - entrepreneurship,
 - the digitalisation of the economy and society
 - and the uptake of advanced technologies.
- **Knowledge on mature R&I results from H2020 and Horizon Europe** can be shared within Interreg Europe:
 - to contribute to policy making
 - and to be further capitalised within the IPA regions, in line with the Horizon Europe Dissemination & Exploitation Strategy and the exploitation of R&I knowledge.
 - In addition, policy changes emerging from Interreg Europe could be linked with the Feedback to Policy Framework of Horizon Europe.

IPA III Window 4 specific support

- **Innovation in SMEs - policy-learning support can be envisaged towards:**
 - Relevant parts of the Horizon Europe (notably the European Innovation Council, European Innovation Ecosystems and the Start-Up Europe initiative).
 - Industrial ecosystems approach highlighted in the EU's industrial strategy.
- **The EU's Urban Mobility Package could also benefit from interregional policy learning on:**
 - Sustainable multimodal urban mobility,
 - while the Connecting Europe Facility and Digital Europe Programme could similarly benefit from learning on energy, transport and digital connectivity.

Conclusions

“If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together.”

African proverb

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black sleeveless top, black pants, and black boots, is captured in a dynamic pose against a bright yellow wooden plank wall. She is holding a purple umbrella with her right hand, and her left arm is extended outwards. Her legs are spread apart, with one leg raised and bent at the knee, suggesting a sense of movement or dance. The overall mood is vibrant and artistic.

Any Questions?

#ThisistheEU

#ThisIsTheEU 



The EU is built
on solidarity

Thank you

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- Pictures, source: Unsplash

