Dear partners in European Cross - Border-Cooperation,

Please allow us to share a few highlights/information with you:

- **INTERREG IIIa - Closing 2000-2006 programmes**: only 4 more CBC programmes to go before we reach final closure of the 2000-2006 programming period (2001CB160PC005 / Germany (Sachsen)- Tschechische Republik; 2000CB160OP005 Spain-Portugal; 2001CB160OP006 Espace Atlantique and 2001CB160OP003 Madeiras Açores Canarias).

- **INTERREG IVa – Implementing 2007-2013 cooperation programmes**
  - **19-20 ETC (INTERREG) May ANNUAL EVENT in Brussels**: we are enthusiastically preparing for it in collaboration with INTERACT colleagues, including:
    - a *showcasing event* of CBC (including IPA CBC) projects with testimonials of beneficiaries.
    - The launch of a *video contest* on Border Problems addressed by INTERREG IV projects and Border Solutions found, due to culminate with the awards in the Sept European Cooperation days.

We are looking forward to seeing you again in Brussels in this occasion! We have attached the latest draft at the end of the newsletter (still subject to some fine-tuning).

- **Customer Satisfaction Survey**: you have received by e-mail on 2 April the following link ([http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ETCCSS](http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ETCCSS)) with an invitation to participate to our anonymous electronic survey. *Please, do respond! HELP US HELP YOU BETTER!* We can then debrief you during the Annual Event and already discuss with you how we can improve our support to programmes.

- **September EC Days**: many of you are already busy preparing for the September European Cooperation days with the help of INTERACT. This year, the September EC days will also be the occasion to announce the
results of a video contest to be launched at the May annual event (see above).

- **October Cohesion OPEN DAYS in Brussels**: a number of INTERREG workshops have been proposed and are in discussion; we will keep you posted with workshops themes in due course and are looking forward to your involvement and participation!

- **INTERREG Va - Preparing 2014-2020 cooperation programmes**

Most recent documents are available on the INFOREGIO site, but please, let us draw your attention to the following:


- Regarding the status of the Commission Delegated Regulation on **eligibility of expenditure** for cooperation programmes, it has not entered into force yet, as it is subject to the right of the European Parliament and of the Council to express objections within a deadline of two months from the adoption of each respective Delegated Regulation. Nevertheless, see:

- As for the draft **Implementing Acts on geography and allocation per cooperation programme**, the 27 March COESIF meeting has not been decisive yet. We will keep you posted on the next steps.

- Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the **new options for ETC programmes following recent developments in the state aid legislation**, among which there is the possibility to include state aid
components in the programmes. You will find at the end of the email an
information sheet prepared by our colleagues at the Interact Point Vienna.

Looking forward to meeting you soon,
Kind regards,
The REGIO D2 team

See our latest organization chart and also your competent Commission REGIO D2
desk Officer by programme, country, thematic and functional task as per our
March updated task allocation table attached.
Annual meeting with the Managing Authorities of the European territorial cooperation programmes
19-20 May 2014, Brussels, Charlemagne building

DRAFT AGENDA

Monday 19 May 2014

2007-2013 implementation

13:00 – 14:00  Registration of participants + welcome coffee

14:00 – 14:30  Welcome note by Mr José PALMA ANDRES, Director, DG Regional & Urban Policy

  Key note speech by Mr Johannes HAHN, EU Commissioner for Regional & Urban Policy

14:30 – 16:00  2007-2013 Story telling: '5 borders, 5 problems, 5 solutions'
Introduction by Mr Martin GUILLERMO RAMIREZ, Secretary General, Association of European Border Regions
(show casing achievements - 5 border regions chosen that demonstrate different challenges and value added brought by ETC projects)

  Video competition modalities presented by Interact

16:00 – 16:30  Coffee break

16:30 – 17:00  2007-2013 cooperation: Where does money go to? How to report it in 2013 Annual implementation reports?
Mr John WALSH, Team Leader, Unit "Evaluation and European Semester" and Mr Marcin WOJCIK, Programme Manager, Unit "European Cross-border cooperation", DG Regional & Urban Policy

17:00 – 17:30  Impact of 2014 shortage of payment appropriations on ETC programmes
Mr Hervé JOUANJEAN, Director General, DG Budget

17:30 – 17:45  Let's not forget about the closure: main messages
Mr Moray GILLAND, Head of Unit "Competence centre and operational efficiency",
DG Regional & Urban Policy

17:45 – 18:00  Common INTERREG V logo
Mr Frank SCHNEIDER, Communication Officer, CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

18:30 – 22:00  Buffet dinner, Berlaymont Piazza
Welcome coffee

Preparing INTERREG V programmes

Result orientation challenges & solutions
Ms Veronica GAFFEY, Head of Unit "Evaluation and European Semester", DG Regional & Urban Policy

Designation of management and control authorities
Mr Brian DEBATTISTA, Team Leader, "Audit II", DG Regional & Urban Policy

Decisional process and timing
Ms Agnès MONFRET, Head of Unit "European Cross-border cooperation", DG Regional & Urban Policy

Q & A session

Sharing programmes’ experience (process undergone by programmes, difficulties encountered and overcome)

Coffee break

State of play of macro-regional and sea basin strategies
Mr Colin WOLFE, Head of Unit "Competence Centre Macro-regions and European Territorial Co-operation", DG Regional & Urban Policy

Complementarity between Investment for Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes

Programmes’ examples
1 transnational programme
1 cross-border programme
1 Investment for growth and job programme

Customer satisfaction survey (feedback & draft action plan)
Ms Agnès MONFRET, Head of Unit "European Cross-border cooperation", DG Regional & Urban Policy

Conclusions
Mr José PALMA ANDRES, Director, DG Regional & Urban Policy

Lunch

Afternoon left open for bilateral meetings with the European Commission and Interact colleagues on request.
Information to ETC programmes about new State Aid Options

ETC programmes in the past often encountered difficulties in applying State aid rules to the cooperation between partners located in different regions and in different Member States. As the new programmes are being elaborated, State aid rules can play an important part in strategic considerations, e.g. as regards the ability of a programme to involve private partners in cooperation projects.

To support ongoing discussions in the programmes, we like to draw your attention to considerable changes in the draft General Block Exemption regulation (GBER) and the de minimis Regulation which will facilitate the administration of State aid in ETC and open new opportunities for Territorial Cooperation.

The most important changes are:

- The GBER (currently available as an advanced draft and expected to apply as of 1 July 2014) foresees an aid category for ‘SME’s cooperation costs linked to ETC projects’ (Article 19 of the draft GBER). This will greatly reduce the administrative burden associated with SMEs as ETC project partners. For example, it will be possible to apply a single aid category to SMEs cooperating in ETC. The proposed maximum co-financing rate for SMEs under the GBER is 50%. The maximum public contribution per SME and project is EUR 2 million.

- Article 14(14) of the draft GBER (Regional investment aid) provides new opportunities for certain ETC programmes, especially those encompassing areas located on the regional aid maps.

- It has been clarified that – in ETC- the Member State in which the Managing Authority is located can take over responsibility for GBER publication and information requirements.

- On 18 December 2013, the Commission adopted a revised Regulation on small aid amounts that fall outside the scope of EU State aid control (the de minimis Regulation). Measures that fulfil the criteria of the Regulation do not need to be notified to the Commission.

- In the same de minimis Regulation it has been clarified in Article 3(2) that the total amount of de minimis aid granted per Member State to a single undertaking shall not exceed EUR 200 000 over a period of three fiscal years. This means that an undertaking can receive de minimis aid several times provided that it is a different Member State granting the de minimis aid. In case of ETC there are several options: Depending on the rules foreseen by the programmes and projects, the granting country can be the country in which the MA is located, the country in which the Lead partner of an operation is located or the country in which the beneficiary is located.

We encourage all ETC programmes to carefully consider the new options and the opportunities they can provide for the respective programme areas. To further support discussion, please note that there will be a workshop organised by the INTERACT programme on the new ways of dealing with state aid for ETC programmes on 24 June 2014 in Brussels. This will be part of a longer 3 day workshop dealing with State aid, eligibility rules and repayable assistance from 24 to 26 June 2014. Registration for these workshops will be available on the INTERACT website.