Dear Interreg Partners,

2017 started with some interesting developments for Interreg... well, some of them are to be honest 'developments that we would like to see happening more quickly' (did anybody utter the word 'designation'?)... some others are really great things that, as usual, we simply could not wait any longer to share with you!

Same old song: designate, people, designate!

We talked about it in January 2016. We reminded it in September 2016. We are touching upon it this time as well: the percentage of Interreg programmes that have designated their authorities is still worryingly low. We could only reiterate our message: if you speed up this process, you will also speed up implementation. We are aware of the issues some of you are facing, but at the same time the first half of 2017 should be a red line: we should be halfway in implementation not in... designation.

Reminder: Management Declaration (and the whole Assurance Package)

This reminder applies to you all, the ones that are already happily designated and the ones still 'fighting for designation': the Management Declaration needs to be submitted by 15 February. We recently sent by e-mail the letter sent last summer that outlines all possible scenarios, according to the date of designation (or the planned date of designation). If you missed that information, please contact your desk officers!
Interreg Volunteers: first steps of the initiative

The Interreg Volunteers Initiative is taking shape. 20,000 volunteers have already registered in the European Solidarity Corps database and our aim is to make some of them embrace the Interreg experience. We presented the first details of the initiative at the Interact event in Berlin on 17 January. If you want to have a look at the presentation, with examples of actions you can put in the volunteering project, you can find it [here](#). A webpage is also in the making and will provide further info as they become available. Stay tuned!

Open Data Platform: a success story

We mentioned the Open Data Platform on several occasions in the last couple of years and we are glad to say that the effort made by all ESIF colleagues that worked on it are paying off: the platform is becoming a recognized and established source of information (maybe THE source of information) on what is happening in European Structural and Investment Funds in real time. New important developments of the platform are expected in the next couple of years: regular updates on Financial Data from February 2018, information on EU payment execution already in 2017 and many more. Have a look at [this video](#) to know more and visit also this page on [frequently asked questions](#) to discover all the potentialities of the platform.
Cross-Border Review: 4th workshop held in Brussels, Communication from the Commission soon under preparation

Last December we organised the 4th of the series of workshop in the context of our Cross-Border Review, to discuss the outcome of the study on border obstacles and solutions carried out by METIS and the way forward to exploit their findings. We are happy to say that all participants found this series of events a great opportunity to establish a network of exchanges and we are looking forward to keeping up the momentum in the next phases. As this was the last workshop, we asked participants to give us their video contribution, reflecting on the whole process.

Here you can find the video and more info about the workshop! Next big step is for REGIO to prepare a Commission Communication on the topic – watch this space!

What next

Border Needs Study: more materials available!

Following up the developments we mentioned in the last two editions of this Flash News, we are pleased to inform you that further material is available in the context of the study on border needs we commissioned last year. If you click on this webpage, you will find all the maps and data made available through the study: we are proud of this important repository of information and food for thought to design the post-2020 scenario!

Interreg Annual Review Meeting: dedicated webpage online!

The InfoRegio page on the Annual Meeting has been activated: the agenda and all other relevant materials are published on this page and will be updated constantly. The link for registering to the event is also available at the same page! This year we are really designing the event with a collaborative approach, so stay tuned and visit the page regularly for news on the work done by the different working groups shaping the conference.
Big changes in the cross-border unit in DG REGIO!

It is surprising to see how, on average every 2/3 issues of this Flash News, we have to give you updates on people leaving our unit or newcomers entering in the Interreg environment. We are proud to say that, despite missing the colleagues that moved on to other professional adventures, we always manage to find great new persons able to give fresh contributions to the Interreg world. It is in this spirit that we welcome this month in the unit Marianne Van de Vorle, the new desk officer for the programmes France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen, Vlaanderen-Nederland and Ireland-Wales.

And it is in the same spirit that we are living a big change of guard, as our current Head of Unit Agnès Monfret will leave us to join the DG REGIO communication unit. She will be replaced by... the current Head of Unit of the communication team, Ana-Paula Laissy!

We are sure you would like to join us in thanking Agnès for her continuous effort over the past 3 years and a half: she was a demanding boss (😊), but at the same time she has always been ready to be on the front line for this big special corner of regional policy which is cross-border cooperation.

We are also sure you would like to give the warmest of welcomes to Ana-Paula, whom you will probably meet during the Annual Meeting in Malta: her tremendous experience in communication will help us all make our programmes even better... you can improve perfection, can't you? 😊

You can find this Flash News and previous issues on our webpage