Dear Interreg Partners,

Please, let us share a few highlights/information with you,

**Adoption of Interreg V-A programmes:**
As of 22 June, 27 Interreg V-A programmes have been adopted and another 27 remain to be adopted (of which 3 not submitted yet) as far as the 54 programs followed by Unit REGIO D2 are concerned (that is to say excluding PEACE and programs with the French outermost regions). This latest status is summarised in the map below.
And as summer approaches...take pictures!

4th edition of the Europe in my Region photo competition

The annual ‘Europe in My Region’ Photo Competition takes place this summer and once again aims to highlight the excellent work that projects across the European Union and candidate countries are doing with the help of EU funding, and explore what these projects mean to local communities. This year participation in the competition has been extended to include residents in pre-accession countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey).

The competition is being launched on 22 June and each participant can enter up to 3 photos until 28 August 2015, 12:00 Central European Summer Time via the European Commission’s corporate Facebook page. As a last resort you can email your photos to regio-infopub@ec.europa.eu.

The 100 pictures with the highest amount of votes, plus up to 50 'wildcard' entries (not included in the 1st group with the highest votes) will be put to a jury of 3 photography professionals who will select the 3 winners. The winners will be awarded a trip for two to Brussels during the 2015 October OPEN DAYS 2015.

...we too enter a playful mode!

Simulation game – Negotiations on 'Interreg post-2020'

Together with the Associazione Diplomatici and EuropaBook, Unit REGIO.D2 will organise a simulation game on the topic of 'Interreg post-2020: setting the framework for the next generation of cross-border cooperation programmes'. The educational initiative will take place in Brussels on 15 July 2015 and will be attended by 20 European students aged 19 to 30 years, enrolled in graduate or postgraduate programs in Italy and abroad, following a selection process. The simulation game is part of a week-long study-visit to Brussels, aimed at spreading knowledge of the European institutions, and especially the functioning of the European institutions among the young generation, and ultimately boosting the belonging of young generations to Europe.

...and look ahead to an unprecedented number of September goodies:

European Cooperation Day (ECD) 2015- #ecday

- Kick-off ECD: During the 15-16 September Interreg25 conference that will take place on in Esch-Belval, Luxembourg.
  
  Registration (If you are using Internet Explorer, please make sure that the compatibility view is not enabled: Tools > Compatibility View Settings > Remove “europa.eu” > Restart IE. Alternatively, please use a different internet browser (Firefox, Chrome or other).

- ECD Interreg Song
  
  Interact has developed a song and video-clip to celebrate 25 years of Interreg, to be used as promotional video for European Cooperation Day 2015: http://www.ecday.eu/news/10

- ECD visual identity and other promotional material
  
  Video, flyer, poster, postcard, t-shirt, and online banner on ECD available on http://www.ecday.eu/ under the section Media Corner.
Place now your programme’s order for materials [here](mailto:interact@ecday.eu). The deadline for submitting your order for materials is June 30. Materials will be shipped out during the first half of August.

**Interreg Slogan contest**

Between 1 and 31 May 127 slogans from people from 23 different EU countries, candidate and potential candidate countries and neighbouring countries were submitted to Interact. The top 5 slogans will be announced on 1 July. Between 1 to 31 July, public voting on the [EC Day Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/ECday) will decide who the winner is. The person who submitted the winning slogan will be invited to the #interreg25 conference in Luxembourg to witness the presentation of his or her slogan, interpreted and showcased by an artist.

**Interreg 25 years Project Slam**

13 applications were submitted. The Jury preselected the following 5 project proposals to perform and compete during the Project Slam 'Interreg 25 years' on 15 September 15 in Luxembourg:

- INTERSYC - CBC GR-BG
- EUROJOB Viadrina - CBC PL-BB
- Cross-border wine routes – IPA CBC HU-HR
- CENTRAL MARKETS - TN CENTRAL EUROPE
- ENGAGE - Interreg IV C

More information about the Project Slam: [slam25years@interact-eu.net](mailto:slam25years@interact-eu.net).

**Interreg TOP 5 achievements**

2015 marks the 25 years of Interreg as an important cornerstone of European cohesion policy. Based upon programme reports, DG REGIO has identified 5 main achievements of Interreg over the last 25 years: trust building, connecting citizens and territories, creating a healthy and safe environment, as well as supporting growth and jobs.

The next edition of the Panorama magazine and the #interreg25 page on the [Inforegio site](https://www.interact.eu) will illustrate these achievements with concrete projects and a short animation video on Interreg's TOP 5 achievements is under preparation.

Our warm thanks all programmes and projects partners who helped us elaborate this article 😊

The short animation video explaining Interreg's top 5 achievements will be produced in all 23 languages and made available next September.

**Come September- October and you should also hear more about...**

**An Arte production ('Le dessous des cartes') trying to explain...Interreg!**

**Eurobarometer**

We expect by mid-September the results of the 1st Eurobarometer survey ever focusing on the perception of citizens living in border regions 😊
The 'CBC review'

This is an initiative taken by Commissioner Crețu in agreement with VP Timmermans to try and:

1) Make an inventory of remaining border obstacles faced by citizens and businesses established in border regions, and, where applicable, solutions already found to overcome them;

2) Envisage possible solutions, having due regard to the principle of subsidiarity.

Commissioner Crețu will launch this review by opening a 3 months public consultation on 21 September at the Austro-Slovak border Vienna-Bratislava. The launch will be echoed by a roadshow performed by REGIO senior management on 10 other borders end Sept.-beginning Oct and followed by a study and several stakeholders workshops.

3 workshops organised by our unit for next October's OPEN DAYs (12-15 October, Brussels)

Registration will open in July

* SMEs involvement in European Territorial Cooperation programmes
* Filling the border data gap
* Managing disaster risks across borders

17 Oct Ekiden – form your Interreg team!

The 2015 EKIDEN marathon will take place on 17 October!
So it is time to get prepared, gather the teams and start training - and let's not forget it is not only about running & team spirit, it is also about solidarity, fundraising for the asbl Give Eur-Hope, which organises the participation of the Institutions' (and associates' 😊) teams.

Let's aim at 25 Interreg teams for Interreg's 25th anniversary this year! Participate in numbers!

Registration will open in July, via the form and according to the detailed information to be made available soon (Registration: EUR 30 per runner)

Questions? Contact agnes.monfret@ec.europa.eu or Ec-give-eur-hope@ec.europa.eu

In-between training for the Ekiden, you will also find below for some reading & entertainment for the vacation period:

Interreg quiz

Test your knowledge on Interreg @:

Learn more about the CBC team of unit REGIO D2!

As Interreg turns 25, we will introduce in each newsletter different team members of the REGIO.D2 CBC unit to let you know a bit more about this diverse group of people sharing a common passion for cooperation across Europe!

Profil of the CBC team

⇒ More over 100 individuals worked for CBC programmes at the European Commission
⇒ Nationalities: ALL 28 !!
⇒ Backgrounds: political science, law, economics, urban planning, engineering, communication
Why did you decide to work on Interreg?
After 13 years in a Commission central service setting up budget and financial rules, internal control frameworks and providing resources for other Commission services to deliver on EU policies, I wanted to contribute more directly to concrete European achievements.

What does Interreg mean to you?
Stronger together, the core of European integration.

Any Interreg or border anecdote you can share?
As a child, I thought about the border as a daunting place, the limit of my comfort zone. I was scared by check-point men in uniform. But the more I travelled, the more 'stepping on the other side' turned into an irresistible adventure.

What is the most important achievement of Interreg CBC for you?
The trust built, the connections established and the conditions laid down for a healthier and safer cross-border environment prone to growth and jobs.

How can you imagine Interreg in 25 years?
Borders with systematic bilingual schools. Border citizens and businesses choosing freely services, social security and tax systems on either side. For the rest, Interreg as the main delivery mode of a true European cohesion policy.

In your job, what is your favourite part?
Hearing proud project holders telling how they made a difference on the ground & enthusiastic projects promoters full of ideas for their region.

What would you see as the challenges to CBC?
Getting people and systems to work together. And doing away with national envelopes when defining European cohesion policy.

What advice would you give to strengthen CBC?
Sell its achievements and keep up the ambition for more.

To your opinion what quality is important for CBC?
Patience, determination and faith in the European project.

Do you have a special border you like?
Several come to mind: the wonderful borderline exhibition by Valerio Vincenzo (https://vimeo.com/24820401) as an illustration of the Europe without borders we dream of – not just visually, but administratively and daily in the lives of border citizens. Also the series of abandoned check-points by Polish-born photographer Josef Schulz.
**Name:** Nathalie Verschelde  
**Nationality:** Belgian  
**Working on Interreg CBC since:** birth  
**Position:** Deputy Head of Unit for CBC

**Why did you decide to work on Interreg?**  
I am a border child and as an adult I have always had a passion for borders and especially how we turn them into something positive and rich. It was natural to join the Interreg team in REGIO in 2005.

**What does Interreg mean to you?**  
The essence of what Europe is about. The proof that it is possible to be attached your roots while getting stronger and better through others.

**Any Interreg or border anecdote you can share?**  
I come from an open border, which I used to cross weekly as a kid. My shock when I was stopped at a remote border point between Eastern Slovakia and Poland: I was searched, the car was searched by sniffer dogs, there was no mobile phone connection and I felt rather threatened. The complete opposite to what borders should look like in Europe.

**What is the most important achievement of Interreg CBC for you?**  
Planting seeds for working together across the EU and on the external borders. Giving a push for people to overcome their fears and prejudices. It invariably leads to positive developments.

**How can you imagine Interreg in 25 years?**  
Not needed any longer?

**In your job, what is your favourite part?**  
Exchanging border experiences with those who live there every day and witnessing the changes – sometimes slow but inevitable.

**What would you see as the challenges to CBC?**  
The need to really step up the joint work. There are still too many one-sided projects. Authorities and beneficiaries alike need to spend more time deepening relationships so they can develop genuinely joint initiatives and projects to manage their common border space together.

**What advice would you give to strengthen CBC?**  
More ambition needed in many cases. The CBC champions need to be given more space and support to take cooperation further and to really imagine a Europe where the national borders are no longer a virtual wall or barrier.

**To your opinion what quality is important for CBC?**  
Open-mindedness and curiosity, which go hand in hand with respect.

**Do you have a special border do you like?**  
They are all special to me. But how can I not mention the border on which I was born and raised? Which is now at the heart of one of the most active and ambitious EGTCs in Europe: the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai.
Why did you decide to work on Interreg?
It is clearly the "most European" part of cohesion policy. It moves things forward for Europe. It was a natural choice for me. I believe that we need more Europe, not less!

What does Interreg mean to you?
Interreg means overcoming the division of our continent! It's at one level with the Euro, Schengen, and Erasmus. All of them stand for deeper, better integration.

Any Interreg or border anecdote you can share?
When I was a child, border controls were always something very intimidating to me. I grew up in Austria close to the Hungarian and Slovenian borders. So, wherever you travelled, there were check points. And then came Schengen! I still remember travelling to Hungary just after the country entered the Schengen area – and passing an empty border station. It was a moving moment. No more borders, no more old fears.

What is the most important achievement of Interreg CBC for you?
That people are willing to see the bigger picture – and look for solutions outside their strict territory. It's about the mind-set!

How can you imagine Interreg in 25 years?
I hope that Interreg will be a nice memory by then. Working and living across borders should be a reality in 2040.

In your job, what is your favourite part?
Working with a bunch of very dedicated people who share a common idea.

What would you see as the challenges to CBC?
We need to simplify implementation. Plus: Many regions and Member States still think in their (national) boxes when it comes to programming and projects. This has to stop. Interreg is about quality and sharing a common goal – not about national allocations or regional economic interests.

What advice would you give to strengthen CBC?
Think beyond funding and focus more on legal and administrative border obstacles! Our upcoming "CBC review" goes into this direction. Robert Schuman would turn in his grave if he could hear that the recognition of diplomas is still a problem in Europe – and that scattered toll systems make cross-border mobility difficult.

To your opinion what quality is important for CBC?
Trust.

Do you have a special border you like?
The green border between Slovenia and Styria/Austria! A phantastic stretch of land, full of natural beauty – and great wines.
**Name:** Guus MUIZERS  
**Nationality:** Dutch  
**Working on Interreg CBC since:** 2009  
**Position:** Programme manager  
**Programmes:** in NL, BE, DE, BB, PL, DE,

**Why did you decide to work on Interreg?**  
I wanted to go to the heart of EU integration: eliminating the negative impact of borders.

**What does Interreg mean to you?**  
Essence: cooperation = partnership = trust.  
Concepts: horizontal multi-level governance, subsidiarity

**What is the most important achievement of Interreg CBC for you?**  
Helping to heal the scars of history.  
Strangers becoming partners, friends.

**How can you imagine Interreg in 25 years?**  
I think it will still be there, as iconic building block of Europe. The delivery mechanism will change, but the core will remain: building trust and friendship across borders.

**In your job, what is your favourite part?**  
Working with the partners in the Member States, our mediation role.

**What would you see as the challenges to CBC?**  
Cooperation between different countries by nature involves aspects that run against 'national logic'. So it is special and should have its own regulatory framework and delivery system. Concrete challenge: to bridge the 'governance divides' between west and east, north and south. We must cherish cultural diversity, but we need a common perspective on the role and methods of public policy.

**What advice would you give to strengthen CBC?**  
Be clear on what is the essence of cooperation (a governance tool), so also on what it is not (macro-economic, sectoral). And strengthen it by making it more smart, easy and friendly.

**To your opinion what quality is important for CBC?**  
Trust – openness – transparency - learning. Personal connection, sharing a wine achieves more than having meetings.

**Do you have a special border do you like?**  
No – I've been to dozens and all borders have their own story. But of course this one is close to me and a bit special (see min 02:50-5:10 of [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtLxZiuiaXs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtLxZiuiaXs))
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The REGIO D2 Team