Dear Interreg Partners,

As a famous recent Nobel Prize winner put it already some time ago, "times, they are a-changing"… why don't we? If you had a look at the title of our Flash News you may have noticed a change: we moved from the CBC Flash News to an Interreg Newsletter, which will be from now on a joint effort of the unit D.1 and D.2 of DG REGIO, to cover news of interest for the whole Interreg world! We hope you will like this change as much as we do…

15th European Week of Regions and Cities is approaching

The 15th European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) will take place on 9-12 October 2017 in Brussels on the theme of ‘Regions and cities working for a better future’. Over 100 workshops and debates will be held under three main headings: (1) Building resilient regions and cities; (2) Regions and cities as change agents; and (3) Sharing knowledge to deliver results. The two DG REGIO Interreg units will co-organise eight workshops: (1) Active Citizens – Supporting civil society to foster resilient cities and regions; (2) Better governance for more resilient regions and cities; (3) Cooperation in health: does health stop at the border?; (4) Delivering results through a collaboration between Arctic EU programmes; (5) Here's Europe! – Cross-border cooperation in twin cities; (6) Interreg Talks. How projects can impact on the EU Climate Change Policy?; (7) Providing opportunities at the EU external borders: regions and cities within the European Neighbourhood Instrument for Cross Border Cooperation; and (8) Removing language barriers to create more dynamic border regions. Registration for the EWRC will open on 10 July 2017, check this webpage!

As in previous years, the best and the most innovative projects in regional development will receive a RegioStars award at a ceremony which will take place on 10 October 2017. The finalists of the RegioStars award will be announced on InfoRegio at the beginning of July. Stay tuned!

Event alert: Cap&Com Interact workshop in Budapest!

As a follow up to the "Let's capitalise" event held in Rome on 7-8 June, Interact is organising a Capitalisation and Communication workshop on 5 and 6 July in Budapest. Communication should be
an integral part of the capitalisation effort. Therefore, working on tailored communication activities to maximise the impact and visibility of Interreg results in different contexts is an essential step of a programme's capitalisation strategy. Interested in the event? You can find more details here.

Interreg Volunteers Youth Initiative: more volunteers on the ground!

Things are evolving fast in the Interreg Volunteers Youth Initiative world, financed by the European Commission and launched in the context of the European Solidarity Corps! 6 young volunteers are already deployed in various European regions, four more are soon to start their experiences, for a total of 7 Interreg Reporters and 3 Interreg Project Partners.

Are you a managing an Interreg programme and would like to host an Interreg Reporter? Go to the website of the initiative and contact Alessandra and Cinzia in AEBR (ivy@aebr.eu) to have all the information about the (really simple!!!) procedure through which you can also host some volunteers in your programmes! And remember: your Interreg-funded projects can also apply to host an Interreg Project Partner and make him/her have a first-hand experience on the ground!

On top of that, if you are around Brussels to follow our wonderful list of workshops at the European Week of Regions and Cities (see news above) please be aware that AEBR will be organising a workshop on "Solidarity wanted: better call an Interreg volunteer! " When the time comes, register for it!

Citizens' awareness about Interreg and EU macro-regional strategies

The latest Eurobarometer on 'Citizens' awareness and perceptions of EU regional policy', conducted in the spring of 2017, shows that 35% of respondents are aware of EU co-financed projects in the area that they live in with 78% of those expressing a positive opinion on their impact in their city or region. The survey includes other interesting findings concerning the cooperation dimension of EU regional policy. Awareness of EU-funded cooperation between regions from different countries has increased by 1% compared to the previous Eurobarometer of 2015 and it now reaches 22%. 13% of EU citizens are aware of Interreg with the highest awareness rates coming from Greece (28%), Poland (26%), and Romania (23%). When it comes to EU macro-regional strategies, awareness of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region stands at 14% with the remaining strategies at 8% for the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and 7% for the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region. For further information see this link.
An important milestone in the preparation for the post-2020 framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds, the 7th Cohesion Forum has been held in Brussels on 26-27 June 2017. The event has brought together, upon invitation, more than 700 participants from European institutions, central, regional and local governments, as well as economic and social partners, NGOs and academics. Keynote speeches have been delivered by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani. The event has been organised with three panel debates and three parallel workshops on critical issues for the future of Europe and the European Structural and Investment Funds.

For further information, please have a look here

Annual Meeting in Malta: more media and web coverage!

We are proud to say that this year Interreg Annual Meeting, held in Malta at the end of April, is producing follow up media materials of high quality. Last week, Panorama Magazine contained an interesting and unusual coverage of the event, made by young students in journalism that reported about the projects visits held on Day 2. You can read these contributions starting at page 48 of the English version of the magazine. In addition, this week, the report on the evaluation survey of the event and the workshops reports have become available online on the webpage of the Annual Meeting.

Stepping up the communication effort

The 25 April General Affairs Council conclusions stated that Member States and the Commission need to scale up their efforts to increase the visibility of cohesion policy. The Commission is proposing 7 actions to do so: 1) Build a coalition to raise the profile of Cohesion Policy; 2) Launching a video competition in each Member States on the achievements of Cohesion Policy; 3) a "Did you know" campaign aimed at informing about the Cohesion Policy support to some famous monuments and/or products; 4) a "before-after" Cohesion Policy photo competition; 5) launching of national version of RegioStars Awards; 6) a "60 ways EU helped you" campaign, showcasing 60 projects funded through Cohesion Policy; 7) the organisation of a
series of regional and local debates about Cohesion Policy.

8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
The 8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) was held on 13-14 June 2017 in Berlin, Germany. The Forum was hosted by the German Federal Foreign Office together with the CPMR – Baltic Sea Commission and in close cooperation with the European Commission (DG REGIO). Opening speeches were given by Sigmar Gabriel, German Federal Foreign Minister; Martti Ahtisaari, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; and Sara Mazur, Vice President and Head of Research at Ericsson. Under the topic of ‘Connectivity’, the event brought together some 800 participants from the Baltic Sea region and beyond, representing government, business, civil society and regional organisations. More than 30 sessions and seminars were held, covering a broad range of issues, including cooperation with neighbouring countries, environmental and climate challenges, sustainable blue growth, etc.

Further information, including summaries and presentations of the seminars, will be made available on the 8th Annual Forum’s website: http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/8th-annual-forum

Save the date for the 9th EUSBSR Forum
The 9th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR will take place on 4-5 June 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia. The event will focus on EU cohesion policy after 2020 and the future of EU macro-regional strategies. Watch a welcome video → https://youtu.be/HvZDuX2Oe1Y and put the date in your calendar!

In brief...
The conference ‘Cohesion policy in mountain areas: how to increase the contribution from mountains and benefits for mountain territories?’ took place on 7 June 2017 in Brussels. Further information, including presentations are available here

You can find previous issues of the Flash News on this webpage