



# EU cohesion policy and Interreg support for cross-border cooperation 2021-2027

TransParcNet Meeting 2020

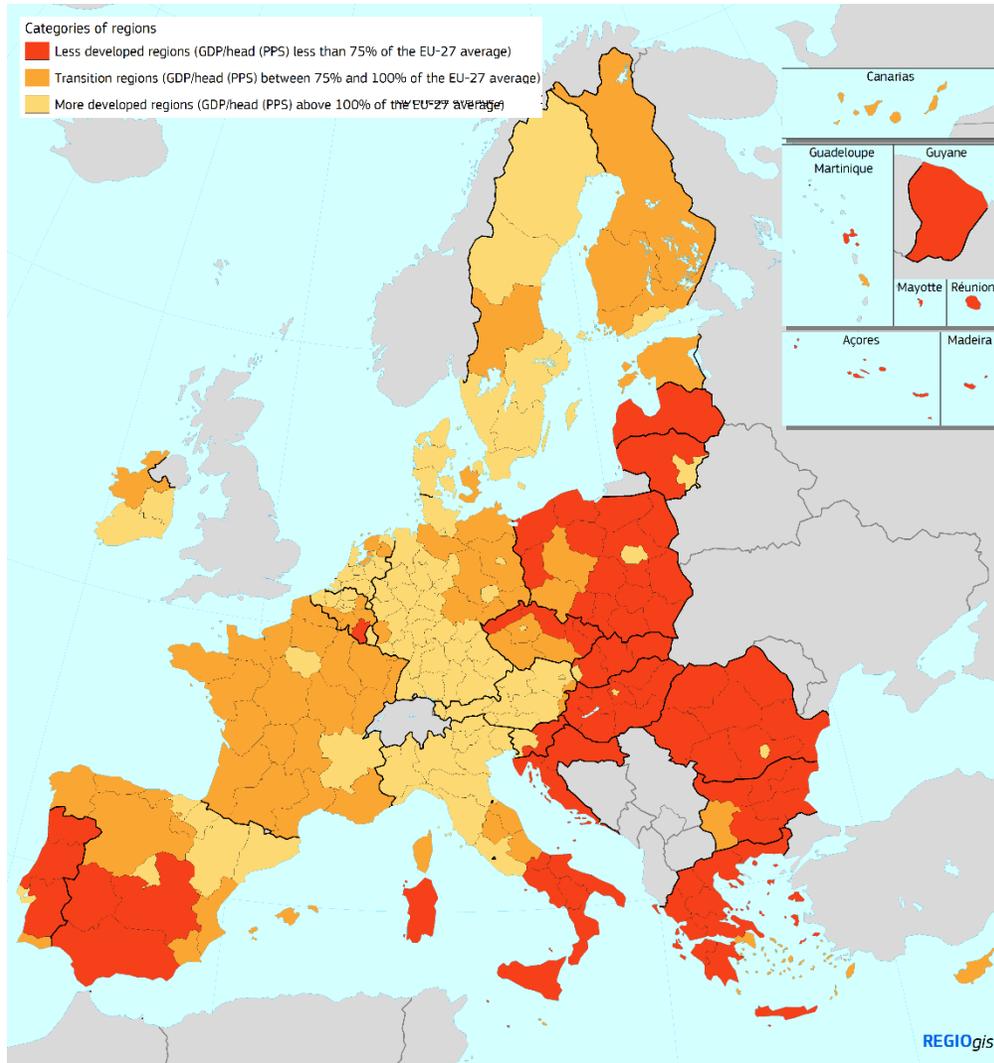
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# Cohesion policy 2021-2027



Investment for jobs and growth goal (ERDF and ESF+) eligibility, 2021-2027  
*informal update based on unpublished lists of regions*

- Nearly 1/3 of the EU budget (European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund + *proposed* Just Transition Fund) to:
  - Reduce disparities between Europe's regions, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion
  - Contribute to EU priorities
- 5 Policy Objectives:
  1. A more competitive and smarter Europe
  2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe
  3. A more connected Europe
  4. A more social and inclusive Europe
  5. A Europe closer to citizens
- 2 additional Specific Objectives for Interreg:
  1. Better cooperation governance
  2. A safer and more secure Europe

# Interreg is ...?

- One of the two goals of **EU cohesion policy**
  - Investment for Jobs and Growth
  - **European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) or "Interreg"**
- A **cooperation framework** between national, regional and local actors from different Member States (MS) and also third countries
- A **tool** to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the EU as a whole
- An instrument that operates via programmes **at different geographical levels**
  - **Cross-border:** Cooperation between border regions from at least two different MS (or at external borders)
  - **Transnational:** Cooperation involving regions from several MS forming larger areas
  - **Interregional:** Cooperation between regions from any MS under programmes covering the whole of the EU (Interreg Europe, Urbact, Interact, ESPON)
- A major **financial support mechanism** for cooperation across borders, including for protection of nature and biodiversity

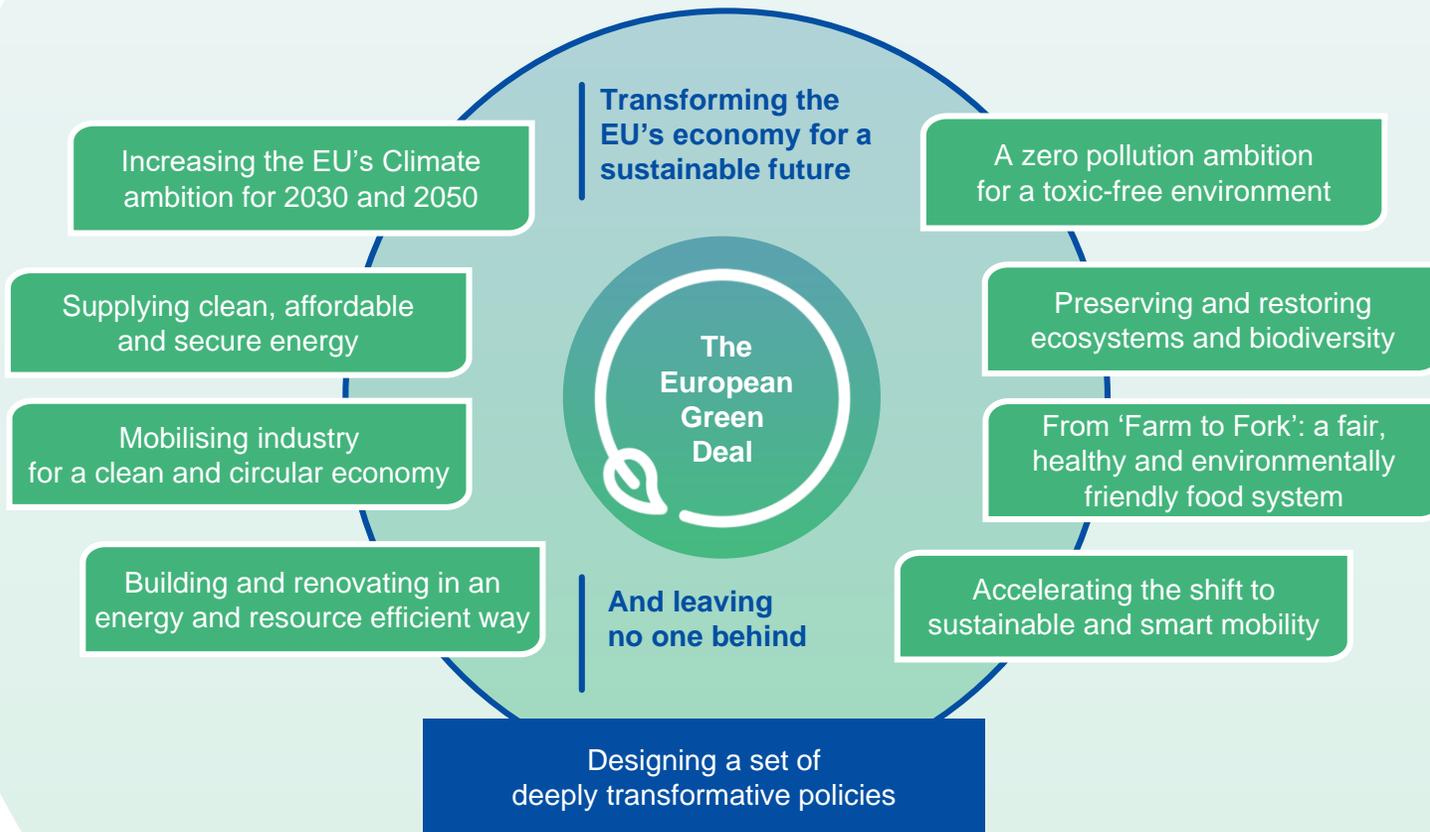
# State of progress regulatory framework Interreg 2021-2027

- Regulation: Political agreement on Interreg Regulation reached 2 December 2020
- Budget: **EUR 8 050 000 000** for Interreg
  - Strand A cross-border cooperation: EUR 5 800 000 000
  - Strand B transnational cooperation: EUR 1 467 000 000
  - Strand C interregional cooperation: EUR 500 000 000
  - Strand D outermost regions: EUR 270 000 000

# Key changes to Commission proposal Interreg 2021-2027

- Maritime issues: Separate cross-border (strand A) and transnational (strand B) – requires strong coordination
- Co-financing rate: 80% (85% for outermost regions)
- Thematic concentration: At least 60% of funding to
  - max 4 Policy Objectives (POs), of which PO2 and PO4 compulsory, for strand A internal land borders
  - max 3 POs, of which PO2 compulsory, for others under strands A, B and D
- Interreg Specific Objectives (ISOs): Voluntary, not compulsory
  - ISO1 “a better cooperation governance”: Up to 20%
  - ISO2 “a safer and more secure Europe”: Up to 5%
- Small Project Fund (SPF): Flexibility provisions facilitating the support to small projects, including actions people to people

# European Green Deal



## LEADING THE TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY PLANET

- A **Climate Law** to lock in commitments and raise ambition
- **Earmarking** 30% of the EU budget for climate
- Greening the **European Semester**
- Comprehensive programme of **legislation**
- **Green investment needs** of around €470 billion per year

# Cohesion policy in the European Green Deal



*“Cohesion Funds play a crucial role in supporting our regions and rural areas from East to West, from South to North to keep up with the transformations of our world.*

*In this transition, we must recognise and respect that we do not all start from the same point. We all share the same ambition but some may need more tailored support than others to get there.”*

-  Investing in place-based innovation and smart economic transformation
-  Deploying technological and social innovation on a large scale
-  Facilitating phase-out of unsustainable practices
-  Ensuring a just transition for all regions

## Policy Objective 2 *(compulsory for Interreg programmes)*

A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation and risk prevention and management

- Specific Objectives (SOs)\*:
  - i. Promoting energy efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
  - ii. Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein
  - iii. Developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside TEN-E
  - iv. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account ecosystem based approaches
  - v. Promoting access to water and sustainable water management
  - vi. Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy
  - vii. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution
  - viii. Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of transition to a net zero carbon economy

*\* Text subject to negotiations (ERDF/CF Regulation; provisional state of play as at 2 December 2020)*

# Nature, biodiversity, green infrastructure, reducing pollution

(SO 2.vii)

- This includes, for instance:
  - Biodiversity protection, ecosystem restoration
  - Green infrastructure in urban areas
  - Measures to improve air quality (incl. monitoring)
  - Decontamination and rehabilitation of industrial sites, contaminated land
  - Noise reduction
- Contributes to:
  - EU Biodiversity Strategy, Zero Pollution Action Plan, Soil Strategy, EU Forest Strategy, European Climate Pact...

# Nature, biodiversity, green infrastructure, reducing pollution

(SO 2.vii)

- Added value of cross-border cooperation can include:
  - Joint knowledge development and planning
  - Protection of cross-border ecosystems
  - Joint management of natural sites
  - EU-level green infrastructure, for instance ecological corridors across borders
  - Addressing cross-border pollution sources, including air, soil, water
- *“... in order to have a truly coherent and resilient Trans-European Nature Network ...investments in green and blue infrastructure and cooperation across borders among Member States should be promoted and supported, including through the European Territorial Cooperation.”*  
(EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, May 2020)

# Interreg programmes and projects – Key takeaways

- Preparation, implementation and evaluation of 2021-2027 Interreg **programmes** to involve **partnership**
  - Involving all those who are concerned / affected by the programme, at all stages
  - Much wider than the national and regional public authorities, for instance:
    - Local authorities (e.g. cities)
    - Economic and social partners (e.g. chambers of commerce, transport operators, etc.)
    - Civil society (e.g. environmental partners, NGOs, associations)
    - Cross-border bodies (e.g. Euroregions, etc.)
- Intereg **projects**
  - Involvement of at least two partners from two different MS (or a third country)
  - Projects need to match the thematic scope of the programme and contribute to its results
  - (Usually) relatively small in size, compared to national or regional European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) / Cohesion Fund (CF) projects
  - Focus on new solutions, not business as usual
  - Many rules are programme-specific (including eligibility)
  - Funding decisions are taken by the programme monitoring committee
  - Cooperation takes time and effort

# Thank you for your attention!

**Further information:** [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.cfm](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm)

**Data and further information on cohesion policy support, including Interreg\*, for protection of nature and biodiversity 2014-2020:**  
<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/Cohesion-policy-protecting-nature-and-biodiversity/gznm-sv2i/>

*\*Interreg = "TC" in data charts*



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