

19.11.2025
Varna, Bulgaria

Bridging the seas.

“Bridging the Seas”

Interreg Euro-MED contributions to EU priorities

19th November 2025

Varna, Bulgaria

Concept Note

The conference provides a platform for reflection, knowledge exchange, and strategic planning among stakeholders of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

As a transnational programme, Interreg Euro-MED involves 14 countries of the Northern shore of the Mediterranean and adjacent territories. Its extensive geographical and strategic scope - from the Atlantic coast to the shores of the Black Sea - includes EU Member States as well as candidate countries. It also articulates with many other Interreg programmes, including CBCs, and covers partly the territory of 3 macro-regional strategies (EUSALP, EUSAIR & EUSDR), the sea basin strategy (West-MED) as well as territories of the Common Agenda of the Black Sea.

This diversity is a major asset, enabling the Programme to address a broad spectrum of shared challenges and to make concrete contributions to EU priorities. By positioning the Mediterranean and its hinterland as a crossroads of diverse territories and actors, Interreg Euro-MED extends traditional boundaries of cooperation and tackles critical issues on the path toward a smarter and greener Europe and Mediterranean.

Framing the Conference

The event will focus on the implementation of the Programme as a starting point to illustrate its contributions to EU priorities. By addressing various dimensions of the Programme, the conference will also feed into reflections on the future of cohesion policy post-2027.

Additionally, the conference will explore the potential for increased synergies across the territorial scope of the Programme. Spanning multiple seas, it mirrors the fluid and interconnected nature of maritime regions, where stakeholders share a commitment to sustainable development, environmental resilience, and regional cohesion. Amid evolving geopolitical, environmental, and socio-economic challenges, the need to align actions with broader EU frameworks and macro-regional strategies is more pressing than ever.

Agenda

Working language: English

Venue: [Hotel Chernomorec](#)

Greek Neighborhood Odesos, bul. "Slivnitsa" 33, 9000 Varna, Bulgaria

09:30 – 10:00 Registration and welcome coffee

10:00 – 10:25 Introduction

Bulgarian representatives, as Presidency of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme
Oana Dordain, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
Guillaume Huet, Interreg Euro-MED Programme Managing Authority

10:35 – 10:40 Introduction to the different round tables

Each round table will tackle one of the following issues:

- Benefits of the progressive enlargement of the Programme area in tackling the Smarter and Greener priorities
- Gaining experience through doing and shared management of Programme, from beneficiaries to National Authorities
- Contribution of Interreg Euro-MED to enlarged cooperation and the role of Interreg in general in reaching EU priorities and objectives

General Moderation by Ljubo Georgiev – URBACT

10:40 – 12:00 Round table 1 Contribution Interreg Euro-MED to EU priorities

Underline the benefits of the enlargement of the Programme cooperation area since the 2007/13 programming period in tackling the Smarter and Greener priorities. Scaling up of projects, successful results from the governance projects as pioneer approach.

- Production of results & policy framework
Interreg Euro-MED FRED, LOGREENER and Dialogue4Tourism projects representatives
- Articulation with GOV, connecting projects to policy level
Interreg Euro-MED Institutional Dialogue projects representatives
- Contribution to MRS & Sea Basin Strategy, from WESTMED to EUSDR
Robert Lichtner, Danube Strategy Point
IPA Adriatic STeP project and Marche Region representatives (TBD)

Focus: Strategic alignment, programme impact, and innovation

Moderated by Alexia Spyridonidou, Interreg Euro-MED Dialogue4Tourism project

Interaction with plenary room

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 Round table 2

Practical aspects of Regional and Territorial cooperation

Setting the Mediterranean and its hinterland at the crossroad of wider regions, from south & East Mediterranean to the Black Sea region. The panel will tackle the complementarities between programmes and territories:

- Cooperation with NEXT programmes – common challenges, different methods
Iulia Hertzog, NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme
- Complementarity CBC – Transnational programmes
Mersiha Delić, Directorate for European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Authority, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Strategic approach in programming (5th call reflections)
Curzio Cervelli, Interreg Euro-MED Joint Secretariat
Radoš Žugić, Municipality of Žabljak, Montenegro
- Results that matter – examples of impact in local and regional policy. Sustainable partnerships leading to sustainable results
Desislava Georgieva, Territorial Cooperation Management Directorate, MRDPW, National Authority, Bulgaria

Focus: Local and regional impact, balanced partnerships and sustainable collaboration

Moderation by Maria Groueva, Interreg Greece-Bulgaria

Interaction with plenary room

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 16:50 Round table 3

Bridges from the Mediterranean

Starting from the Summary of key findings from the Harvesting report on post-2027, the last point would be dedicated to the contribution of Interreg Euro-MED to enlarged cooperation and the role of Interreg in general in reaching strategic EU priorities and objectives.

- Interreg bringing the European cooperation close to territories and people
Zuica Zmejkovska, Ministry of European Affairs, EUSAIR Presidency & National Authority, Republic of North Macedonia
- 15 years of involvement of IPA countries into the Programme – Testimony from IPA to FEDER
Marko Opančar, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, National Authority, Croatia
Miloš Marković, Ministry of European Affairs, National Authority, Montenegro
- Assets of enlarged cooperation for Beneficiaries

Faruk Cerić, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (SERDA), Bosnia and Herzegovina

Municipality of Varna, Bulgaria

Soumodip Sarkar – Alentejo Science and Technology Park (PACT), Portugal

Focus: Policy alignment, internal strategic evolution, and enhanced regional links

Moderated by Stoyan Kanatov, Interact

Interaction with plenary room

16:50 – 17:00

Event Wrap-Up

Summary of key messages and outcomes from all sessions.

Ljubo Georgiev – URBACT

17:00 – 17:15

Closing Remarks

Bulgarian and Albanian National Authorities representatives

17:15 – 18:15

Networking cocktail