



Interreg Euro-MED contributions to EU priorities / Bridging the Seas

Round Table 3: “Bridges from the Mediterranean”

Interreg Bringing Cooperation Closer to Territories and People

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REGIO D1*

Varna, 19 November 2025



In a few words...

- 1 European cooperation and local impact
- 2 Interreg IPA and EUSAIR first results
- 3 Policy alignment and territorial cohesion

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European cooperation and local impact



How Interreg translates EU cooperation into local impact?

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How Interreg translates EU cooperation into local impact?



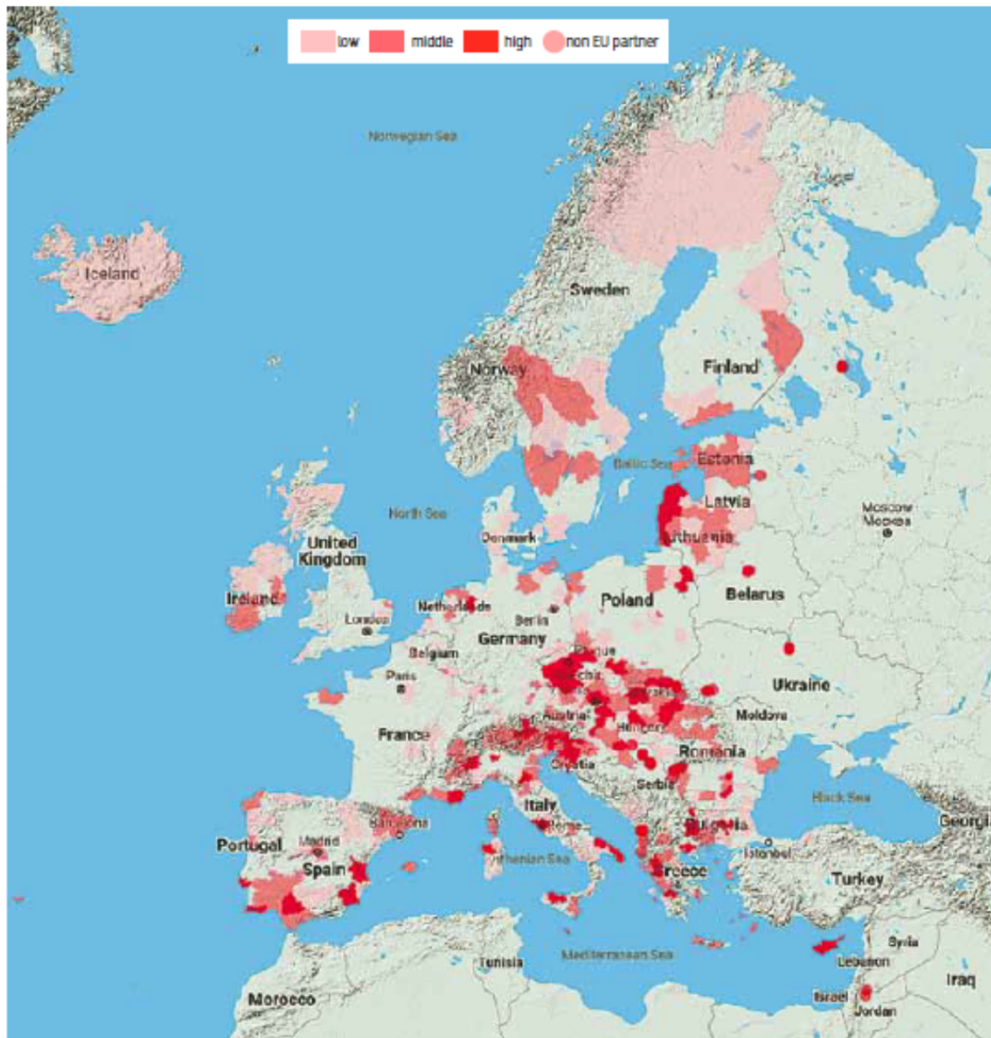
- A synonym for "**European Territorial Cooperation**„
- An established **brand** among the cooperation community
- One of the two goals of **EU cohesion policy**
- A **cooperation framework** between national, regional and local actors from different Member States
- With the objective of promoting a **harmonious economic, social and territorial development** of the Union as a whole (Treaty)
- A **financial support mechanism** for cooperation across borders
- An instrument that operates **at different geographic levels**

Track record with Natura 2000

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Interreg projects involving Natura 2000

Figure 7. Heat map of Natura 2000 projects under Interreg since 2000. The shades of red on the map show the different concentration of partners versus the average ('middle') for the search parameters.



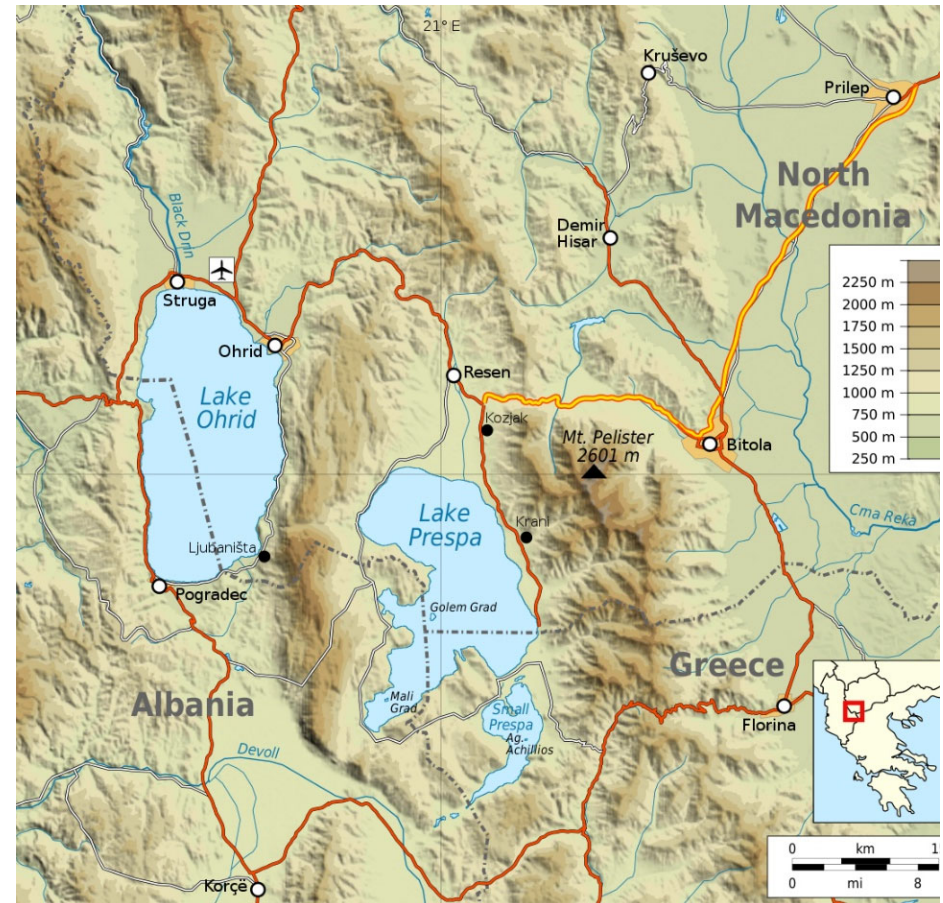
- Projects involving Natura 2000 sites are:
 - not just about conserving biodiversity
 - But also about their integration into wider socio-economic development objectives at the local or regional level.

Place-based approach

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EU for Prespa & EU Territorial Cooperation

- Combined operations with IPA III AAP 2021 Prespa AD and/or IPARD:
 - Construction of a border crossing point with Greece (Markova Noga)
 - Decreased pollution resulting of human activities
 - Increased share of Environmentally Friendly Agriculture
 - Sustainable tourism product promoted and diversified
 - Strengthened cross-border exchange



Thematic focus: Cross-border health cooperation

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EU actions cross-border healthcare cooperation

- EU Law
- EU Funding
- Advice & Expertise



- Commission Studies
- Conferences
- Health Policy Platform
- Border Focal Point



- Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (2011/24/EU)
- Coordination of social security systems (Regulation (EC) 883/2004);

European Structural & Investment Funds:

- Interreg - European territorial cooperation;
- Horizon 2020 - research programme
- Connecting European Facility - eHealth

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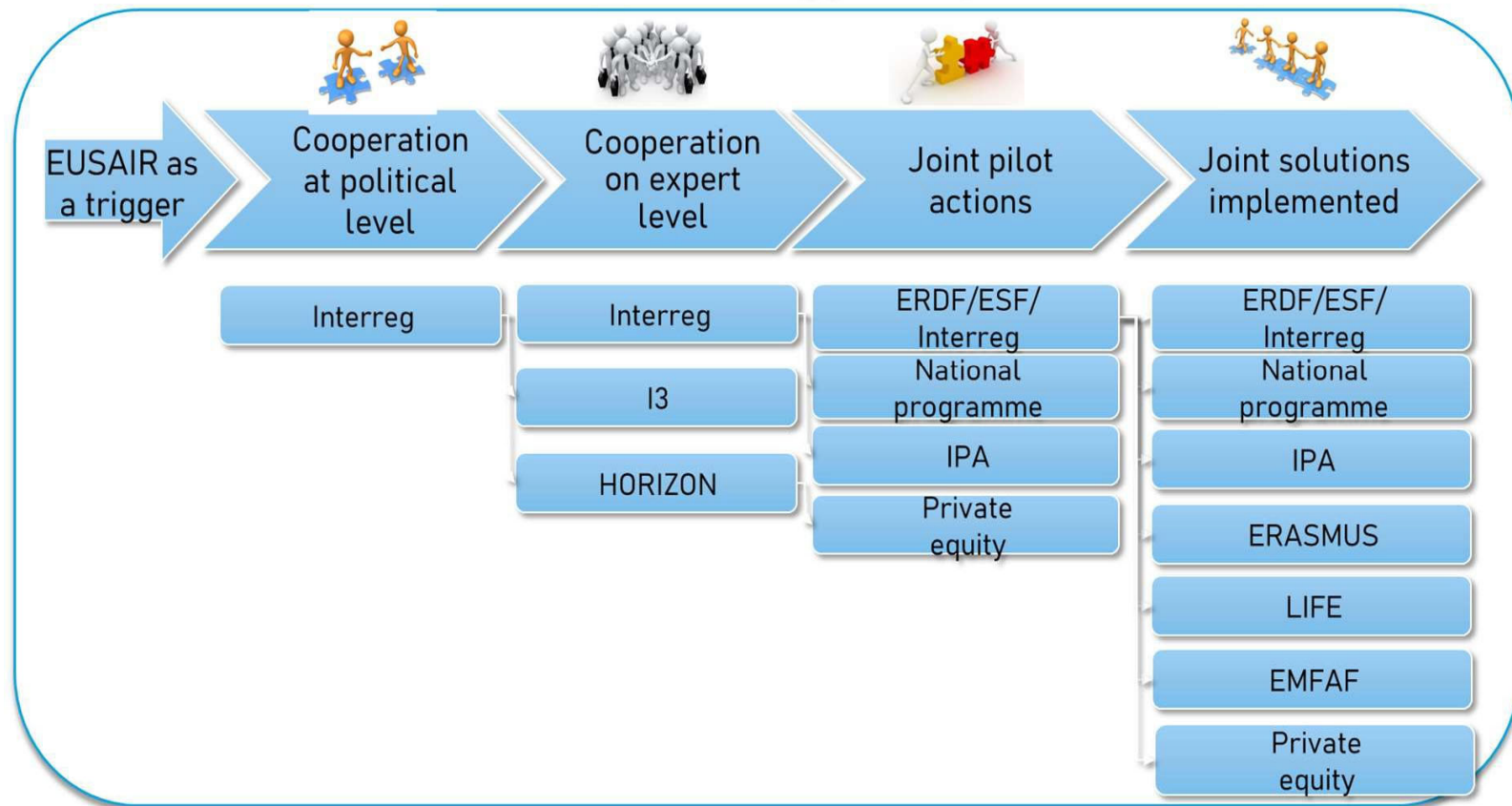
Interreg IPA and EUSAIR first results

Tangible results of cooperation in Interreg IPA and EUSAIR areas

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EUSAIR as a platform that triggers synergies along the cooperation value chain

EUSAIR as a strategy and platform



EUSAIR Action Labs & Multi-Programme Mechanism (MMM)

- **EUSAIR Action Labs**

**12 MAs
involved**

IPA ADRIAN
ITALY-CROATIA
ITALY-SLOVENIA
SLOVENIA-CROATIA
GREECE-ITALY
SOUTH ADRIATIC (ITALY-ALBANIA-MONTENEGRO)
CROATIA-SERBIA
CROATIA-BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA-MONTENEGRO
GREECE-ALBANIA
GREECE-NORTH MACEDONIA
SERBIA-BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

- **Multi-Programme Mechanism (MMM)**

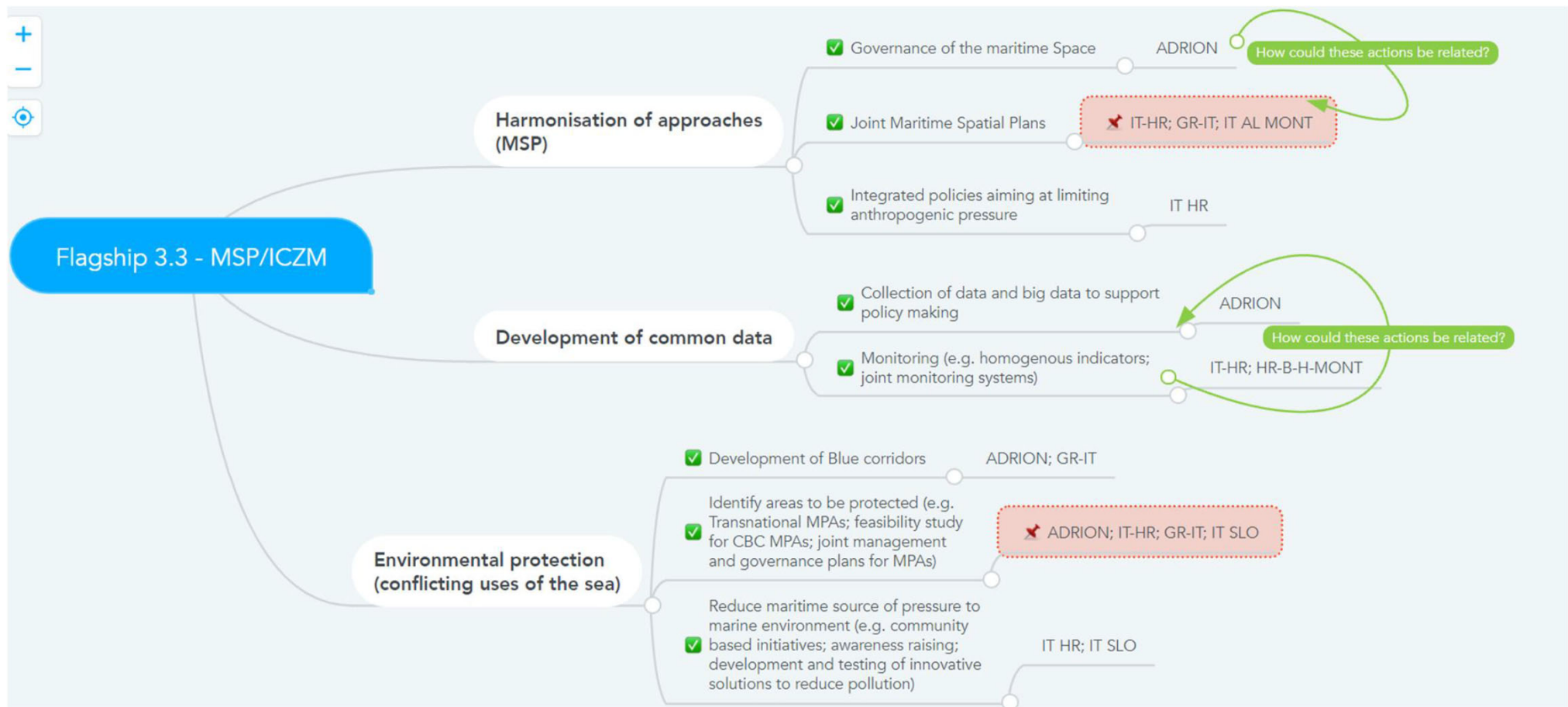
**10 MAs
Involved**

EURO-MED
NEXT MED,
ITALY-FRANCE MARITIME
GREECE-CYPRUS
ITALY-MALTA
ITALY-CROATIA
ITALY-SLOVENIA
ITALY-TUNISIA
IPA ADRIAN (OBSERVER)
SOUTH ADRIATIC (ITALY-ALBANIA-MONTENEGRO) (OBSERVER)

EUSAIR flagships and Interreg Specific Objectives

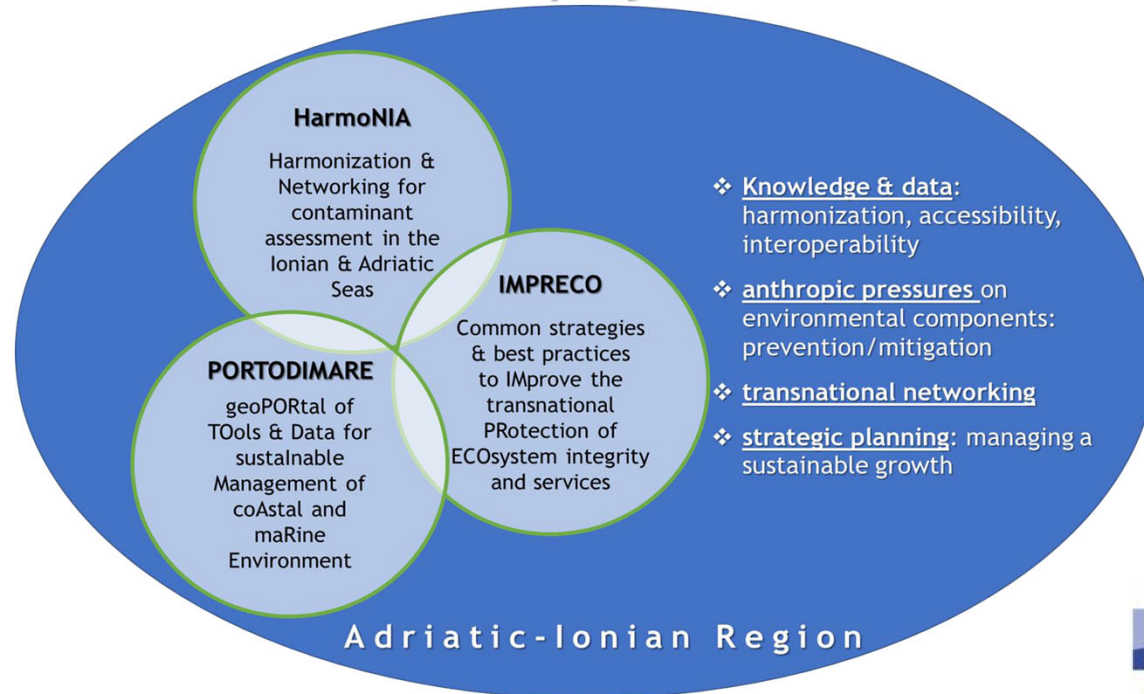
FLAGSHIPS	Specific Objectives (2021-2027)	ETC PROGRAMMES
1.1. FOSTERING QUADRUPLE HELIX TIES IN THE FIELDS OF MARINE TECHNOLOGIES AND BLUE BIO-TECHNOLOGIES	1.1 Research and innovation	ADRION; IT HR; GR-IT; IPA HR-BA-ME*
	1.4 Skills for smart specialization	ADRION; IT HR; GR-IT; IPA HR-BA-ME*
	4.2 Education, training and lifelong learning	IT AL ME
Pillar 2 S– Flagship 2.1: SMART/GREEN PORTS HUB CONCEPT	3.2 Transport mobility	ADRION; IT-HR; GR IT; IT AL ME
	2.6 Circular economy	ADRION; GR-IT
Pillar 3 – Flagship 3.3: PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF THE AI REGION BY IMPLEMENTING ICZM AND MSP	2.7 Preservation of nature, biodiversity, green infrastructures	ADRION; IT HR; GR IT; IT AL ME; CROATIA SERBIA
	2.4 Climate changes and risks	ADRION; IT HR; IT AL ME
	4.2 Education, training and lifelong learning	IT AL ME
	1.3 SMEs	ADRION; IT AL ME
Pillar 4 – Flagship 4.5: AIR CULTURAL ROUTES.	1.1 Research and innovation	ADRION; IT AL ME; GR IT
	1.3 SMEs	IPA CRO-BiH-ME*; IT AL ME
	2.7 Preservation of nature, biodiversity, green infrastructures	IPA CRO-BiH-ME*
	4.6 Culture and sustainable tourism	IT HR; IT AL ME

Emerging EUSAIR patterns of cooperation (as identified through the EUSAIR Action Labs)



Tangible results in terms of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

From the thinking of synergies between
3 sister projects...



...to a Thematic Cluster!

Interreg 
ADRION **ADRIATIC-IONIAN**
European Regional Development Fund - Instrument for Pre-Accession II Fund

Thematic Cluster on Coastal and Marine Environment Management 

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Policy alignment and territorial cohesion

Interreg's role in strengthening policy alignment and territorial cohesion

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EUSAIR, Interreg IPA Programmes and other Union programmes



INTERREG IPA

Other Union Programmes, including

Digital
Europe

InvestEU

LIFE

Innovation
Fund

Horizon
Europe

IPA III
“mainstream”

ESF+

IPARD / Common
Agricultural Policy

ERDF
“mainstream”

Maritime &
Fisheries Fund

EU4Health

Space
Programme

Single Market
Programme

Connecting
Europe Facility

AMF, ISF
& BMVI

ERASMUS+

Creative
Europe

Enhanced synergies

COMPATIBILITY

Harmonisation of funding rules; flexible co-funding schemes; pooling resources at EU level

COHERENCE & COMPLEMENTARITY

Alignment of strategic priorities in support of a common vision

Just Transition
Mechanism

Recovery and
Resilience Facility

Embedding – strategic success factors

- **Multilevel cooperation:**

- **Cohesion Funds (MS)** – EUSAIR governing bodies, Managing Authorities, National Authorities
- **IPA beneficiaries** – NIPAC, EUSAIR Governing Bodies, EC (mainly REGIO, NEAR and EC Delegations in the region)

- **At MS level, networks of Managing Authorities**

- **Council conclusions on the implementation of MRS (3-12-20) CALL** on the establishment of networks of managing authorities to implement macroregional projects in the 2021-2027 programming period.

Why are EUSAIR and Interreg IPA programmes needed in the region?

1. More cost effective solutions:


- Solving problems together instead of “re-inventing wheels” from country to country, region to region, etc

2. Territorial Governance is the formulation of public policies, programmes and projects for the development of a territory by:

- Coordinating actions of actors and institutions
- Integrating policy sectors
- Mobilising stakeholders participation
- Being adaptive to changing contexts
- Realising place based/territorial specificities and impacts

Definition by: “Towards a Better Territorial Governance in Europe”, ESPON, 2014

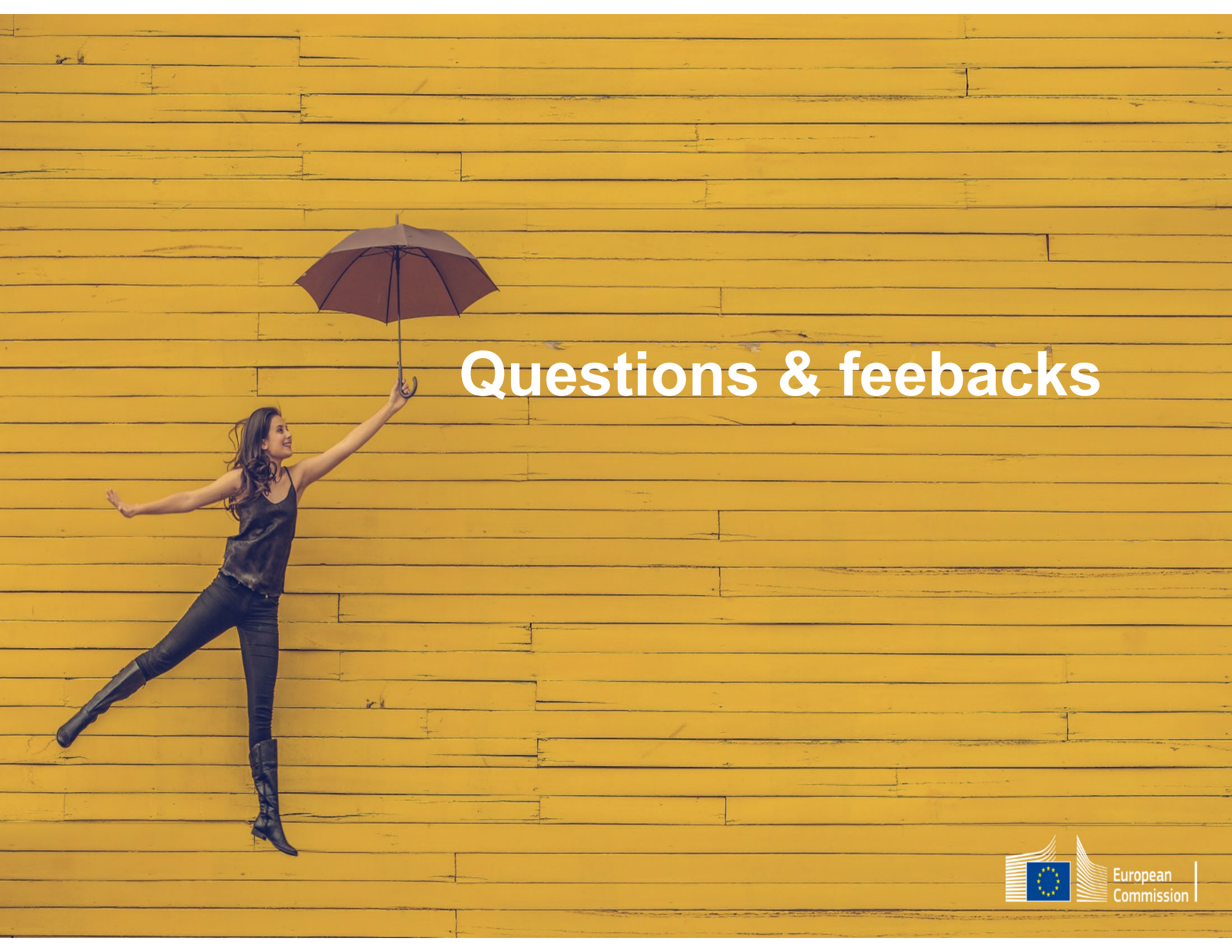
Why are EUSAIR and Interreg IPA programmes needed in the region?

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- 3. MRS are forms of territorial governance on a larger scale.**
 - 4. EUSAIR and the Interreg IPA programmes can play an important role in bringing stability and fostering EU integration, beyond contributing to growth and jobs in the Region.**
 - 5. Currently, the enlargement process has a vertical structure**
 - Countries climb up from association agreements via the commission's "opinion" ("avis"), through candidate status and onto accession talks, until they reach the very last level: membership.
 - EUSAIR can promote a more gradual horizontal EU integration, strengthening the much-needed feeling of ownership of the process, of acceptance and equality.

Conclusions

Interreg IPA and EUSAIR expected achievements and value in strengthening policy alignment and territorial cohesion

- Enhancing complex ecosystems of actors (from multiple levels of government, to private firms and non-profit entities):
 - **Across levels**
 - **Across countries and sectors**
- Stimulating policy interactions
- Creating synergies
- Allowing positive overlapping and
- Providing additionality to mainstream programmes

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black sleeveless top, black leather pants, and black boots, is captured in a dynamic pose against a bright yellow wooden plank wall. She is holding a purple umbrella with her right arm, and her left leg is kicked out to the side. The scene is brightly lit, creating a cheerful and artistic atmosphere.

Questions & feedbacks

#ThisistheEU

#ThisIsTheEU



The EU is built
on solidarity

Thank you

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