

TOPICS OF THE INTERREG 30 YEARS CELEBRATIONS

The celebrations of Interreg's 30th anniversary will focus on three main topics which will be articulated on different occasions. These topics are interconnected in nature and can be demonstrated throughout all of the work we do all cooperation activities.

We believe that they represent the heart of what Interreg is about and illustrate the main concerns expressed by our citizens.



neighbour cohesion

WE ALL HAVE A NEIGHBOUR

We all have neighbours – and they matter!

In good times and bad times, we cooperate, we work together and make decisions together. We face challenges together and we create new opportunities for a better future in a common space. No matter what, we stay together!

Never before has cooperation been so crucial, because never before have our challenges been so global.

Forest fires know no borders. They spread from slopes to valleys, never asking for a visa to cross a border. And neither do diseases, pollution or social unrest. If one side of the border is affected, the other will inevitably be too. Climate change epitomises this perfectly.

But we know that sharing borders involves more than finding solutions to common problems. It also means taking advantage of common opportunities, interests, lifestyles and cultural practices. Together, we create strong communities and build bridges between people across borders. Together, we make sure our citizens have better access to education, health care or jobs. Together, we improve connectivity and accessibility across borders, while preserving everyone's safety and protecting heritage and nature. We have a lot more in common with our neighbours than we might think. And Europe keeps us together.

For 30 years now, under Interreg, EU cooperation programmes have been helping neighbours work together to develop strong communities along internal and external borders. For 30 years, thousands of EU-funded projects have brought concrete benefits to EU border regions and beyond; building trust and respect amongst people from communities sharing a common space. Because all together as neighbours, we know that cooperation matters! As we know that neighbours matter!



youth cooperation

YOUTH

Young people between 15 and 29-years-old made up 17% of the European Union population in 2018.

Irrespective of their gender, economic situation, social origin and age, they all face common challenges such as weak labour markets and lack of education and training opportunities.

They are not immune from other crises such as global warming, insecurity and the widespread lack of trust in public institutions. However, their desire for a better future is shared across the continent. Therefore, the European Union as a whole offers vast opportunities, especially to the increasing numbers of young people moving within the EU – and enabling youth mobility is crucial to strengthening its position as a knowledge-based economy.

For 30 years, Interreg and cohesion policy have found solutions for young people. How? By working together, building partnerships and sharing knowledge to improve educational levels, qualifications, skills, international competences and job opportunities for all and to make "an economy that works for people".

Interreg facilitates youth mobility through cross-border internships, enhancing the ability of young people to work and learn on both sides of the border, increasing their employability and fighting against youth unemployment. Youth mobility is a prime mechanism for fostering a sense of European identity and citizenship.

Interreg promotes networks and activities for helping young entrepreneurs to develop their skills, therefore unlocking youth's unexploited potential and competences. This also creates an enabling environment to make their innovative ideas become ventures with high social added value. Interreg also educates young people in and outside of Europe to make them aware of global warming and to adapt their habits towards a more sustainable way of life.

Interreg builds trust and confidence across borders by establishing common public services that young generations can easily access.

Young generations are the future of cooperation – and Interreg empowers the European spirit.



green connections

GREEN AND CLIMATE NEUTRAL EUROPE

Humans have created borders to establish a sense of belonging and common identity throughout the years.

However, Mother Nature does not play by these rules. Borders do not limit rivers, mountains, forests or lakes, nor do they prevent flora and fauna from crossing them. Air, water, land pollution and the use of common resources do not recognise national boundaries. To preserve this treasure for generations to come, Interreg has fostered cooperation in environmental matters for 30 years.

The European Commission has just presented its Green Deal as Europe's new growth strategy with the objective of becoming climate neutral by 2050 and decoupling economic growth from resource use. This will be Europe's 'man on the moon' moment in our fight against climate change and to protect the environment against the biggest threat to humanity in the 21st century.

And one thing is crystal clear: a green and climate neutral Europe cannot be achieved if we all work in isolation, but instead in cooperation. That is what Interreg stands for, and has stood for for the past 30 years.

