



Interreg Europe Annual Implementation Report 2017

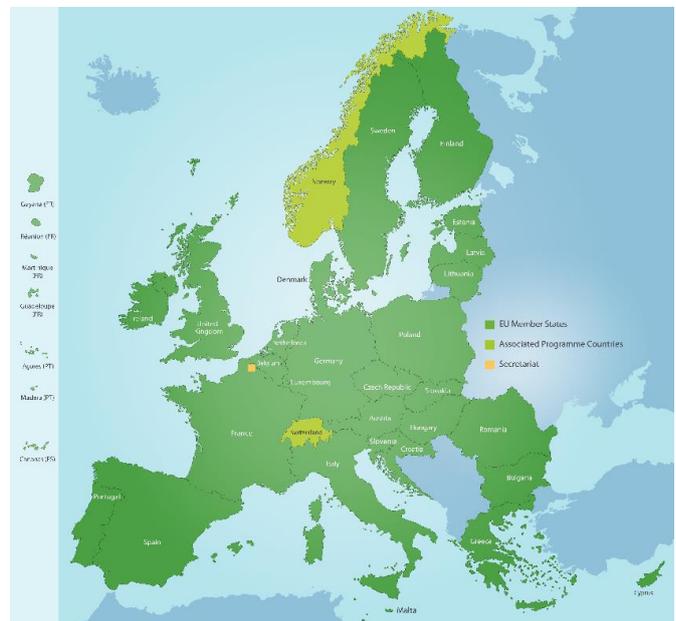
CITIZEN SUMMARY

This is a brief summary of a report on the programme implementation for 2017. It presents several programme highlights from that year.

What we do

The European Union works on reducing differences in the levels of development, growth and quality of life among European regions. Cooperation and exchange of experience and good practice with funds managed by European territorial cooperation programmes is a way to do it.

Interreg Europe is a programme helping public authorities across Europe develop and deliver better policy. With €359 million from the European Regional Development Fund for 2014-2020 plus Norwegian and Swiss national funding, it supports policy learning among institutions from 30 countries (EU28, Norway and Switzerland). The funds help policymakers find inspiration on how to improve strategies for their own citizens, either in cooperation projects or the Policy Learning Platform.



Four topics in two policy learning actions

Interregional cooperation projects are for organisations from different European regions to work together on a shared policy issue for 3 to 5 years. An action plan for each region ensures that the lessons learnt in the project turn to action. Regional partners monitor implementation of the action plans.

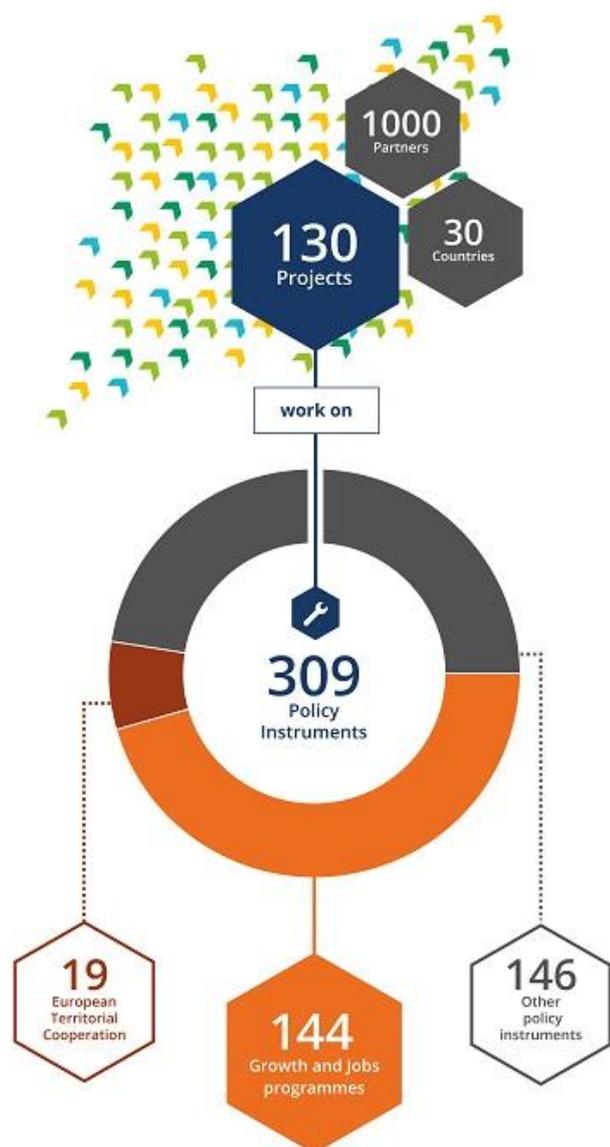
Policy Learning Platform opens up the programme’s knowledge to all project partners and also regional policymakers and stakeholders outside the cooperation projects. It is a community of peers and a space for continuous policy learning in the four topics covered by Interreg Europe.





2017 highlights

Year 2017 was busy for the programme with supporting and monitoring the 130 projects approved in the first two calls, the launch and assessment of the third call for project proposals, and further development of the Policy Learning Platform services and of the online monitoring system (iOLF).



Over 1000 partners in 130 Interreg Europe projects started or continued working on 309 policy instruments all over Europe in 2017. 144 of them represent the Growth and Jobs programmes, 46% of all those approved by the European Commission. 19 are European territorial cooperation programmes and 146 other local, regional or national policy instruments. The project partners exchanged smart and sustainable solutions developed and tested in other partner regions in order to transfer those solutions into their own policies and strategies.

Overall, Structural Funds programmes represented well over 50% of the policy instruments addressed by the approved projects in all topics. In research and innovation projects, the Structural Funds programmes represented 88% of all policy instruments addressed; in SME competitiveness projects, the share was 86%; in low carbon economy projects, it was 75%; and in the environment and energy efficiency projects, it was 74%. Such a concentration of the projects on the Structural Funds programmes promises improved use of the funds once the projects have their action plans implemented.

A new set of projects was in the making in 2017. The third call for project proposals ran from 1 March to 30 June 2017. 234 submitted project proposals received the eligibility

check first. 171 eligible proposals then kept the joint secretariat of the programme busy assessing their content and relevance to the programme. Before the end of the year, 57 projects were suggested for the last step of assessment – checking the operational quality of the proposals.

The Policy Learning Platform expert team started offering their policy learning services in 2017. Members of the Interreg Europe online community were invited to upgrade to the Platform membership. Over 60 articles and 30 policy briefs provided expert insight into the four topics of the programme. The good practice database started gathering information about the smart and sustainable solutions developed not only in the project partner regions. A validation system for the submitted good practices by the Platform experts was put in place. The European Week of Regions and Cities gave the programme a chance to record close to 40 good practice



stories, now available at the programme's YouTube channel. Four thematic and four networking events, organised by the Platform, gave the running projects and all interested organisations the chance to start building synergies.

The programme is committed to simplifying procedures both for the applicants and the beneficiaries. In 2017, the online system for submitting applications and for monitoring the finances and activities of approved projects saw further developments. For applicants, the systems further limited errors in submitting applications. For beneficiaries, the system was further developed to help them and their first level controllers work on the progress reports online and submit them electronically to the secretariat. Conclusion of the designation process of the managing authority and the certifying authority in 2017 allowed the secretariat to proceed with the project costs reimbursements.

The programme communication activities in 2017 had again mainly the value and benefit for the applicants and project beneficiaries in mind. Programme and national events provided information on the third call and facilitated partner search. Online events and webinars welcomed large numbers of participants and offered series of trainings and question & answer sessions on various topics both to project partners and potential applicants. The programme regularly featured running projects' highlights on the programme website and in the newsletter. Evaluations of all activities asked the participants or experts to suggest further improvements.

Solutions for better regional policies

More than 1 000 partner organisations from 221 European regions were involved in 130 projects running in 2017. Citizens from those regions are soon to benefit from the results of the projects. Some projects already have information to share about the results of their work. [Design4Innovation](#) project inspired policymakers from Latvia in their development of the design strategy. Workshops in Bruges and Thessaloniki presented approaches and tools to conduct an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Design Ecosystem in Latvia. The analysis shaped the new 'Design for Latvia 2020', launched on 6 September 2017 by the Ministries of Culture and Economy. The lead partner of [HoCare](#) project, Nicosia Development Agency from Cyprus, has made first steps towards using the funds under the operational programme 'Competitiveness and Sustainable Development' 2014-2020, their selected policy instrument. A new project to be implemented by the Ministry of Health will transfer a good practice called 'e-Care', shared by the Slovenian project partner.

For more information

The latest programme news and details on activities can be found on the programme website:

www.interregeurope.eu

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