

# **EWRC 2017: Interreg Talks. How projects can impact on the EU Climate Change Policy?**

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## **Report**

**Author(s)** Mercedes Acitores  
Manuel Gonzalez

### **Interreg Talks. How projects can impact on the EU Climate Change Policy?. Workshop description.**

Territorial dimension and multilevel governance are two unique elements to give an effective response to Climate Change. In addition, it is a global issue that must be tackled in a broader territorial way rather than locally, for which cooperation is essential. In this sense Interreg is best placed to achieve the correct solution. But then, how Interreg results are considered when discussing new Climate Change policies? what process can be followed to ensure their impact to the EU policy?

This workshop has a twofold purpose,

- to illustrate the contribution of project results on the EU Climate Change policy through examples, explaining the needed steps, contacting the relevant institutions and doing the follow up.
- to encourage the Interreg project actors to be more active in the influencing process. The session will be interactive between panel and audience, following an interview format.

### **Summary of the workshop.**

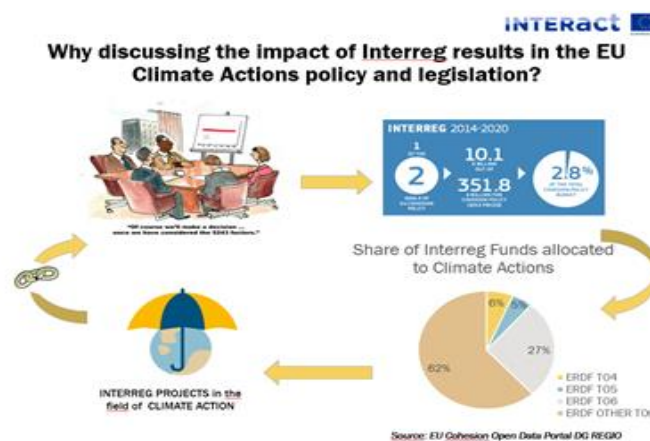
**Mercedes Acitores\_ Interact**

How can Interreg projects impact the EU climate change policy and legislation? Why Interreg project results are they able to impact EU environmental policies (Climate change, energy, etc) and to the relevant EU decision makers?.

Because **Interreg and Climate adaptation-mitigation share the same key elements: territorial dimension; cooperation and multilevel governance** (giving the regions, municipalities and NGO's the responsibility to implement EU policy in their territory). Examples on the importance of multilevel governance, including macrorregional strategies were highlighted in the workshop.

Marie project (Interreg Med). BaltAdapt Project (Baltic Region/Baltic EUMRS), Enerbuilt (Alpine Space).

Interreg programmes are investing more than 1 billion € on climate change and low carbon projects for 2014-2020. Based on the *EU Cohesion Open Data Portal DG REGIO*, 38% of Interreg funds are being allocated in their Cooperation Programmes to the following thematic objectives: **Low Carbon (T04); Climate Change (T05) and Environment (T06)**. This investment produce outputs and results that feeds the implementation of the EU Climate Adaptation Policy in the territory. **But are these results feeding back the EU decision makers?** Do we use the policy recommendations coming from the projects? Here there is a missing link. All this conclusions recommendations coming from the territorial implementers should be forwarded back to the decision makers, that in a time decided to allocate a budget for a response.



#### POLL result.

- Are you aware if your projects have influenced? 64.3% voted yes to awareness in changes in climate change
- Which group you represent? 100% Interreg practitioners
- Figure approximate for Interreg investment on Climate Change and Low carbon projects for 2014-2020? 69% of the audience considers that EU invests over 30% of Interreg budget

#### Dina Silina \_ DG CLIMA

Multilevel governance is crucial for climate change policy as Climate does not respect borders. The EU Climate Adaptation Strategy has 3 main points:

1. **Adaptation in each Member States** . life fund to implement adaptation projects
2. **Need to work on knowledge gaps with the support of JRC to address the model.** Climate projections for future adaptation awareness model and platform.
3. EU level action climate proof with key sectors, agriculture, maritime, fisheries, environment, etc..

Focussing on the **multilevel governance strategy**, there is a constant dialogue with each level of governance, including a Working Group on Adaptation. There is a set of indicators to look and Member States create scoreboard indicators. **There is constant work with Cities and Covenant of Mayors. An Agenda on adaptation has been launched + URBACT partnership on adaptation and advance measures in Europe**

To the questions *How Interreg results can influence the Adapt Strategy? What could be the process?* Dina Silina mentions the **different information sources DG Clima uses**, for example, the Commission report on the Macro-regional Strategies implementation, a study that DG REGIO is currently conducting on MRS and their links with the Cohesion Policy, newsletters (such as the EUSBSR HA CLIMATE produces); the Covenant of Mayors good practices material, and the reports from European Environment Agency (EEA).

On the other hand, DG CLIMA stresses the **need of condensed analysis of the achievements of all Interreg programmes in terms of climate action**. The analysis can be then illustrated by certain good examples, but a good overall summary of how Interreg contribute to climate change objectives would be needed. We have to demonstrate the results in order to argue for more recognition in the possibly revised strategy. Being alert that there are many other sectors and areas that are competing for being prioritised.

**From projects to policy**

European Commission

**Climate in ETC programmes**

- **Successfully integrates climate action - >20% or nearly €2 bn**
- **Strong adaptation component**
- **Enhance prevention, preparedness, and impact-response cooperation; Focus on 'soft' measures: joint strategies/action plans, tools, studies, monitoring systems etc.**
- **Research and the protection of biodiversity: focus on the recovery of terrestrial habitats, resilience of forests, green infrastructures.**

**From projects to policy – key information sources**

Communication material – studies, reports, publications, brochures, case studies, presentations at events (e.g. MRS FORUMs), fact sheets, news letters, Climate-ADAPT...

European Climate Adaptation

Alpine Space

Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2016

Region's i

Mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change into the ESI Funds 2014-2020

Annex A - Case Studies

Sustainable, Climate-Resilient and Vibrant Cities

Good practices from Covenant of Mayors signatories

COWI

## KRISTA KAMPUS \_ Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

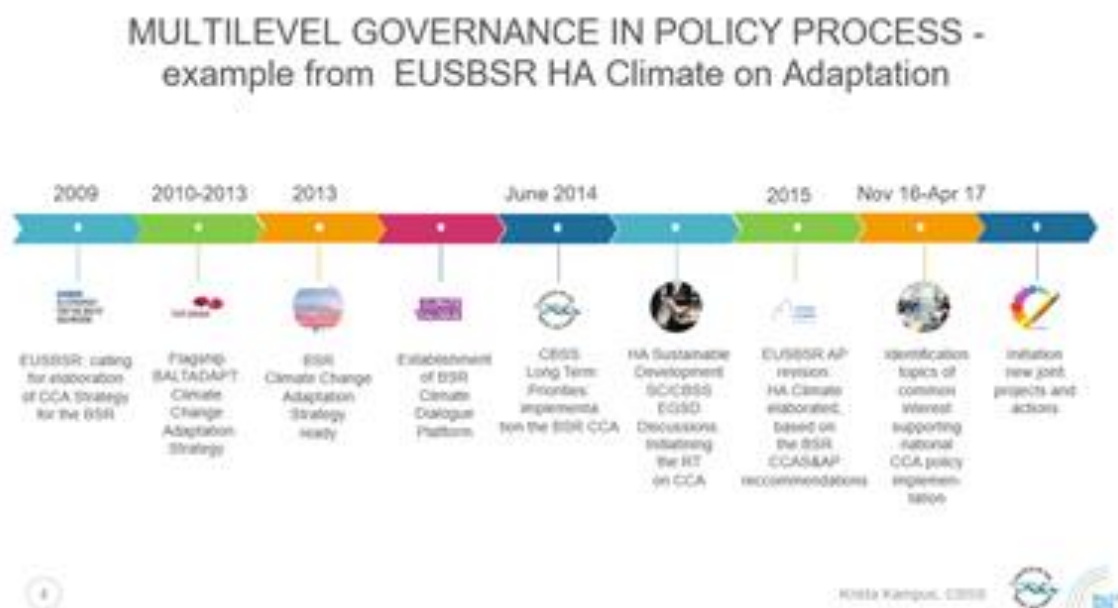
CBSS is working in the framework of Macro Regional Strategy. Specifically, a project in adaptation named BALTADAPT was explained but not only, also iWater and CASCADE were mentioned.

Creating partnerships takes time. BALTADAPT Project did contribute to set up cooperation in Baltic MRS. With a budget of 2,8 Million Euros and 11 partners and relevance of partnership was really good: ministries, regions, cities, research and NGOs, with knowledge brokerage and capacity.

**Climate change adaptation is a strategy for all the Macro Region**, where 5 areas were identified. Before no coordinated mechanism was made and now there is a dialogue format established in the Baltic region and new projects, trainings and seminars.

Project BALTADAPT is a showcase for increasing resilience in cities and risk assessment methodologies. Training for trainers is foreseen. Methodologies and plans. EU civil protection mechanisms with impact at national level and scientific information and evidences. **This project helped countries to elaborate plans and it is an example of multilevel governance. No immediate results after project is finished. Some outputs, but impacts take a long process.**

In terms of Transnational Cooperation, multilevel governance and setting up partnership and governance is important, with the need to involve all. Science also involved. Good projects to policy loop.



#### **Comments from Anna Kottaviita, iWater project.**

Representing 100 cities in Baltic Sea Region and cooperation with municipalities in 3 Interreg projects (iWater, PRESTO and PURE) on municipal water waste treatment.

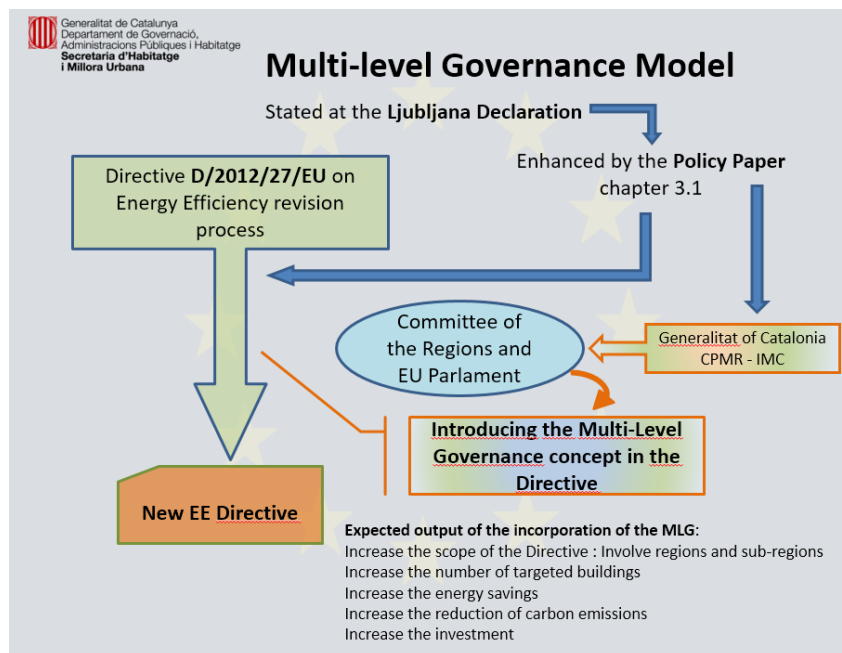
Kotaviita presented two Interreg projects from the cities perspective:

First, the iWater - Integrated Storm Water Management (Central Baltic Programme) that has the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's HA Climate Flagship Status. iWater is an initiative of 7 cities (Turku, Tartu, Helsinki, Riga, Jalgava, Gävle, Söderhamn) who have severe problems with flooding. iWater cities produces integrated storm water management plans, including tools of Green Area Factor that imitates the nature's natural hydrological cycle in order to create higher quality, cleaner, attractive and safer urban environment and increase urban sustainability. In addition, approximately 35 other cities are trained to use developed methods in the region. The uniqueness of iWater is that it is connected to all UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Secondly, UBC SCC has worked 10 years with Belarusian partners in close cooperation with HELCOM in various projects, such as PURE, PRESTO, IWAMA in the Interreg Baltic Sea Region/ ENPI framework to improve the state of the Baltic Sea through the capacity building of the local waste water treatment plants. The cooperation has included technical assistance, development of technical standards for constructions and dimensioning waste water treatment plants with advanced nutrient removal among others. In addition, EU and Belarus have nowadays similar standards. These project made good ground for other EU funding instruments and investments, such as NIB, EBRD, EIB in Belarus

#### **Xavier Marti \_Generalitat of Catalonia**

Within the framework of the Strategic Call of the MED programme (2006-2013) 3 projects (MARIE, ELIH -Med and PROFORBIOMED) dealing with energy efficiency in building were approved, with a mandate of the Managing Authority to work together in a common capitalisation strategy with **"Policy Paper to implement the Energy Renovation of Buildings policy in Mediterranean"**. This document was structured in 4 parts: diagnostics, main barriers to develop this policy, commitments from all the authorities, and recommendations for policies. This Policy Paper has been and is an important tool and asset to improve the EU policy on EE of buildings and, more precisely, to influence in the **Directive D/2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency**, enhancing the added value of multilevel governance for a better implementation EE in public buildings.



Regions and cities are important to develop the energy efficiency directive, not only at Member State level. It becomes necessary to arrive to the local level. As an example, in Spain the National strategy of energy renovation of buildings was considered by the JRC as the best strategy in Europe, but then he considers that this does not work well as it does not take into account the public buildings stock at local and regional level (multilevel governance). Therefore, at regional and local level the impact of the directive is much higher. This amendment was included in the directive at policy level. Currently waiting for final decision of ITRE (Industry, research and energy) Committee at the European Parliament

#### Frederic Lopez Palau\_MEP assistant:

The EP does not have the capacity to propose new legislation, but is one of the co-legislators since the Lisbon reform, what means that what the Parliament thinks has to be taken into account. There are only a few competences where Europe can be decisive, and one of them is on environmental issues. In this case, through the participation of MEP Gambús from Spain, **the ENVI committee gave an opinion (amendment) to the position of the EP on the proposal of the EC on the directive on Energy Performance on buildings. Currently waiting for final decision.**

Mr. Gambús had previous experience working in the field of external relations of Generalitat de Catalunya, and for this purpose he requested the Generalitat about experience of knowledge on energy efficiency and possible project recommendations. In this case, **some good partners like CPMR can be a multiplier factor for the interest of your region.** Also it is important to keep good relationships with your **Regional Government**. In addition, **Interact also played a role in this process**, since after several exchanges several initiatives were developed on that specific issue.

Frederic highlighted **four tips** for any project to influence in the EP:

1. To look for the offices from MEPs coming from your constituencies or regions where the programs are developed, mainly from those where the political party ruling is the same that the MEP.
2. Also take into account that small delegations are much more accessible than the big ones, who had their own kind of internal structure.
3. Don't focus on the MEP. They usually have a fully booked agenda, and small slots to fit meetings. But, assistants are much more accessible, and you never know which is the influence that they can have at the end of the day on the amendments tabled.
4. Be aware of the Work in Progress, which is in the Committees webpage, and overall keep in mind the deadlines for amendments, that are usually published on the Committees Agenda

**Comments from Etienne Vienot, working for Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Énergie Environnement (AURA-EE) in Auvergne -Rhône-Alpes.** He commented on Enerbuild project and CESBA network, from the initiative in Interreg Alpine Space .The Enerbuild project ) produced an assessment tool to assess the sustainability of buildings. The main conclusion of this exercise is twofold: a single European reference framework is unreal, since each assessment tool must integrate regional characteristics (= one does not build the same in the Northern Alps as in the South, and responses to environmental challenges in the buildings are not the same, hence a need for regional / local contextualization) but it is also important to have common criteria, which allow to compare themselves, to exchange and to bring together regional public policies. Together with the partners who shared this vision, other projects were developed in various Interreg programs (Central Europe program, Med programme). It allowed the partners to go further and to give it a political dimension in a "Policy paper" and establish the European association CESBA network. At the same time, **DG Environment was contacted by CESBA for few conferences, in regions and in Brussels, in that time it issued its Communication COM (2014) 445 on the efficient use of resources in the construction sector in July 2014, which resulted in the LEVEL (S) initiative, considering CESBA's vision, among others. Further, CESBA was invited to the working group launched by European Commission for the preliminary studies as one of the two European networks** organized to promote the environmental assessment of the building. In the CESBA Med project, the Level(s) indicators will be tested. The approach taken at building level is now taken at district scale (CESBA Med project) and territorial scale (CESBA Alps).

#### **POLL results.**

- Interreg actors should be more active when drafting EU policy and legislation. 95% considers yes with more resources time and staff.
- How can Interreg project results get attention of EU institutions?.60 %considers is right timing and relevant knowledge.
- Wordcloud. Fill one word which inspires the most: Cooperation, Influencing, Partnership, Active, Commitment, Passion



**Closing by JM Venineaux- DG REGIO.**

It is clear that **more cooperation is needed since cities and regions have a role to play**. We need to think also of Functional area at territorial scale and think of the future of Cohesion Policy. How are these actions are finding this place in the right puzzle of cooperation? **Global issues such as Climate Change need to benefit from the multilevel governance. The question is how to organise this governance. Do not underestimate capacity to influence policies.**

Cooperation comes from aggregating project results in the regions. **There is a need to use capitalisation to drive the results**. There is an invaluable knowledge in cooperation projects. We need to disseminate knowledge from interregional cooperation. Need to use more the functional areas. In this context, everyone is aware of the needs to speed Climate Change actions. **Results will be measured in the timeframe of 10 to 15 years, but Climate Change is happening already today. In addition, there are cross cutting issues that we have to deal with in any action implemented in Structural Funds, have an impact on Climate Change and we have to integrate this dimension in future policies.** The same happens for third countries. Check the example from Belarus. Since the changes we face are global, our neighbours shall not be underestimated.