

Annual Interreg communication network meeting

28 February – 1 March 2018
Bucharest, Romania

Summary

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Background

Interact brought together communication officers of Interreg, Interreg IPA CBC and ENI programmes this year to:

- Exchange experience in implementation of programme communication.
- Keep up with the progress in preparations for Interreg post-2020 with special focus on communication, discover areas of possible contribution by Interreg programmes
- Identify content policy for the new harmonised digital Interreg tools such as Interreg website, blog and social media and ensure ownership of these tools
- Update communication officers on the stage of European Cooperation Day, what is expected from programmes and how Interact will support the campaign.
- Give an overview of updates for the past year and present the communication activities in which Interreg programmes will have a crucial role in 2018.
- Get practical training on copyrights and digital marketing that are dominant communication topics in everyday management of Interreg programme communication.

All presentations from the event are available at <http://www.interact-eu.net/#o=events/annual-communication-network-meeting>

Below is a summary of the meeting sessions with main takeaways.

Interreg communication – news and updates

Interact team and representatives from DG Regio gave an overview of what has been going on during the last year and the initiatives for the rest of the year in Interreg communication to make sure communication officers are aware of the priority topics as well as ensure maximum Interreg involvement possible in various Europe-wide initiatives.

Interreg website has been launched along with harmonised Interreg social media. Detailed information is in the following pages.

Communication toolkit: A great amount of input was gathered from programmes via surveys, interviews and online network discussions. Interact put the specific input together to update the toolkit. As the amount gathered for specific topics such as video making and Interreg project communication was too great, Interact prepared these chapters as separate publications. Video guide was published in July 2017. Project Communication handbook will be published in March 2018. The 3rd and final edition of the communication toolkit will be published in April 2018 with photography, social media (rewrite) and plain English.

Online networks: Basecamp groups have been shut down. Everybody is invited to create their user profiles on new Interact IT tool, which will not only allow you access to the new communities replacing basecamp, but will also facilitate your access to other services provided by Interact.

KEEP: Interact reminded the programmes of the importance of getting the programme and project data to Keep. Currently only ca. 1/3 of the 2014-2020 projects are in Keep. As there are on average 300 daily sessions in keep.eu, there is great potential for visibility of project data in a bigger context. But only as long as the project data is there, of course. The communication colleagues were encouraged to go back to their teams to remind them of this importance.

Evaluation – communication: As a short but important message to take home from the Interact workshop on Evaluation and communication (Vienna, December 2017) Interact shared the reminder for the communication colleagues to be(come) actively involved in the programme evaluation (nb! not only evaluation of the communication activities) process from the beginning. This is important in order to make sure the evaluation process and contents are built so that the communication of the eventual evaluation findings can be done in a well-planned and impactful way.

European Cooperation Day: the new visual identity and slogan (“Painting our future together”) were presented. All the designs can be customized with names, catchy sentences or ideas that programmes have in mind. The slogan can be also translated into different European languages. The [EC Day website](#) will keep the same structure and format so that programmes can upload their events easily. Some elements will be repeated this year: the customization of the EC Day video and the possibility to order promotional material (in April, be ready!) As a novelty, the EC Day campaign has a brand-new online community which replaces the old one on Basecamp. There are more than 100 members so far but if you are not part of it and would like to join, please let us know!

Events coming up in 2018

21 March: Cohesion Policy 30 high level event
Early May: MFF Post-2020 Announcement
21-25 May: EU Green Week
4-8 June: EU Sustainable Energy Week
8 June: BG Informal Council Meeting on Cohesion Policy
Early June: Infom meeting
(June): Interact Capitalisation major event (dates TBC)
18-19 June: Annual Interreg meeting
21 September: EC Day
8-11 October: EWRC 2018
(November): Project Communication Camp (dates TBC)

(November): Europcom (dates TBC)
(November/December): Inform meeting (dates TBC)

Commission presentation

Representatives of DG Regio of the European Commission made a presentation on various communication activities relevant to Interreg programmes:

Events

Interreg Annual Meeting, 18-19 June 2018, Brussels, Belgium

Focus on:
1st day – current implementation issues
2nd day – future of Interreg

Format: plenary sessions, workshops, project visits (optional)

16th European Week of Regions and Cities, 8-11 October 2018, Brussels, Belgium

Main headline - ‘For a strong EU cohesion policy beyond 2020’

Format: workshops, participatory sessions, Ted-like talks, Q&A sessions, exhibitions, including Tasting Regions and Cities

More information: www.regions-and-cities.europa.eu

RegioStars Awards 2018

Five award categories:
1) Supporting smart industrial transition
2) Achieving sustainability through low carbon emissions
3) Creating better access to public services
4) Tackling migration challenges
5) Topic of the year 2018: Investing in cultural heritage

Applications can be submitted from 1 March till 15 April 2018.

Award ceremony will take place on 9 October 2018.

More information: www.regiostarsawards.eu

Annual Fora of EU macro-regional strategies

- 3rd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region on 24-25 May 2018 in Catania, Italy

- 9th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) on 4-5 June 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia & 10th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR on 12-13 June 2019 in Gdańsk, Poland
- 7th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region on 18-19 October 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria
- 2nd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region on 20-21 November 2018 in Innsbruck, Austria

Publications

- Factsheets on EU macro-regional strategies presenting basic information about the strategies (a general one and for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region) have been prepared by DG REGIO. A factsheet on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region is in pipeline and should be ready soon.
- Publication '**10 things to know about transnational cooperation**' prepared by a group of Interreg transnational programmes and Interreg Europe, with the support and facilitation of Interact. By providing concrete examples it illustrates the role, added value and achievements of transnational cooperation.
- Publication '**European Cross-Border Cooperation on Health: Theory and Practice**' prepared jointly by DG REGIO and DG SANTE. Among other, it provides several examples of cross-border cooperation in the field of health, with particular focus on cooperation at the Franco-Belgian border, which could serve as a benchmark for others.

Campaigns



Project success stories

DG Regio stressed importance of submitting successful project stories for Info regio project database. The form to be used when submitting these stories is attached as an annex to this summary.

Key Interreg initiatives

Interreg Volunteer Youth

101 volunteers reached!

Extension of IVY until end of August 2018

Currently reflection on IVY 2

1 March-20 March: social media campaign to celebrate “1st year of IVY” with videos shot by volunteers

Our Heritage: Where the past meets the future

Interreg has the most labelled projects/events

Encourage your projects to get the label at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/RequestLabelEYCH2018>

Interreg workshop at EWRC on cultural heritage and possibly focus of project visits at Interreg Annual Event.

Following the adoption of the communication on 'Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions' [Boosting EU border regions platform on Futurium](#) was launched. The platform provides an opportunity to learn from each other and be up to date on what happens on and around the borders in the EU. In addition, a call for proposal (B-solutions) to finance up to 20 pilot actions aiming at solving specific border obstacles of administrative and/or legal nature is launched with the deadline 30 April 2018. Each of these pilot actions must focus on one of the following topics: employment, transport, health, multilingualism, and institutional cooperation.

Participants were reminded that the **public consultation on the future of Cohesion Policy** was still open with the deadline of 8th of March.

Interreg communication post – 2020

Alexander Ferstl, Head of sector: Communication with Member States at DG REGIO and responsible for drafting the Communication part of the new Regulation presented the main ideas they are currently developing about the Communication of Cohesion Policy in the post-2020 period. See his presentation in the [events section of Interact's website](#) for more details.

Participants exchanged in the Q+A session and in group discussions. Their comments were included in the follow-up Interact Reflection Paper on regulatory provisions for the future.

Participants' general comments:

- The European Commission should provide less Regulation and more guidance.

- What type of information will go in the single database of projects?: As the programme websites will be feeding information into the EC's single database, the EC needs to inform programmes ASAP about the information fields they require from them. This is to ensure the individual programme databases contain the relevant fields as it is difficult to add them after the programme website has been built.
- More strategic approach for projects and programmes
- Coherence of EU with national laws
- Do not force programmes/beneficiaries to use English in their communication if not relevant. Communication tools should be in the language of the audience they address to.

Participants' proposals for the regulation: Simplified EU reference: Keep the obligation to include the EU flag and symbol of help (e.g. MS outside the EU, Interreg, etc.) according to programme needs. No fund reference.

- The current Interreg brand would be sufficient to comply with this rule as the Interreg logo contains the EU flag and the EU name.
- For Programmes: Make obligatory that sufficient HR capacity dedicated to communication.
- For projects: Designate a communication “contact” person to be trained during programme seminars (even if they are not a COMM officer as such).
- Explicitly refer to communication indicators (what change in opinion/behavior came about as a result of communication activities?)
- How should capitalization be integrated in the Communication Strategy?
- Plaques, billboards and templates:
 - o EC to provide a single set of visual identity guidelines accompanied by a toolbox (available online) with indicative templates for programmes/beneficiaries to customize as needed. These guidelines should include, among others, information about how to apply the branding to social media, which has not been referred to in the current regulation.
 - o Remove the obligation for projects to put up posters or temporary billboards.
- Encourage a paperless approach in communication so that programmes and projects use as little printed materials as possible.
- Concentrate the content of communication on the changes achieved with the help of EU funding and results (what are programmes going to be evaluated against?) give examples of impact and result indicators.
- Suggest “hosting” project websites on programme websites: helps their sustainability and harmonized image.
- For publications, use the disclaimer in the language of the publication.

This session was followed by a presentation on ‘experience with capitalisation networks: Example from Latvia’ by Julija Jakovleva, National Authority for Interreg and ENI programmes in Latvia.

Interact presented the main features of the website, as indicated below and answered the specific questions of the participants.

Feature	Interact's role	Programmes' role
Interactive map: easily and intuitively navigable map of Europe where all Interreg programmes can be found based on geographical area and thematic objectives.	Ensure functionality and accuracy of the map and timely fix bugs and errors	Update the info on your programme ID page such as description, programme area, priorities, contacts etc. and making sure the info are up to date at all times
Interreg Highlights (blog): a blog displaying benefits of Interreg from a wide variety of angles. Displayed can be e.g. projects, clusters of projects, programmes, individuals, organisations or regions as long as the impact and benefit of Interreg is in focus.	Develop the blog, provide the technical assistance and guidelines for the contents of blog posts.	Generate original blog posts about achievements of your programme/projects enriched with visuals such as authentic photos, videos and illustrations
Twitter feed: Real time newsfeed for the website where posts of wider interest from Interreg community is retweeted and original posts are generated when necessary. What is posted on @Interreg_EU is hosted as html text on the website, therefore contributes in its SEO.	Maintain the account, grow followers, post contents, monitor programme feeds and retweet contents from programme accounts.	Inform/tag/mention @Interreg_EU to the posts that are of wider interest so the content can be retweeted and hosted on the website.
Calls and Jobs Open programme calls and job vacancies	Ensure consistency of the announcements in style, follow up on technical programme requests, ensure functionality of the CMS forms	Insert timely when there is a new call and job announced by your programme
Media centre: a storage of materials generated by programmes that help better understanding of Interreg, its great achievements and opportunities it provides.	Review and upload materials delivered by programmes to the media centre.	Help enrich media centre with material from your programme that is of interest for the abovementioned type target groups of more Interreg programmes.

An **editor** is a programme person whose e-mail address has been authorised to log in to the CMS of interreg website and who is able to edit the programme information, upload new calls and jobs. This can be the communication officer of the programme but also another, internally agreed colleague.

Most programmes now have their editors. In case your programme has not received the user credentials, it is probably due to outdated contact information. In this case, please write an e-mail to arkam.ograk@interact-eu.net and guillaume.terrien@interact-eu.net who will provide you with user credentials and detailed instructions on using the CMS.

It was reiterated by Interact that editors should:

- login and change their passwords.
- follow the style of already published posts while uploading their calls and jobs.
- ensure programme descriptions are simple, clear and easily understandable.
- update contact details of the programmes with contacts where potential applicants and citizens can get specific information about the programme, rather than providing all possible programme contacts.
- let Interact know when there is a major publication or material that could be of interest Europe-wide in order to upload on the media centre.
- tag @Interreg_EU to important programme posts in order to provide wider visibility and guide project beneficiaries on doing so
- contact Interact in case of technical problems.

Interreg blog

The current section “News” of the portal will be replaced by a blog called Interreg Highlights.

The main objective of the Interreg Highlights blog is to increase the visibility of Cohesion Policy, in this case by showing concrete results and the impact of Interreg, across Europe.

The blog provides a platform for the entire Interreg community to share stories and articles about the concrete benefits and results of Interreg cooperation in different parts of Europe. Also, the blog will offer Interreg programmes, Interreg projects, Interreg networks and other Interreg stakeholders the possibility to share and spread their success stories to audiences in all Europe as part of the communication activities related to capitalisation.

The participants of the Communication seminar provided a large number of ideas for potential topics to be presented in the blog, under the categories of Cooperation, Regions, Results, Networks, Policy and People. Interact colleagues are already in the process of digging into some of them to build interesting, journalistic blog articles highlighting the many aspects of Interreg benefits in different parts of Europe.

The blog will be launched by the end of May. Both before and after the launch Interact colleagues will be in touch with the communication colleagues in programmes with requests for support in building blog contents.

In case you have any more new ideas for potential good stories to show the impact and benefit of Interreg, please don't hesitate to be in touch with Linda Talve or Eva Martínez in Interact.

Promotion of the interreg.eu

As a result of table discussions, the following ideas were gathered for possible actions by Interact and Interreg to promote it as widely as possible.

What can Interact do?

- Create hashtags for all programmes to use in promotion of the portal (as well as Interreg in general)
- Develop banners, icons, infographics and/or videos for programmes to use to link to interreg.eu from their websites
- Coordinate the contents with the Commission and other relevant actors
- Pay for marketing in social media
- Promotion at events, networks etc.
- Create multilingual promo materials for programmes to use

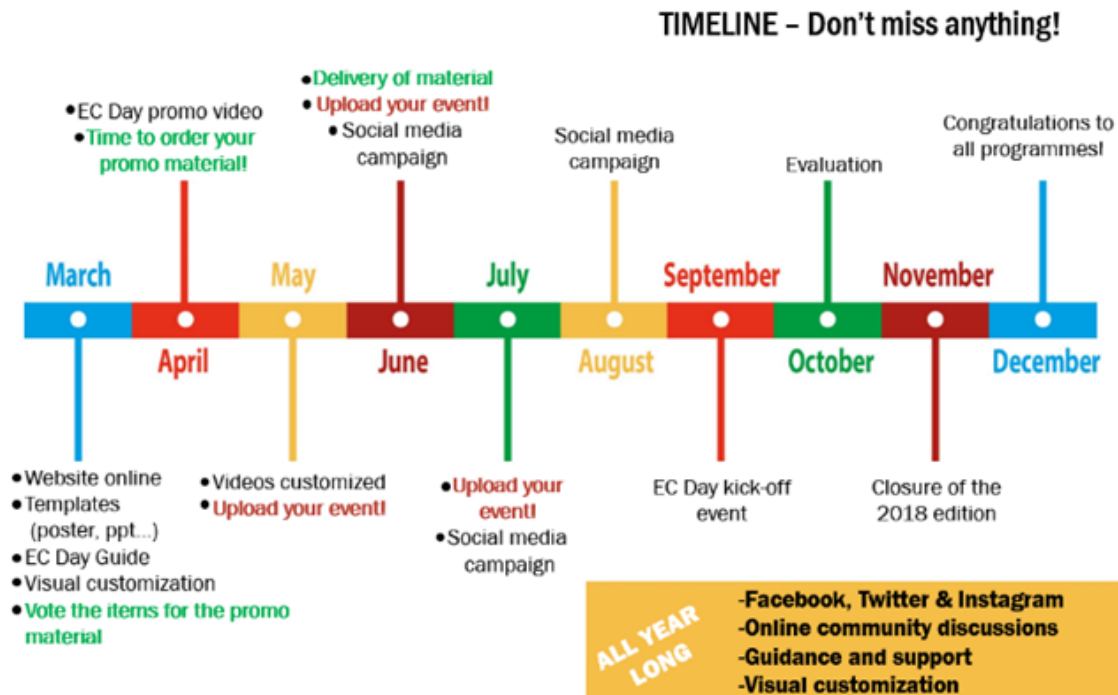
What can programmes do?

- Put a link to interreg.eu on the programme website
- Add a link to interreg.eu to your email signatures
- Make a news post about the portal on the website or newsletter
- Promote via social media, organic or paid
 - Via multipliers, e.g. by tagging, sharing, linking
- Share and spread blog posts to your networks
- Promote during events (info days, MC meetings, European Cooperation Day, European Week of Regions and Cities, INFORM meeting etc.)
- Inform the mainstream programmes and national structural funds MAs in “their” countries about the site interreg.eu and ask for linking in any relevant/suitable place
- Mention the portal as a source for “more information” about Interreg in different occasions, e.g. for press
- Encourage beneficiaries to submit content (e.g. blog posts, photos)
- Inform your own team and close networks
- As part of marketing your own calls, the portal can be mentioned as a source for information on calls of other programmes where relevant

In addition, Michael O’Flynn, the digital marketing expert in the room pointed out that we should not only consider the young and digital generations but also try to reach out to older “analogue” generations.

European Cooperation Day

Timeline



EC Day video

In order to show the results of the EC Day 2017, the [evaluation video](#) was displayed. The main highlights are:

- 78 events in 26 countries
- In 2017, programme participation rose from 37 to 44
- 26 Interreg, 10 IPA and 8 ENI
- All the events gathered around 17.500 visitors

Survey

Participants did a Kahoot survey regarding their needs and role during the EC Day. These were the results:

- 27 programmes are definitely participating in the EC Day, and 14 are probably participating
- 3 will probably not; and 5 say they will not participate

- 19 programmes would like to organize a sports or cultural event
- 19 programmes would like a project event
- Almost all programmes will organize the event in September
- Most of programmes need Interact's support on: providing materials and setting the thematic background (slogan, visuals...)

Find your partner and brainstorm a little!

Participants had to find the person with the name written on their card. Then, in pairs, they discussed about these topics: 1) Ambitious idea (event) for the EC Day; 2) Easy idea; and 3) Ideas for the future. The results can be clustered as follows:

Ambitious ideas

- Theater play, singing contest, TV show
- Cross-border drone trip, cross-border bus trip
- Joint event for all programmes in the country with one main idea
- Joint artistic project on the border
- Joint painting on a school wall
- A tournament in each participating country, a cycling relay
- Event involving high level politicians and decision-makers, all of them participating in an active way
- President of the country promoting EC Day
- Painting exhibition at the airports of the participating countries
- City "hop-on, hop-off" in the cooperation area
- Repeating the movie "Bande à part" at EU and national emblematic building
- A shocking event to show the idea of not having EU cooperation
- A cross-border football game with ex professional players from all countries
- Include the EC Day in a major event happening in the region (for example, a marathon)

Easy ideas

- Contests (online and events), competitions with prizes
- Sports events (cycling, running, a race...)
- Cultural events (concerts, fairs, a photo exhibition...)
- A campaign on social media
- Info campaign at the City Hall
- Project visits or an event involving projects (an info day, etc)
- Food/European market
- An event with a forum style/format, a virtual event
- Involve students, young people, and use existing facilities
- Blood donation
- Join other programmes to do something together
- A stand in the city center
- Festivals (movies, art...)
- A painting master class
- Beach cleaning, promotional campaigns
- Cooperation with Erasmus
- A conference on cooperation
- Cultural heritage routes

- An EC Day linked to the annual event

Ideas for the future

- Artificial intelligence
- A flash-mob
- Body painting
- One EC Day festival, a joint EC Day event
- An environment friendly campaign (trees planting...)
- A joint snapchat on EC Day
- One EC Day for all programmes
- Car flying test
- An outdoor event with popular activities (hiking, etc)



Quiz

The session finalized with a wrap-up Kahoot quiz. The programmes did a very good job and knew many of the questions. The winner in the end was:



Anna Koktsidou
IPA CBC Greece - Albania

She will receive some copies of a customized EC Day Team poster.