

Migration-related actions in Interreg programmes and projects: where are we now

"It's our duty to do everything we can to turn the migration challenge into an opportunity" Corina Cretu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy

Executive summary

Preamble

Following the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016, the EU financial support provided to Member States under pressure proved to be essential in ensuring, as much as possible, an effective EU response by developing search and rescue capacities, increasing reception capacity, and step up returns.

In this regard, the EU has proposed for the management of migration and asylum – under the Asylum and Migration Fund – a budget of EUR 11.3 billion for the next programming period, compared to EUR 7.3 billion to the current 2014-2020.

The Asylum and Migration Fund, as it did in the past, will support the very early integration of migrants and asylum applicants. However, it is well-known, not only by academia but by practitioners in particular, that integration is *per se*, a long-term process. Therefore, medium to long-term integration needs will be supported through the European Social Fund+ and the European Regional Development Fund through actions which focus on vocational training, education, housing and other actions.

It is clear that partnership and cooperation with third countries is an essential component of the European Union's migration and asylum policy. Actions financed and/or to be financed under the external policy instruments will play a complementary role in addressing the root causes of migration in non-EU countries.

Aim of the study and methodology

The present summary follows and updates the desk research analysis that Interact published in June 2016 "*Pilot action 'Interreg response to migration-related challenges'*". The aim of this working paper was to offer an overview of Interreg, Interreg IPA – CBC and ENI CBC projects financed over the programming periods 2000-2006 and 2007-2013.

The findings of this work are to be considered as an update of the previous study, by providing additional information on the projects financed during the 2014 – 2020 programming period with the theme of migration, in a broader sense.

As in the previous study, in order to be able to look at similarities and differences between different programming periods, the same four **pre-identified sub-topics** were taken into consideration. They are as follows:

- Support to employment, labour market integration and entrepreneurship;
- Governance and management of migratory flows;
- Integration of refugees/migrants; and
- Welfare and social inclusion.

Findings of the study

The data was collected through available information of projects in www.keep.eu database. The figures (below) on projects dealing with migration related topic is underestimated, due to projects not yet being included in the database. Therefore, further desk analysis was carried out and the MinPlus project, financed by Interreg V-A Italy – Switzerland programme was identified and included in the study.

Table 1. Identified projects per programming period and per strand

	2000 - 2006	2007 - 2013	2014 - 2020
Interreg A	9	22	9
Interreg B	8	4	3
Interreg C	4	4	0
IPA CBC	4	2	0
ENPI CBC	2	2	0
Total	27	34	12

Source: keep.eu, November 2018. Own elaboration

A total of 12 out of 2,307 projects available from the current programming period were identified using the key words “migration”, “integration” and “refugees”, which represents only 0.5% of the total of projects financed up to date with an overall allocation of nearly **EUR 9.8 million of ERDF** funds.

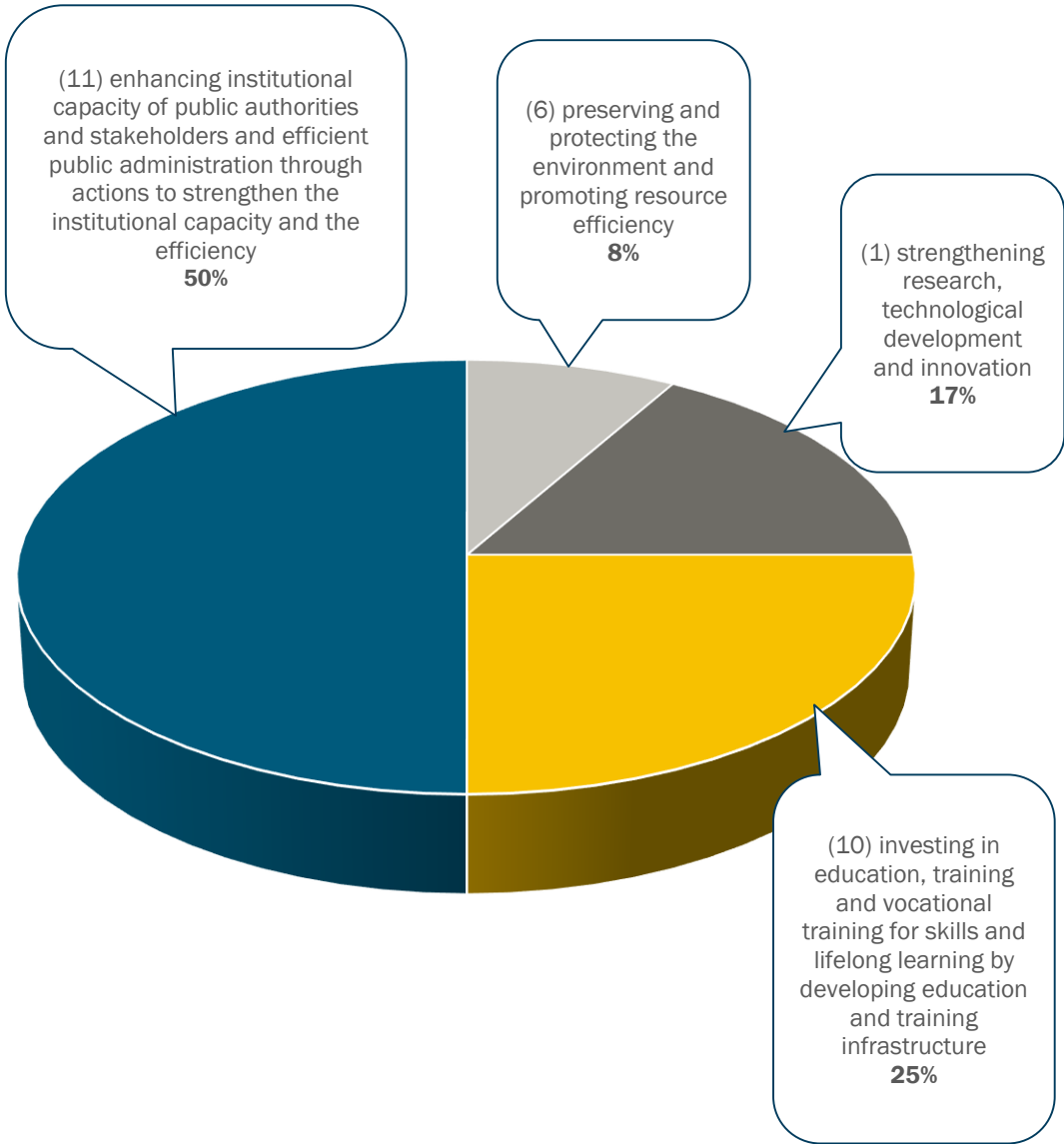
Table 2. EU funds allocated per programming period

2000 - 2006	EUR 32,318,502
2007 - 2013	EUR 29,791,253
2014 - 2020	EUR 9,784,611
Total 2000 - 2020	EUR 101,685,618

Source: keep.eu, November 2018. Own elaboration

During 2014 – 2020 programming period, projects are addressing all the identified sub – themes, from employment support to the Governance and management of migratory flows, from actions focused on the integration of refugees/migrants to social inclusion.

Figure 1. Distribution of projects per thematic objective, 2014 – 2020



Source: keep.eu, November 2018. Own elaboration

The **main topics** covered by the projects may be summarised as follows:

- Demographic change and immigration;
- Institutional cooperation and cooperation networks;
- Community integration and common identity;
- Education and training;
- Social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- Health and social services; and
- SME and entrepreneurship.

The **integration** of migrants and **wellbeing** of both migrants and host society seem to be the key result that projects aim to achieve. Principally, the **envisaged outputs** to be delivered by the projects are:

- shared knowledge centres and online platforms to disseminate results and best practice;
- studies and analysis on the structures and processes on migration and integration;
- pilot actions and methods to increase handcraft, language and job creation skills of migrants;
- transnational tools to enhance the mutual exchange of information and good practice among public institutions and at various levels of governance;
- elaboration of measures and instruments for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market;
- awareness raising, community and networking activities to increase the involvement of migrants into the host societies;
- demonstration guides to the social and economic integration of refugees with particular focus on the education system;
- support to migrant's entrepreneurial skills and assistance to start up business;
- increase prefabricated hosting units.

Focus on projects

Focus on:

Migration und Integration in der bayerisch-tschechischen Grenzregion: Analyse, Kooperations- und Lösungsstrategien

Brief description

The project establishes a sustainable institutional network between political, administrative and civic actors in the Bavarian-Czech border area and between the universities of Pilsen and Bayreuth by exchanging experience and developing joint strategies in the frame of migration and integration through application-oriented research.

Expected results

The cross – border cooperation will be enhanced through the creation of joint know-how centres for the dissemination of good practices and results; the on-line platform serving documentation, interconnection and public presentation. Emphasis will be placed on the use of knowledge by target organizations in practice, case studies, examples of good practice of applied practices and tools (i.e tools for the inclusion of children from the migrant background in schools, strategies against social exclusion of refugees, etc.).

Interreg V-A Germany / Bavaria - Czech Republic

EU Funding: EUR 421.532

DRAFT

Focus on: ARC

Active Refugees in the Community

Brief description

The number of refugees and asylum seekers receiving residence permit in Finland and Sweden have doubled in 2016. Refugees usually lack formal certificates of their professional skills and education. They have challenges in seeking and forming connections to any local communities and integrating into the wider society. This prevents them from getting a job which increases the risk of marginalization and social exclusion. The ARC project aims to engage immigrants with refugee background in meaningful activities and interaction with the local community through providing them systematic guidance in practical activities like building and farming, opportunities to cultural interaction and practicing language skills.

Expected results

As a result of the project the wellbeing, acceptance, societal knowledge, handcraft, language and job creation skills of participating immigrants with refugee background will improve. The piloted methods and practices are disseminated and adopted in Sweden and Finland. The developed concepts and methods are transferable and can be used also in other regions and countries. Social return on investment methods and web analytics will be utilized in the evaluation.

Interreg V-A Finland - Estonia - Latvia - Sweden (Central Baltic)

EU Funding: EUR 203.707

Focus on: DRIM*

Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants

Brief description

With the goal of achieving cohesion and economic development in the Danube region, DRIMs objective is to enhance the capacity of public institutions for promoting migrants' economic integration, understood as fair access to employment, work and skills enhancement. DRIMs aims improved capacity of public institutions to respond to the needs of newly arrived as well as resident migrants through effective information sharing through the conceptual framework for information sharing and the development of an info tool – DANUBE COMPASS.

Expected results

Increased intensity of cooperation of institutional actors and other stakeholders in the programme area in order to tackle major societal challenges through an easy and friendly-user tool: danubecompass.org for migrants to get all the needed information.

Interreg V-B Danube

EU Funding: EUR 1.293.843

Focus on: EUMINT*

European Regions, Migration and Integration

Brief description

The EUMINT project aims at strengthening cross-border cooperation between institutions in the Provinces of Bolzano and Trento, in the Länder of Tirol and Carinthia, and in the Regions of Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Veneto, in order to tackle social, economic, political and cultural challenges arisen from migration phenomena. Border regions require indeed common and coherent measures in the field of integration policies and the project will involve key stakeholders in three different spheres: - Institutional integration; - Civic integration; - Labour integration.

Expected results

Cross-border exchange of experiences and integration measures between institutions and development of a series of recommendations for relevant actors in the field of immigration and integration; training new professional figures in the social welfare sector in order to increase awareness of these European values among asylum seekers and refugees; development of specific and short-term and medium-term measures and instruments, as well as the planning of long-term strategies and policies for their integration into the labor market

Interreg V-A Italy – Austria

EU Funding: EUR 998.519

Focus on: FEM

Unlocking the Potential of Estonian Migrant Women

Brief description

The project aims to strengthen the communities of women who have left their homeland and are living and working in another country in Baltic Sea area. So far the issue has not been much dealt with and there is lacking systematic approach to the topic. This project is approaching the topic via different type of activities, indicating first the main questions and problems the migrant women have and making steps in helping to solve those problems via community activities.

Expected results

Stronger and more integrated Central Baltic communities through awareness rising activities. More informed Estonian migrant women in order to allow them make proper decisions when they are planning to immigrate. Community and networking activities will increase the involvement of the immigrant women into Finland's host society through active participation.

Finland - Estonia - Latvia - Sweden (Central Baltic)

EU Funding: EUR 166.204

Focus on: MinPlus

A governance model for International Protection applicants

Brief description

Definition, testing and validation of a multilevel territorial governance model that includes and manages regulatory, financial and organizational aspects regarding the taking charge and accompaniment on both sides of the border of migrants seeking asylum with a particular focus on Non- Accompanied Minors. The definition of the model will take place through cross-border and national participatory co-planning tables, which involve all stakeholders, from public administrations, to private and third sector entities.

Expected results

The outputs of the project will form the basis for the definition of policies, models and tools which will allow to manage the phenomenon of migrants seeking asylum and Non-Accompanied Minors in both institutional contexts.

Interreg V-A Italy – Switzerland

EU Funding: EUR 609.823

Focus on: PAIONAS*

Treatment of vulnerable refugees and transfer of patients through the sea

Brief description

The project concerns the efforts of the two countries, Greece and Cyprus, to address the problems that arise in the area of territorial cooperation of the program and concern joint management - dealing with specific risks and humanitarian disasters, such as the refugee / immigration issue.

Expected results

By improving the capacity of the temporary refugee hosted area in Kokkinotrimithia, means immediate provision of suitable welcoming conditions, according to the provisions of the relevant European Directive. At the same time, it will mean the state's effort to tackle refugee/migratory flows in response to humanitarian crises by building on the protection of human health and life, which are the main objectives in dealing with humanitarian disasters.

Interreg V-A Greece - Cyprus

EU Funding: EUR 2.550.000

Focus on: PlurAlps

Enhancing capacities for a pluralistic Alpine Space

Brief description

PlurAlps aims to develop and promote a welcoming culture and to increase the territorial attractiveness and social cohesion of Alpine areas through innovative services and practices for the integration of migrants. This will be possible through enabling municipalities to engage better in social planning by considering aspects of cultural diversity and quality of life of all citizens. Furthermore, the capabilities of municipalities, SMEs, and social organisations for cross-sectorial cooperation to provide welcome services will be strengthened. And finally knowledge and awareness regarding the integration of migrants in mountainous and peripheral Alpine areas will be improved.

Expected results

The project aims to deliver a transnationally applicable analysis instrument for medium to long-term community social planning and the integration of migrants in municipalities. Pilot projects on social integration, economic innovation, and the management of Alpine landscapes by migrants will be implemented in municipalities and regions. The transnational cooperation is essential to exchange knowledge and to mobilise the potential for social innovation across the participating regions.

Interreg V-B Alpine Space

EU Funding: EUR 2.065.499

DRAFT

Focus on: REGI

Reacting to Growing Immigration - Strengthening social inclusion of Estonian migrant families in Finland and Estonia

Brief description

Work related migration from Estonia to Finland has grown rapidly in the last 5-10 years, causing a variety of social problems (especially among families where one or both parents have moved) that haven't been properly addressed in either of the countries. This can turn into issues that include social exclusion, broken families, depression etc., which in turn cause unhealthy and broken communities. Cross-border cooperation is vital for successful execution of the project since the families of migrant workers are divided between two countries and they have to be addressed across borders.

Expected results

Successful implementation and execution of project activities will improve the wellbeing of families and their members, thus inevitably improving wellbeing and wholeness on community-level as well. Wellbeing of migrant families has direct benefits for neighbourhoods since the trust and community support are increased, and for employers since their employees are more productive.

Interreg V-A Finland - Estonia - Latvia - Sweden (Central Baltic)

EU Funding: EUR 194.765

Focus on: SIREE

Social Integration of Refugees through Education and Self Employment

Brief description

The project will tackle the key societal challenge of social exclusion by increasing the access to education and self-employment. Through this methodology of the SIREE aims to improve the social and economic integration of refugees in the partner regions and wider 2 Sea area introducing new demonstrations to increase the engagement of refugees in the education process and to improve the economic independence of refugees through self-employment.

Expected results

The main project's results will be the increased number of refugee parents involved in education of children; the increased number in pre-school refugee children attending school; the increased number in refugee adult education; new refugee businesses started resulting in new jobs. All these activities will lead to a significant annual public savings.

Interreg V-A France - Belgium - The Netherlands - United Kingdom (Two seas)

EU Funding: EUR 2.928.481

Focus on: URBAN DIVERSITY

URBAN DIVERSITY

Brief description

The project will connect migrant entrepreneurs and their families in Ljubljana and Graz to enhance and promote diversity through creativity. Creativity is increasingly understood as the facilitator of growth in all types of industries diversity is recognized as one of the key factors of economic added value and many countries and regions have embraced migration and mobility as a foundation of innovation and creation of social and economic wealth. The developed model of collaboration will be suitable also for the inclusion of refugees since integration through work and self-employment could be considered as one of the most useful tools for their success and empowerment.

Expected results

The development of the potential and creativity of migrant entrepreneurs and their families through connection and collaboration of both cities through the assistance and use of good practices developed and implemented in other European cities. This will enable the removal of social and other obstacles.

Interreg V-A Slovenia – Austria

EU Funding: EUR 713.944

Focus on: YOUMIG

Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

Brief description

Emigration of the youth may cause a severe loss of labour force and human capital, coupled with untraced incoming transfers (such as social and financial remittances), while immigration, if not properly managed, may result in marginalization and the underuse of human resources. The project aims at boosting their institutional capacities to enhance the scarce local evidence on youth migration, contributing to improved policymaking with a focus on human capital.

Expected results

Increased intensity of cooperation of institutional actors and other stakeholders in the programme area in order to tackle major societal challenges. Statistical offices and academic organisations team up with local governments in a complex and tailored multi-level and transnational cooperation to create local developmental strategies based on improved impact indicators of youth migration, and to introduce transnationally tested tools to manage local challenges.

Interreg V-B Danube

EU Funding: EUR 2.311.025