Outcomes
EC Day 2017 Brainstorming

January 17, 2017
Leonardo Royal Hotel Berlin, Otto Braun Str. 90, Berlin
Berlin, Germany

28 participants from 19 programmes + TESIM (ENI CBC TA project) + DG Regio

Session 1: Framework for the EC Day

Presenters:
Linda Talve, Interact - presentation
Gianluca Comuniello, DG Regio - presentation

At the beginning of the day **Linda Talve** from Interact presented the main findings of the evaluation report on the European Cooperation Days 2012-2016. The aim was to pave the way for the sessions of the day ahead as well as for the whole campaign of 2017.

Following the evaluation findings **Gianluca Comuniello** from DG Regio presented a new initiative called "Interreg Volunteers Initiative" which is something currently under preparation. Once active, it will allow for Interreg programmes to invite young Europeans as volunteers to work in their programmes. Please see the presentation (link above) for more information.

Session 2: Setting the goals for 2017

Facilitation: Laura Belenguer, Interact - presentation
Presentation: Anna Koksidou, Greece-Albania IPA-CBC Programme - presentation

Before starting the brainstormin activities in groups, **Anna Koksidou** from the Greece-Albania IPA CBC Programme presented their EC Day activity from 2016: a running event over the Greek-Albanian border. Topped up with a nice video, the presentation set the way for the participants of the brainstorming to start working on ideas for future EC Day activities.

The first groupwork was about goals of the campaign.

The objective of the EC Day campaign is *to improve the visibility of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), disseminate its benefits and highlight how European cooperation projects*

are reducing obstacles and disparities, and increasing cultural understanding among regions.

Taking into account this general objective, participants broke the main objective down to four more specific goals for the campaign. These goals can be summarised as follows:

GOAL 1:
Identify representative project results and benefits

- Identifying good projects with impactful results
- Finding good, innovative and interesting ways to present to specific target group(s) how cooperation affects people's lives

GOAL 2:
Disseminate the benefits of ETC to citizens and society

- Finding ways to present the identified results and benefits to the selected target group(s)
- Finding a balance between "as wide visibility as possible" and "relevant benefit examples to a clearly defined target group"

GOAL 3:
Create better understanding of ETC

- Making people aware of ETC existing in their region through the benefits it offers
- Communicating European territorial cooperation in an interesting way that creates a positive image of EU activities in the regions

GOAL 4:
Increase cultural understanding within Europe

- Displaying the differences between European countries/regions and how they can be brought together to reach something bigger

Following this, the participants continued brainstorming in groups on the **activities** to be carried out under each goal. They were also asked to come up with potential indicators that could be used for the activities.

They also suggested some **indicators** to support running these activities and to assess their success. The indicators can be considered either "internal" or "external". The internal indicators are ones that the programme can use to structure and support its own work, for instance by setting target values (e.g. "we aim at finding 10 projects to present in our EC Day activities"). The external indicators are ones that can, additional to their internal functions, also be monitored on the overall campaign level and used for the analysis of success of the whole campaign (e.g. media coverage).

GOAL 1	
Identify representative project results and benefits	
ACTIVITIES	**INDICATORS**
To identify a target group addressed by the activities	• Number of target groups addressed *(e.g. 2: teachers and pupils between 7-12 years of age)* • Estimation on the number of population targeted *(e.g. 200 teachers and 1000 pupils)*
To identify project elements worth "selling"	• Number of clear cooperation benefits (i.e. something that could not have been achieved alone) *(e.g. 2: new multicultural dance groups consisting of members from all X countries and cooperation of coast guards on all shores of the sea)*
To identify most attractive projects from the programme's portfolio and their most relevant and attractive results/benefits to be displayed	• Number of identified projects • Number of identified results/benefits
To invite and motivate projects to valorise and share their stories from different points of view	• Percentage of invited projects that gave positive response *(e.g. 80%: out of 20 invited projects 16 were interested to contribute)* • Number of beneficiaries willing to share and participate *(e.g. 35 project partners of the above-mentioned 16 projects became involved)*

GOAL 2	
Disseminate the benefits of ETC to citizens and society	
ACTIVITIES	**INDICATORS**
To plan and create one or more events for the selected target group(s)	• Number of events • Number of participants

To use creative communication tools that best suit the target group	• Number of tools used • Number of people reached
To attract the support of online communicators in social media by providing short stories	• Number of provided stories • Number of stories/messages/posts shared by others • Number of reached people • Number of likes
To create promotional materials that carry the EC Day message to the target groups	• Number of promo materials with message • Quality indicator measured through individual interviews/surveys

GOAL 3
Create better understanding of ETC

ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
To explain what ETC is – beyond the project examples – in an interesting way to the selected target group(s)	• Number of single methods presenting what are the higher goals of the ETC • Number of participants having learned something new about European Cooperation at the event(s)

GOAL 4
Increase cultural understanding within Europe

ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
EXAMPLE: Project open door days - Encounters	• Number of open door days organized • Number of visitors
EXAMPLE: Collaboration with schools	• Number of schools collaborating • Number of participating students
EXAMPLE: Creation of videos (with nice storytelling explaining what the ETC does). Videos could show also the "before" and "after" of an activity.	• Number of seminars/events in which the video is displayed

Session 3: How to reach the set goals

Facilitation: Nebojsa Nikolic, Interact - [presentation](#)

Taking into account the findings of the EC Day evaluation 2012-2016, the first part of the session consisted of a presentation summarizing six basic steps for overcoming the usual EC Day organization challenges. The six steps, which were discussed in detail during the presentation, are:

1. *Keep your goal in mind at all times;*
2. *Start early and stay on track;*
3. *Use what you have to cut costs,*
4. *Use and combine social media platforms;*
5. *Engage stakeholders and VIPs;*
6. *Collaborate with other programmes.*

The participants were interested in finding out more regarding the techniques for engaging and using social media platforms during organization of an EC Day event. One particular concern was financial reporting regarding the expenses for paid promotion on social media. The group identified the most practical solution for dealing with this problem is involving an external contractor, as part of a contract for organization of events or programme promotion.

The first part of the workshop was titled "Daydreaming".

The participants, divided into four groups, had the task of coming up with the most ambitious ideas for organization of a EC Day 2017 event, without having any restrictions in terms of available budget, time or administrative conditions. The goal of the exercise was to stimulate an exchange of ideas between all the participants and come up with exciting new ideas for the EC Day events.

After the 20-minute brainstorming session each group presented their favorite ideas. Here is a list of the ideas the groups presented:

- A media campaign, involving high profile international media;
- A reality show for influences, exploring Europe (on a bus tour for example);
- CBC/Interreg product placement in a popular TV show like "Game of Thrones";
- A celebrity-endorsed event;
- A wide-scale tree planting event – to plant a whole forest;
- A televised contest with big prizes, in the format of "Who wants to be a millionaire?";
- A sports event with international sports stars;
- A wide-scale blood donation;

- A joint event for all the participating programmes across Europe;
- A Balkan cross-border music festival – 7 days in 7 countries;
- A Pan-European bus or a train trip, visiting the best cooperation projects along the way;
- A joint attempt to break a Guinness World Record in one of many categories.

The second part of the workshop was titled "Facing the reality".

The participants, divided into the same four groups like in the first part, had the task of choosing one of the event ideas presented, and discuss on the major implementation obstacles and how those could be overcome. The goal of the exercise was to show that both the creative and practical aspects have to be carefully considered when organizing an EC Day event. After a 20-minute discussion, each group presented their idea, including the obstacles and the potential solutions. Here is a summary of the results:

Group 1 – A joint attempt to break a Guinness World Record – human cross-border chain.
Points raised:
- A joint attempt by all or most programmes, joining the available resources;
- The attempt to make the biggest human chain could be attempted on both the land and the sea/rivers, by using boats;
- The event could engage a celebrity endorsement for increased visibility;
- The event would engage families from the cross-border regions;
- The attempt does not have to succeed for the event to be successful.

Group 2 – Pan-European bus trip.
Points raised:
- The busses could meet at the borders;
- The event could involve several programmes, joining resources;
- The event could include live coverage, like a "Facebook Live" online streaming, for increased publicity and visibility;
- How to select the participants? – The trip could be a prize from a previously arranged thematic competition;
- The event should involve/include influencers.

Group 3 – Cross-border (Balkan) music festival.
Points raised:
- Depending on the music star involved, the event could be very expensive to organize. The group identified the following potential solutions:
    - Several programmes joining resources;
    - Opening the event with a celebrity, to attract attention, and then involving less famous artists for a concert;

- Involving musicians who have been very famous in the past but could be more affordable to hire in the present;
- Involving an artist famous in a particular region (not world-famous star), that would still attract a big crowd but could be more affordable to hire.

- Organizing a concert can be very expensive because of the technical conditions that need to be met, such as building a stage, the stage lights, audio equipment, etc. The group proposed that this issue can be addressed by several programmes joining their resources;
- The event would have to be related to the theme of Interreg/ETC.

Group 4 – Interreg train trip.
- Unlike the bus-tour, the train trip could be more difficult to organize because of the potential incompatibilities between the railroad systems of different European countries;
- The event could be combined/related to the European Mobility Week;
- The trip could include local thematic events at the train stops;
- The train could be open to the hop-on/hop-off concept, allowing the passengers to participate in the trip part which is relevant to them.

What came out of the discussion was rather clearly that in order to mobilise big crowds of people something very selling must be "in it for them". **Motivation of the people to attend is a key element in making the event a success.** One identified good practise is involving a **"big name"** in the activity. By getting a person/group widely known in the region involved in the event in one way or another can be a good investment as it gets people to participate and makes sure the rest of the efforts and resources put into the event organising will be better delivered. Other motivational elements that came up were **possibility to visit new places** (e.g. on bus tours) or to take part in a **trendy activity** at the moment like a running event.

Session 4: Interact support

The final session of the day focused on the practical tools Interact could provide the programmes in order to best help them in organising their events. The discussion can be summarised as follows.

EC day website

Interact has procured the service provider for a new EC Day website, graphic design services and social media support. The new website will be built on an open source content management system (CMS) enabling better maintenance and support and also transfer of the website to new service provider in the future.

The new website will offer multiple solutions for the programmes to support their work when they are planning and executing their events. There will be option for the programmes to use the back office of the website for planning their events without making all the fields of the events public. Some inserted information is only for the programme and Interact to share. Also, learning from previous years, an event can be published with some technical information still missing (e.g. the exact starting or ending time of the event). Additionally, the evaluation of the events will be done in the new website CMS back office starting from defining the target groups, goals and indicators before the event to filling out and evaluating the actual outcomes on how successful the events turned out to be.

Ideas raised in the discussion:

- There should be possibility to export all events into one table and this feature could be available also for all the users of the website.
- How programmes can promote the EC Day website? More attractive presentation of the website or other ideas to be thought.
- One of the initiative could be to introduce localized messages/landing page based on the visitor's IP address or location. There could be a small box "This is happening near you" listing the events which are taking place near the visitor of the website. Also there could be a small pop up or similar describing the objectives of the EC day in local languages.
- In general the EC Day objectives should be more visible in the website in common language for everyone to understand
- Event descriptions should have a clear link to EC Day objectives
- Sharing events between programmes, meaning programmes could use the website to plan events together with the option to include more than one programme to one event for editing.
- Language issue. There are already fields for multiple languages per event and this will stay.
- Promoting the stories of EC Day. This could be for example showcasing successful events on the website.
- In the social media posts, there could be better linking to the EC Day website in order to better disseminate the overall objective of the EC Day.

Social media

At the moment Interact is hosting Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts for the EC Day. Facebook and Twitter are used mainly for promoting the events and YouTube for sharing the promotional video. Last year Interact tried, for the first time, paid boosting of the posts in Facebook. This paid off really well and the promoted posts reached high numbers of people. Using gif-animations turned out to be a well-functioning feature in promoting the 2016 events. Moving images work better than still images.

Ideas raised in the discussion:

- There could be a short (max. 1-minute) storytelling video about EC Day, which also programmes could use in their social media for promoting EC Day.
- #ecday should be used in all social media communication, especially in Twitter, in order to create a momentum for the overall campaign and for the Interreg community to be able to connect the events to one another.
- Facebook live videos from the events could be an effective way to raise the visibility in Facebook.
- Contests could be a good way to involve the target groups. For example photo or video competition with small price would help to raise the awareness of the events. It was mentioned that it might not be ideal to arrange contest all Europe wide but on local basis.
- In order to gain better visibility in social media, the programmes should also like and retweet each others' posts. In order to be able to do it, the #ecday should be used for others to find the events.

EC Day promotional video

Interact has produced promotional videos in the past five years. Concerning the effort, it is questionable whether the input-output ratio in the videos is serving the needs. A video production requires a lot of resources and the number of views has traditionally been rather low considering the price of the video. Some programmes consider the video as a good way to promote EC Day during the events but also new ways could be considered. In case a video will be produced for the 2017 campaign, it should be short (maximum 1 minute) and straight to the point of promoting the objectives and added value of territorial cooperation.

One idea for how to produce a video would be to use an online video creation tool called Moovly. Moovly is simple to use and anyone can use Moovly to create videos from existing elements in the tool. One of the options to replace the traditional promotional video would be that Interact would create a "template" of a promotional video that would include the needed logos, objectives and the general framework needed for promoting EC Day. Interact would then share the video template with the programmes allowing them to customise the video with their logos, event details, etc.

Promotional materials

In the past years Interact has offered ready-made promotional material from bookmarks to leaflets and magnets to balloons. For the 2017 campaign the idea is that materials are produced only based on the programmes' needs.

One of the most highlighted concerns from the programmes is that in the past years the promotional materials have been designed rather late. This year the main focus for Interact is to provide the selection of items as well as the open design files (e.g. for posters) already during spring. The ordering and shipping should also be done before the summer holiday

season. This will leave enough time for the programmes to plan their events and possible need for additional promo materials for their specific events.

The programmes are supporting the idea to reduce the material and there is clearly no single promotional item to be defined which all programmes could benefit from in their events. This would support the idea to offer open templates in terms of graphic design for variety of materials and the programmes could then customize those to their needs and produce materials also themselves.

It was already agreed that the programmes would get open format files of poster design to create their own localised posters in good time and the printing could be done by the programmes locally instead of Interact printing and shipping posters in English to the programmes. As for the other promo materials, there will be some centrally ordered and shipped to programmes but not as many different items as before. What will be produced will be clear already during spring.

Basecamp discussion forum for EC Day

Interact will put up a discussion group for EC Day in Basecamp and invite all programmes to join for planning, sharing ideas and discussing the preparations of the 2017 campaign. Interact will use this as the primary forum for involving programmes to the planning of the campaign (e.g. opinions on the selection of promo materials) so joining this group is highly recommended for all programmes participating in the EC Day 2017.

Those that did not participate in the brainstorming can request an invitation by sending an e-mail to linda.talve@interact-eu.net. The brainstorming participants have been added to the Basecamp group already.

Thank you to all participants for the fruitful, active and inspirational discussions during the brainstorming. We feel this was a very good start for an impactful
European Coopearation Day 2017.

Let's keep up the good work. All programmes are warmly welcome to to join the campaign.