

PRELIMINARY POSITION ELEMENTS
for the Interreg Programmes
in view of the post-2027 Cohesion Policy

- extract from the groundwork Interreg position in Romania -

The results of previous programming periods demonstrate that **multilevel governance** is an integral part of the added value that the Interreg programmes bring and that it is important to maintain the current **shared management** model, with no major changes required. However, depending on the future proposals, certain changes or improvements may be done, for example in terms of avoiding over-regulation and over-control, increasing or at least maintaining the level of EU co-financing for the Interreg programmes, removing the automatic decommitment deadline or keeping it at N+3 for the entire duration of the programming period, pre-financing at programme level.

The *performance-based approach* will need to be analysed with utmost attention and having in mind the whole proposed package for the future Interreg programmes and overall Cohesion Policy. In this context, the following aspects could be considered: ensuring an appropriate level of **pre-financing** at programme level, similar to the level granted to the Interreg IPA/NDICI 2021-2027 programmes, with the **extension of the "off-the-shelf" simplified cost options** which foster a simpler implementation and with **no conditionalities related to the implementation of policies and reforms of a particular state**. There is a need to clarify the implications for the future Interreg programmes of the new vision of the European Commission regarding a *policy-based budgetary approach* instead of a programme-based budgetary approach.

For stability and continuity, it is essential to maintain the current **core legislative framework** for the Interreg programmes, as well as to ensure an evolution that guarantees that any **results-oriented functioning** is **adapted to international cooperation** (cross-border, transnational, interregional) and that there is increased complementarity between European and national programmes and policies, but by **maintaining the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) objective as a distinct and rightful element in European cohesion**.

Although noting that budgetary aspects will have to be managed and assessed in the overall context of the future Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027, as a principle an **adequate budget** should be allocated to Interreg programmes, in line with the EU's overall ambitions and objectives for these programmes. The principle of allocation of funds for cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes at Member State level should be kept, based on the covered population, and the financial allocation for the interregional programmes should be supplemented in line with the extension of the geographical coverage.

The Interreg programmes must foster territorial concentration and avoidance of overlaps, support a limited number of thematic objectives and investment priorities, i.e. a concentration of support for *people-to-people and small project fund projects*, which have role in building solidarity and improving governance for better territorial cooperation. On the other hand, it can be argued that the implementation of Interreg projects generates a *concrete and structural cross-border or territorial impact in eliminating barriers* to the free movement of people, goods and services, impact enhanced by the **cooperation capacity building** element implicitly promoted by the Interreg programmes, be it inter-institutional, administrative or European integration cooperation.

Other important elements are related to maintaining Interreg specificity and the *European cooperation purpose/philosophy* of the Interreg programmes, with a *clear delimitation in the objectives for each type of territorial cooperation* (cross-border, transnational, interregional, outermost regions), to *ensuring complementarity and limiting overlaps with other programmes and instruments* (for example: avoiding the creation of initiatives with similar objectives managed directly/indirectly at European level) and to the evolution from bureaucratic and administrative complexity, where multiple initiatives and structures/programmes can finance from European funds the same project, towards a *simplified and coherent funding framework oriented towards the beneficiary* (easy to access, with uniform and predictable rules).