

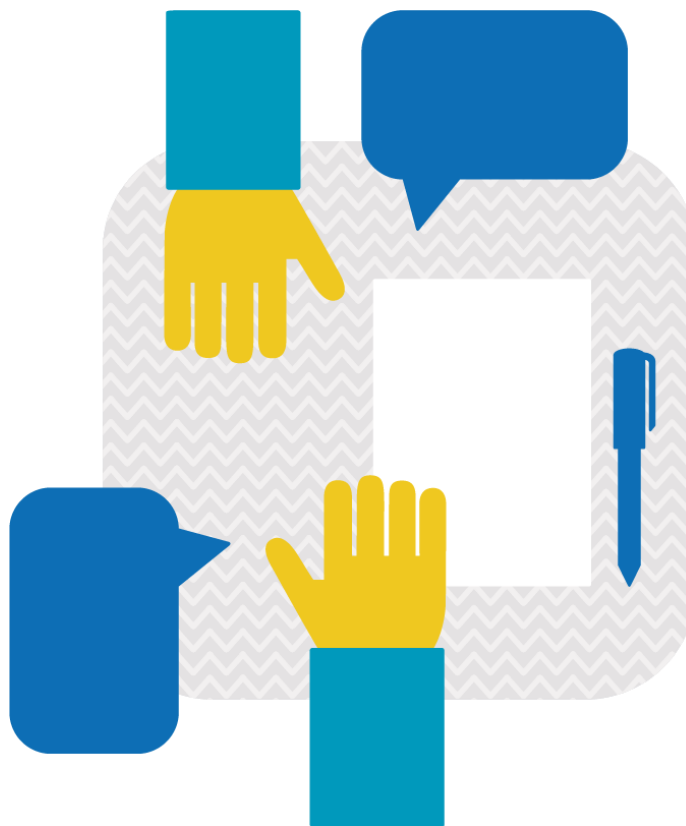
Draft Agenda | Interreg & the Union of Skills: Empowering People, Connecting Policies

22 September 2025

Online event. From 9.30 to 12.30

A More Social Europe. Interact

Agenda





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Online

Outline

“The Union of Skills is our strategy to help people stay ahead in a rapidly changing world and keep Europe competitive and fair. We, in Europe, put people first because the success of every person in learning, at work and in life is essential for competitiveness and for a stable and resilient Union.”

— Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness.

In today’s rapidly evolving landscape, equipping people with the right skills is fundamental for Europe’s social cohesion, territorial resilience, and long-term competitiveness. Skills are no longer a matter of individual advancement alone — they are a collective investment and a strategic imperative.

Interreg, the EU’s tool for territorial cooperation, plays a growing role in developing skills across Europe. From 2014 to 2020, it supported over 1,100 skills-related projects, investing €1.46 billion in areas like education, employment, and inclusion. This focus continues in 2021–2027, with 57 programmes running nearly 600 skills projects — 450 of them in core social policy areas — backed by over €611 million in EU funding. The goal: to boost employability and ensure all regions, especially border and rural ones, have the talent to thrive.

Interreg builds bridges across sectors and borders, helping tackle skills gaps, support lifelong learning, and promote fair green and digital transitions.

In 2023, [Interact’s More Social Europe network](#) conducted an [analysis of Interreg’s contribution to skills](#) development, as part of the European Year of Skills. Since then, over 450 new projects have been launched, reaffirming Interreg’s commitment to empowering people and regions through learning and cooperation.

Meanwhile, 2025 marks the launch of the [Union of Skills](#), a new EU-level framework that gives fresh momentum to the social dimension of European integration. Anchored in the Draghi Report and CEDEFOP’s strategic foresight — and coinciding with CEDEFOP’s 50th anniversary — the Union of Skills aims to enhance policy alignment, mobility, and the recognition of qualifications across borders.

This online event will explore how Interreg’s practical, place-based approaches to skills can contribute to the broader Union of Skills agenda — and how cooperation with DG EMPL, CEDEFOP, Erasmus+, and other EU actors can unlock synergies for greater visibility, coherence, and impact.

Objectives

- Introduce the Union of Skills as the EU’s strategic framework for competitiveness, inclusion, and talent development.
- Highlight Interreg’s role in supporting upskilling, reskilling, lifelong learning, and mobility — especially in cross-border and rural regions.
- Enhance alignment between Interreg projects and the wider Union of Skills policy agenda.
- Strengthen synergies with EU-level actors and instruments such as DG EMPL, CEDEFOP, and Erasmus+.



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9.30 – 9.35

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome by Interact.

Overview of the event objectives and expected outcomes

9.35 – 9.50

Keynote: The Union of Skills_ A new strategic vision

Speaker from DG EMPL

Comments by CEDEFOP and DG REGIO

- *How the Union of Skills supports competitiveness and fairness in Europe*

9.50 – 10.05

Setting the Scene: Interreg and Skills – Where Do We Stand?

Interact

- *Key Interreg data and trends (2014–20 and 2021–27).*

10.05 – 11:00

Panel Discussion: Building Talent Across Borders

- *How is Interreg contributing to build skills, learning new skills, circulating skills and attracting new talent to their territory?*
- *What lessons can we draw from existing projects?*
- *Reactions from the audience and debate*

Panelist. Programmes and practitioners

11:00-11:05

Comfort break -

11:05-11:35

Panel Discussion: Boosting Synergies _ From Strategy to Practice

- *What are the current challenges to aligning Interreg with ESF+ and Erasmus+?*
- *How can Interreg's work on skills gain more visibility and policy influence?*
- *Which tools, platforms, or coordination mechanisms could support stronger cooperation?*

Panelists: ERASMUS, ESF+ and Interreg programme with a track record of synergies

11:35-11:50

Interactive Session – What would help Interreg play a stronger role in the Union of Skills post-2027?

- *Live poll*
- *Open audience comments*

11.50-12.00

Closing & Key Takeaways

- *Moderator wrap-up with key messages.*
- *Final remarks and follow-up actions and invitations*