



Regional network meeting of programmes in Central and South-East Europe

18th Regional network meeting

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*South-East Europe Team Leader,
REGIO D1, Gilles Kittel, 1 October
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In this presentation...

1

The role of Global Europe and its meaning for Interreg and cooperation in general

2

5th Commission report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies

3

EUSAIR – A new EC Communication and a major revision of the action plan adopted on 7 May 2025



Warning

- This presentation uses information available at this time.
- The Cohesion and Interreg agenda might still shift considerably, as it is only an EC proposal.
- Focus on common understanding of intentions.
- Mechanics neither stable nor clearly established yet.

1

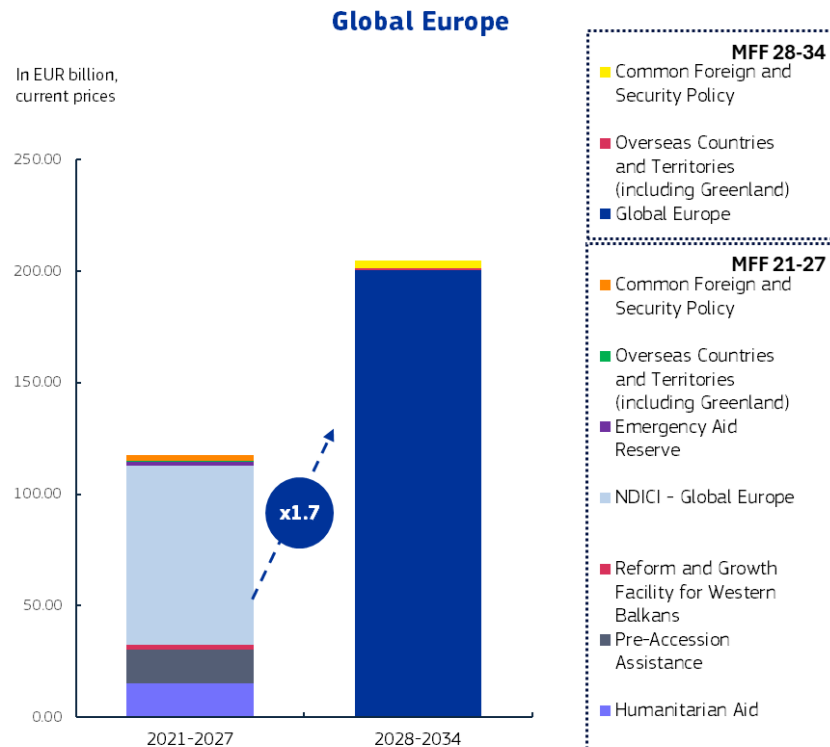
The role of Global Europe and its meaning for Interreg and cooperation in general

AN AMBITIOUS BUDGET FOR A STRONGER EUROPE 2028-2034

A strong Europe in an uncertain world: the Global Europe instrument



A strong Europe in an uncertain world: the Global Europe instrument



- The new Global Europe will **optimise, consolidate, and streamline** EU external action financing under the next long-term budget.
- **Enlargement is a political and geostrategic imperative.** Global Europe will provide essential financial and policy-based support to help candidate countries and potential candidates progress along this path.
- The EU will **support Ukraine for as long as it takes.**

External border funding integration

- Same approach as for 2021-2027
- Funding from Global Europe to be provided in "proportionate amounts" to Interreg programmes [Article 11(1) ERDF]
- Financing agreements required (apart from parts of outermost cooperation implemented under indirect management) [Article 11(2) ERDF]
- Public procurement –new possibility of national rules for non-Member States
- Return of resources in case of non-submission retained, but extended to cover all chapters, including on internal borders

Questions received so far and related to Global Europe

Preliminary Q&A

- *Q1: Interreg IPA - Under which legal framework are the Interreg IPA programmes expected to be implemented – Global Europe, or the ERDF/Interreg Regulation? If both apply, how will the legal interplay be regulated? Will the specific ERDF/Interreg rules prevail, or will they be subordinated to Global Europe's external action logic?*
- REGIO Answer: Interreg programmes involving candidate countries will be implemented fully under Interreg rules, in the same way as 2021-2027. Article 7(2) and Article 11 of the proposed ERDF/CF Regulation clarify this by stating that contributions from the Global Europe instrument to territorial cooperation under the Interreg Plan will be implemented under Interreg rules.

Questions received so far and related to Global Europe

Preliminary Q&A

- *Q2: How will the Interreg IPA programmes contribute to enlargement-related reforms, such as institution building, minority rights, and regional development, and how will these be measured separately from the development logic of Global Europe?*
- **REGIO Answer:** All Interreg programmes can address Specific Objectives set out in Article 3(a) and (c) of the proposed NRP Regulation. In addition, they may contribute to “better cooperation governance”, “safer and more secure Europe” and “more resilient regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine”. The topics enumerated in the question could be covered under those specific objectives. The contribution to the enlargement-related reforms can be measured through relevant milestones and targets as they will be defined in the chapters of the Interreg Plan.

Questions received so far and related to Global Europe

Preliminary Q&A

- *Q3: Which audit and control standards will apply to IPA Interreg programmes – those under shared management in the Cohesion Policy context, or those under indirect management in Global Europe? What happens in cases where partner countries have not adopted EU-compatible public procurement, audit, and anti-fraud standards?*
- **REGIO Answer:** The audit and control standard to be applied to Interreg programmes with candidate countries are to be the same as other Interreg programmes, as is the case in 2021-2027. According to Article 11(2) of the draft ERDF and Cohesion Fund Regulation, the financing agreement is to set out the rules applicable to the Union budget in an Interreg Plan chapter under shared management in a non-Member State. Article 11(3)(a) offers the possibility for non-Member States to use their national rules for procurement as long as the financing agreement allows it. The audit and controls should focus on the achievement of milestones and targets and not the underlying costs.

2

5th Commission report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, as adopted by the Council of the European Union on 16 September



What differs from the 4th MRS Report?

- **Stronger focus on** how macro-regional strategies can help to facilitate EU enlargement.
- Assesses the **long-term development of the macro-regional strategies** in the light of ongoing action plan revisions and updates.
- Includes a detailed discussion on **governance issues**, notably on how to secure a stronger commitment at the level of thematic priorities.

Key takeaways from 5th MRS report

- If macro-regional strategies are to play an active role in building a prosperous, sustainable and secure Europe, they must further develop the ability to **constantly adapt to a changing environment**.
- **More focus on issues** such as energy transition, European economic competitiveness, risks and security, and on addressing demographic challenges.
- **Involve all key stakeholders** in the work, including local and regional actors, young people and underrepresented groups like civil society organisations, academia, businesses and clusters.

3 EUSAIR – A new EC Communication and a major revision of the action plan adopted on 7 May 2025

EUSAIR – A new EC Communication and a major revision of the action plan

- **In 2014, more than 10 years ago, the European Commission adopted a Communication and the Action Plan on the Strategy.**
- Since then, no Revision has been done, this is a reason.
- But also:
 1. New challenges (Pact for Competition, War in Ukraine, Energy prices, Green Deal, Demographic shifts, etc.).
 2. Evolution of the governance structure and set-up of the EUSAIR Youth Council.
 3. Need to align the Action Plan with the new EU political priorities.

Revised EUSAIR action plan

- Main areas of revision:
 - **Social Dimension in the EUSAIR:** A new 5th Pillar on 'Improved Social Cohesion' added in addition to the original four.
 - **A new structure with three horizontal and five cross-cutting topics:**
 - ❖ The three horizontal topics are: **enlargement; capacity building; and research, innovation and development.**
 - ❖ The three cross-cutting topics are: **circular economy, green rural development, digitalisation, skills and smart specialisation.**
 - **Adaptive multi-level governance** better enshrined in the partnership
 - Mainstreaming of **gender equality and youth involvement**

Revised EUSAIR action plan

- Main areas of revision:

- A revised instrument:

- ❖ to achieve the **European Green Deal, the Digital Transition and the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas** in the region, beyond Member States
- ❖ to consider green rural development as a **cross-cutting issue**, that emphasises the importance and challenge of balancing the 'blue' and 'green' development of the wider region.
- ❖ to stimulate **Urban-Rural linkages**

-> **Continental (green) component under all five pillars to various degrees**, with emphasis on supporting local fisheries communities, sustainable energy production, mobility, environment and agricultural practices, and preventing brain drain

- **A new coherent system of indicators** with a common methodology



Any Questions?

#ThisIsTheEU



#ThisistheEU

The EU is built
on solidarity

Thank you

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