

Interreg Knowledge Fair session on

ISO2 and 3:

- **A Safer and More Secure Europe** 
- **More Resilient Regions bordering
Russia, Belarus and Ukraine**

Besiana Ninka, Ilze Ciganska,
Guilherme Johnston, Marko Ruokangas
Interact | 05.11.2025

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Welcome to the Interreg Knowledge Fair 2025



Objectives for the session

Understand the rationale of ISO2 and the new ISO3 – how these objectives function in the changing safety and security environment

Clarify the connections with other policy areas – how to ensure complementarities and build synergies with other policy areas?

Provide a platform for exchange – sharing concerns, insights and ideas with the colleagues – and identifying the areas where further support is needed

Agenda/ ISO2-3

01

**Opening and
introduction**

02

**Setting the
scene**

03

**Programme
reflections**

04

**Working in
groups**

05

**Conclusions
and next
steps**

ISO2 - A safer and more secure Europe



”Not only about protection but also about **trust, transparency and safety** for the communities on both sides of the borders”

”**Human approach** on border and migration management building **stability, cooperation and resilience** on border regions”

Border management
infrastructure

Border crossing and
mobility and migration
management

Protection and
integration of
migrants

Other actions to
contribute to Safer and
more Secure Europe

9
Programmes
-
20 projects

Interreg and the work with the regions bordering Russia and Belarus

- a) 6 CBC programmes, one NEXT programme and 2 transnational programmes
- b) 150 MEUR ERDF re-allocated from cancelled programmes
- c) More than 450 projects including beneficiaries from the impacted border regions selected
- d) Regular meetings with the programmes since the beginning of 2024





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Setting the scene: ISO2 and ISO3 within the MFF proposal

Simona Pohlová

Deputy Head of INTERREG, Cross-Border
Cooperation, Internal Borders Unit D.2, DG
Regional and Urban Policy, European
Commission

Introduction to the Concept of Resilience in the Interreg Context

Guilherme Johnston | Interact | 05 November 2025 | Dubrovnik, Croatia

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Resilience

**Whitstanding shocks
and stressess you
cannot anticipate
and go back to some
form of function**

The etymological roots of the resilience stem from the Latin word *resilio*, meaning 'to bounce back' (Klein, Nicholls and Thomalla, 2003.)



Shocks

Sudden, intense, and often short-term events that pose a direct threat.

- Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, heatwaves)
- Man-made crises (e.g., terrorist attacks, infrastructure failures, cyber-attacks)
- Pandemics

Stresses

Chronic, day-to-day or cyclical hardships that erodes social and economic fabric, generating more vulnerabilities

- Economic inequality and poverty
- High cost of housing
- Aging or inadequate infrastructure
- Chronic unemployment

Interreg Post-27

- Promote sustainable prosperity
- Strengthen defense
- Fostering social cohesion and inclusion
- Disaster risk management
- Climate resilience
- Safer and More Secure Europe
- More Resilient Regions Bordering Belarus, Russia, Ukraine

Cross Border and Transnational Resilience

How can Interreg support?

- Territoriality
- Governance
- Localizing solutions
- Economic development and right to stay
- And more

Good Practices

Erzin, Türkiye



Spain, Portugal Border



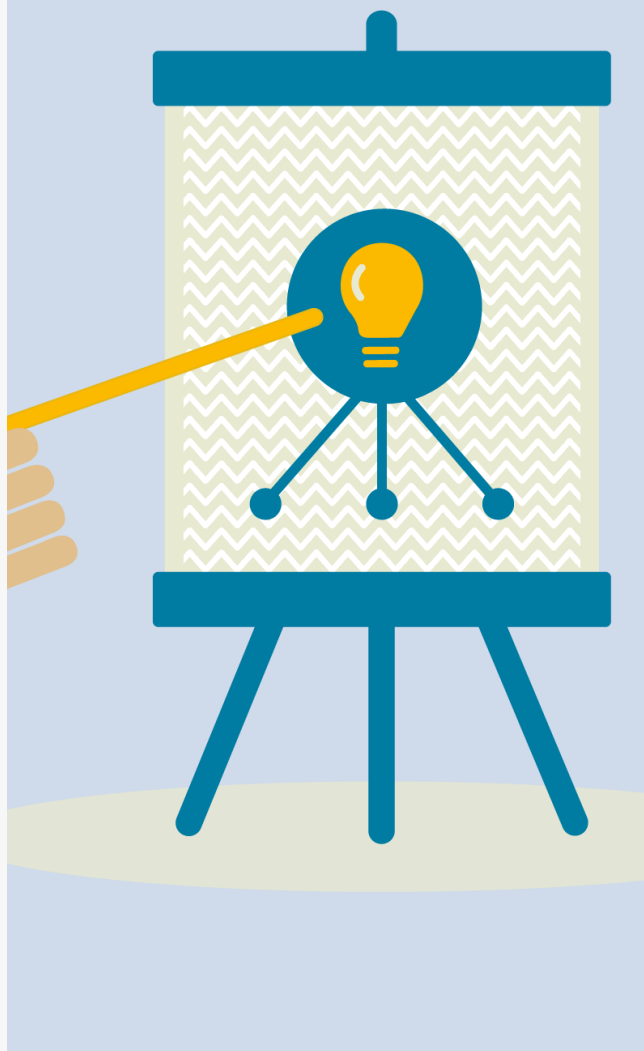
What's Next?

- Further programme collaboration and exchanges
- Factsheet on resilience
- Preparing for Post-27
- Let's explore additional ideas



Thank You

guilherme.johnston@interact.eu



Programme experiences

ISO2:Safer and More Secure Europe:

Malgorzata Chetko, Interreg NEXT Poland-Ukraine

Eastern border regions:

Liina Luup, Interreg Central Baltic

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NEXT Poland – Ukraine

Interreg Poland – Ukraine

Session on Interreg Specific Objectives 2 and 3



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ISO2 a safer and more secure Europe: how it started...



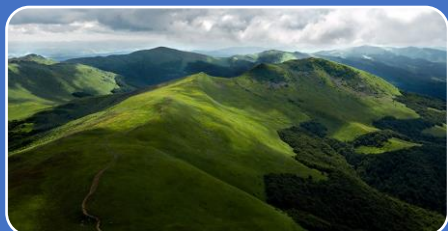
Primarily planned for border services

- limited interest (PL other funds available)



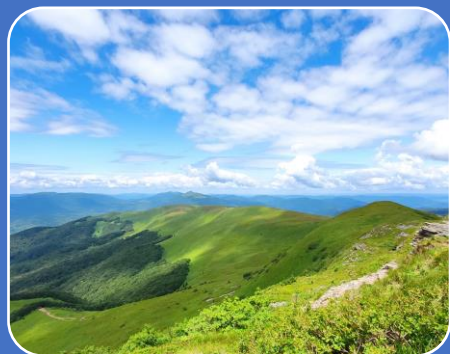
Planned as direct award project(s)

- problem to reach a consensus on what to finance



Scope of actions to be financed open for interpretation

ISO2 a safer and more secure Europe: how it's going...



Programme modified to broaden the scope of activities

- focus on Solidarity Lanes and cross-border mobility



1 direct award project selected for financing

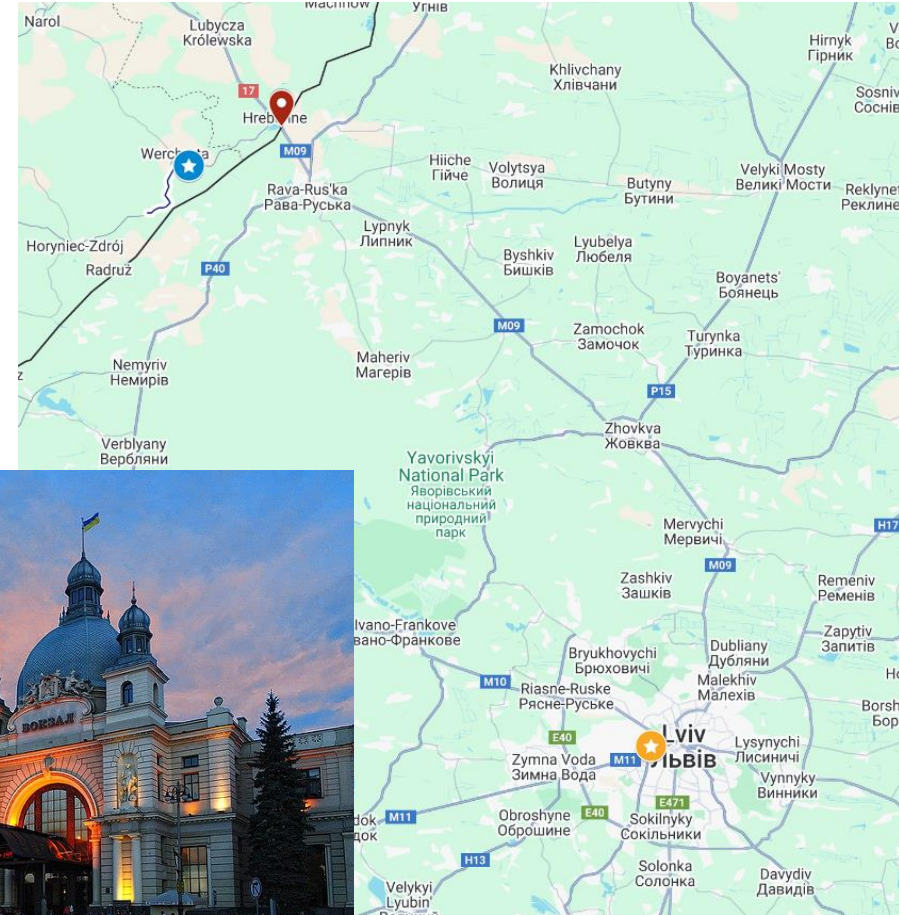
ISO2 a safer and more secure Europe: Other actions to contribute to a safer and more secure Europe

- Improving the border-crossing infrastructure, necessary for supporting the EU-Ukraine **Solidarity Lanes** initiative
- Increasing the **cross-border mobility** and the use of railways for the transport of people and goods between Ukraine and the EU
- Ensuring safety and flow of cross-border traffic, as well as transportation of goods across the border
- Increasing the level of safety and efficiency of **infrastructure of cross-border importance**
- Ensuring the **access to rail infrastructure** for people with disabilities and other low-mobility groups
- Common **training** of border services, customs services, other services related to the operation of border crossings and services ensuring security in the border area

ISO2 a safer and more secure Europe: how it's going...

Improvement of the quality and safety of cross-border railway connections by works on the line no 101 in Werchrata and in Lviv railway station

Co-financing: 10,7 MEUR



ISO3 more resilient regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine

potentially interesting: programme area
borders both Ukraine and Belarus

very open for interpretation in terms of what
actions can be supported

clarifications needed on relations between
ISO3 and *Pact for the eastern border regions*

relatively small Interreg funds vs need for
large investments & reforms

need to reach agreement between parties on
key investments & reforms between in
advance



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NEXT Poland – Ukraine

Dziękujemy

Thank you!



Interreg NEXT Poland – Ukraine 2021-2027

www.pl-ua.eu

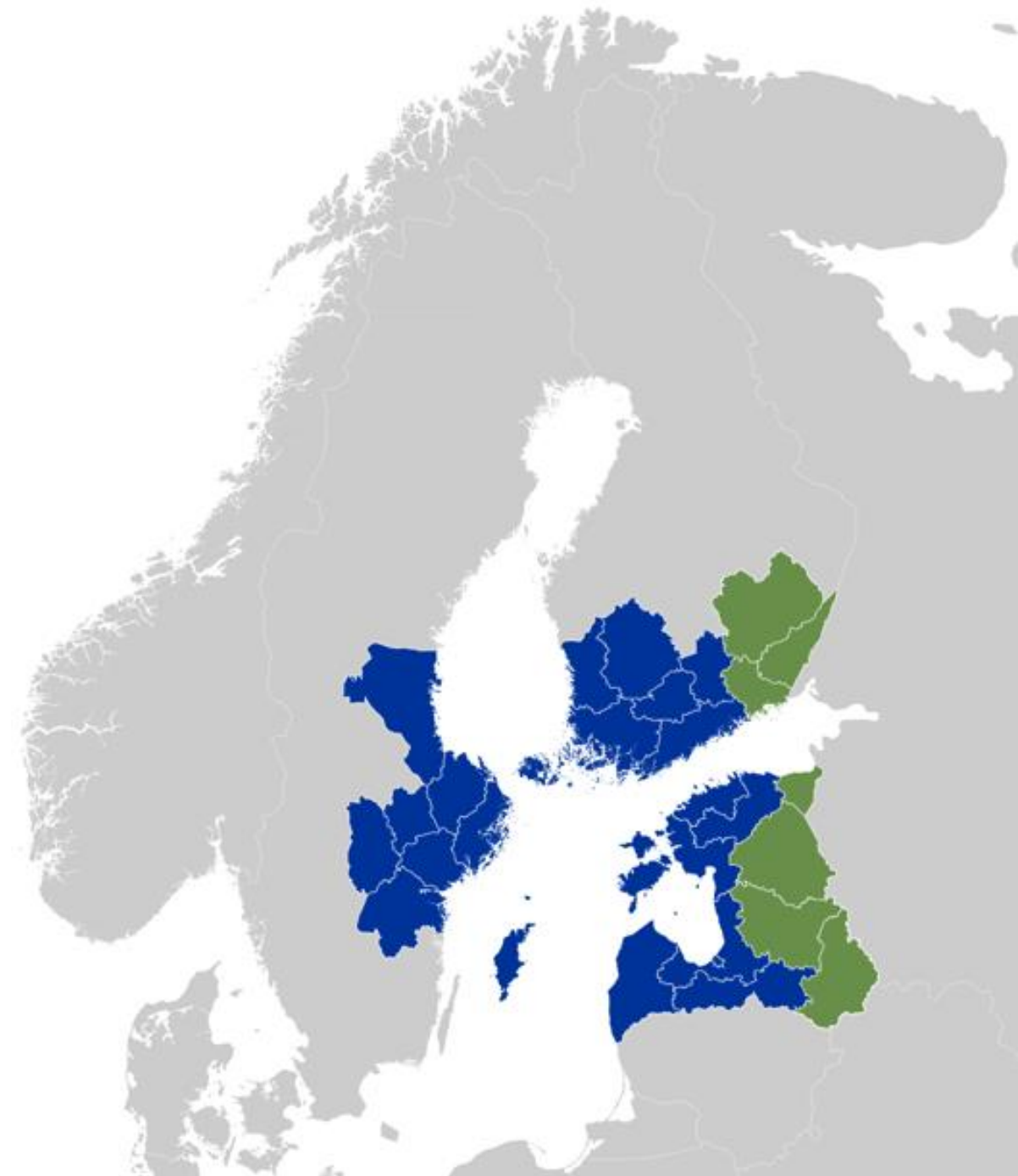
External border regions

FI: Etelä-Savo, Etelä-Karjala, Kymenlaakso

EE: Kesk-Eesti, Kirde-Eesti, Lõuna-Eesti

LV: Latgale, Vidzeme

- targeted call in 2024
- dedicated project manager
- physical seminars and workshops
- continuous support to new cooperation directions



Working **in** groups

Group 1 ISO2

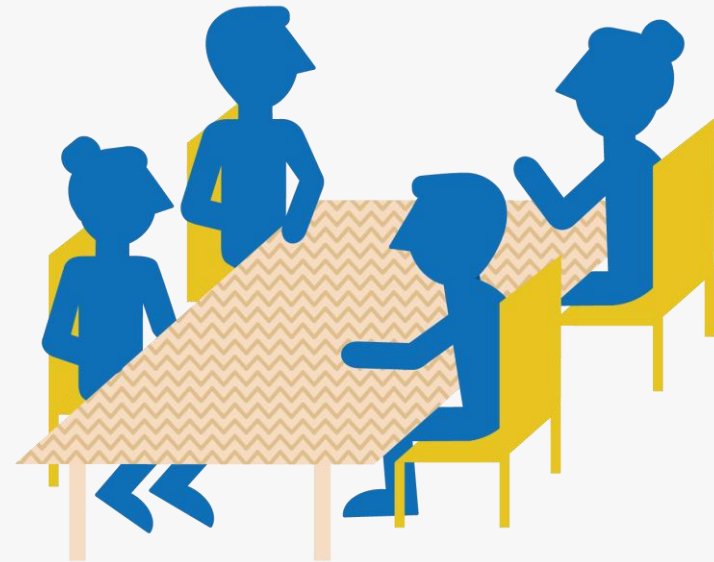
How to focus in the changing safety and security environment?
How to build complementarities and synergies with other policies?
What guidance / support is needed?

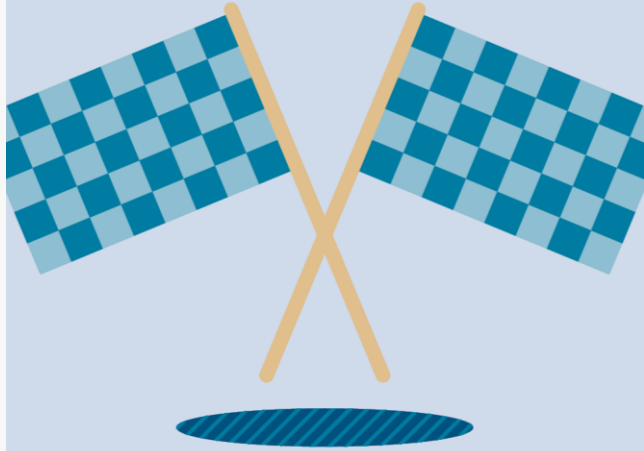
Group 2 ISO3

Where interreg can make change?
How to build complementarities and synergies with other policies?
What guidance / support is needed?

How to work in groups?

- 30 minutes for discussion
- Reporting from the groups





Conclusions

Besiana Ninka

Simona Pohlova



Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:
Interact.eu/Library

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Publisher

Date updated

Primary knowledge area

Author(s)

Interact Programme

5 November 2025

Programme own consultation

Marko Ruokangas

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