

Interreg projects: reforming the territory. Draft



13 October 2026

Interreg projects: reforming the territory in healthcare, education, employment and tourism

Address: Thon Hotel EU, Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Brussels | Belgium



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Outline

A side event of the European Week of Regions and Cities

Interreg projects often start as practical cooperation pilots, but also its strategic value lies in changing the **rules, procedures and governance arrangements** that shape how territories function. These changes may take different forms: operational protocols, technical annexes, cross-border agreements, joint booking or referral procedures, action plans, local ordinances, mutual-recognition arrangements, administrative simplification, and, in some cases, legislative or regulatory adaptation

In areas such as **healthcare, education, employment services and tourism**, Interreg can help territories move from cooperation pilots to more **systemic transformation**: new protocols, cross-border service agreements, joint action plans, simplified administrative procedures, mutual-recognition arrangements, local rules, and, where needed, changes in regional, national or European regulations.

The discussion will show how Interreg acts as a **testing ground for transformation**: identifying what works in real territories, building trust between institutions, and provide models that public authorities can scale up.

- Healthcare: ambulance protocols, patient referral systems, cross-border hospital services, joint booking procedures, reimbursement arrangements, shared medical teams.
- Education and VET: cross-border curricula, joint vocational training, recognition of qualifications, youth mobility rules, cooperation between schools, training centres and employers.
- Employment services: cross-border labour-market data, skills matching, one-stop shops for workers, social security and taxation issues, telework arrangements, solutions to labour shortages.
- Tourism: sustainable tourism action plans, cross-border permits, recognition of tour-guide qualifications, visitor-management rules, mobility solutions, climate-adapted destination strategies.

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Day One **Tuesday, 13 October 2026**

10.00 – 10.30 Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

10.30 – 10.45 **Interreg as a laboratory for systemic transformation: from cooperation projects to policy and institutional change**

By DG Regio (tbc) and Interact

This session will explore Interreg not only as a funding instrument for cooperation projects, but as a laboratory for testing approaches, generating evidence and enabling systemic transformation.

Interact will first provide an overview of common PO4 trends across Interreg programmes, looking at budgets, programme strands, geographical patterns, demographic challenges and urban–rural dynamics, to establish a shared framework for discussion.

By Interact

10.45 – 11.30 **Evidence cases: Interreg solutions preparing change**

Four short examples from different policy areas:

- **Healthcare:** cross-border hospital services, ambulance protocols, digital health platforms, patient referral systems, workforce training.

Cristina Igoa. (tbc) Interreg POCTEFA

- **Education and VET:** joint vocational centres, cross-border curricula, digital learning tools, recognition of skills or qualifications.

DualPlus! Project. Interreg Alpine Space.

- **Employment services:** integrated labour-market services, skills matching, cross-border employment pathways, solutions to labour shortages.

Silvester Holop Interreg Slovakia Hungary TAPE project

- **Tourism:** sustainable tourism action plans, destination governance models, visitor-management rules, cross-border tourism services, skills for tourism

Athina Kouloumpatsani. Interreg Greece North Macedonia. BorPres2 project.

Objectives of the session

- Present and exchange concrete Interreg examples where cooperation results led, or could lead, to legal, administrative or policy change.
- Identify what was tested, what barrier was found, and what protocol, procedure, agreement, action plan or rule changed or is still needed.

11.30 – 11.50 **Coffee/Tea break**

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11.50 – 12.50

Working tables: What kind of change can Interreg produce in the field of healthcare, education and VET, employment services and tourism? What should be scaled up?

Objectives of the session

- Collect concrete examples from different Interreg strands and territories.
- Map the change and where are we standing in the implementation so far and how Interreg moves from pilot actions to more systemic change.
- Which types of Interreg results have the strongest potential for scale-up
- Reflect on how programmes can better capture and communicate legal and administrative change.

Moderated by Interact

12.50 – 13.00

Closing: messages for post-2027

Summary of the main conclusions and next steps.

Position Interreg as a source of evidence, governance capacity and reform preparation.

Facilitated by Interact

13.00 – 14.00

Networking lunch