

# INTRODUCTION

All along 2020, DG REGIO will celebrate 30 years of Interreg and cooperation in all its shapes. As the second pillar of the Cohesion policy, European Territorial Cooperation is at the heart of the European spirit because it encourages regions and countries to tackle challenges they can solve only by working together.

The celebrations throughout 2020 will provide the opportunity to demonstrate the achievements so far, but also the chance to focus on the future by launching the debate on cooperation policy post 2020 as we are entering a crucial phase to shape the future of the programming period.

While it is the time to think about Interreg funding covering cross-border (Interreg A), transnational (Interreg B) and interregional (Interreg C) cooperation, it is also the moment to go beyond funding and to use existing mechanisms in order to anchor cooperation in a more sustainable policy environment, such as the Macro Regional Strategies (MRS) or the Border Focal Point (BFP).

It is time to question, to re-think, and to give a new breath to what **we consider as a fundamental value in the European Union: cooperating between people, regions, and countries close to us.**

At a time when the European Union is facing a lot of changes, when political dialogue often questions its functioning, when new European leaders and new priorities are emerging, **Interreg has been acting now for 30 years to leave no one behind and to build Europe brick-by-brick.**

Interreg is already tackling climate change and contributes to a greener Europe, Interreg encourages young people to find their way to work or study abroad and supports initiatives to learn their neighbours' language or to volunteer in projects,

Interreg facilitates everyone to commute from a country to another, to find jobs in the border regions of Europe or outside the EU, or to access the closest public services to their homes.

**We want to celebrate the past and we want to do more together in the future.**