



Reinforcing territorial cooperation and addressing challenges on European integration

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Group of high-level specialists on the future of Cohesion Policy

The European Commission, the Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy (lead) and the Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (associated) have set up a Reflection Group on the future of Cohesion Policy. The group includes high-level members from academia and practice and in 2023 will meet nine times to reflect on current and future needs and the functioning of Cohesion Policy.

The group will offer conclusions and recommendations that will feed the reflection process on Cohesion Policy post-2027 including through the 9th Cohesion Report in 2024 and the mid-term review of Cohesion Policy programmes in 2025.

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Disclaimer

This paper is an independent input to the reflection paper. The opinions expressed in this paper are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of Reflection Group or the European Commission.

Key words

Territorial cooperation, cohesion policy, cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation, cross-border obstacles

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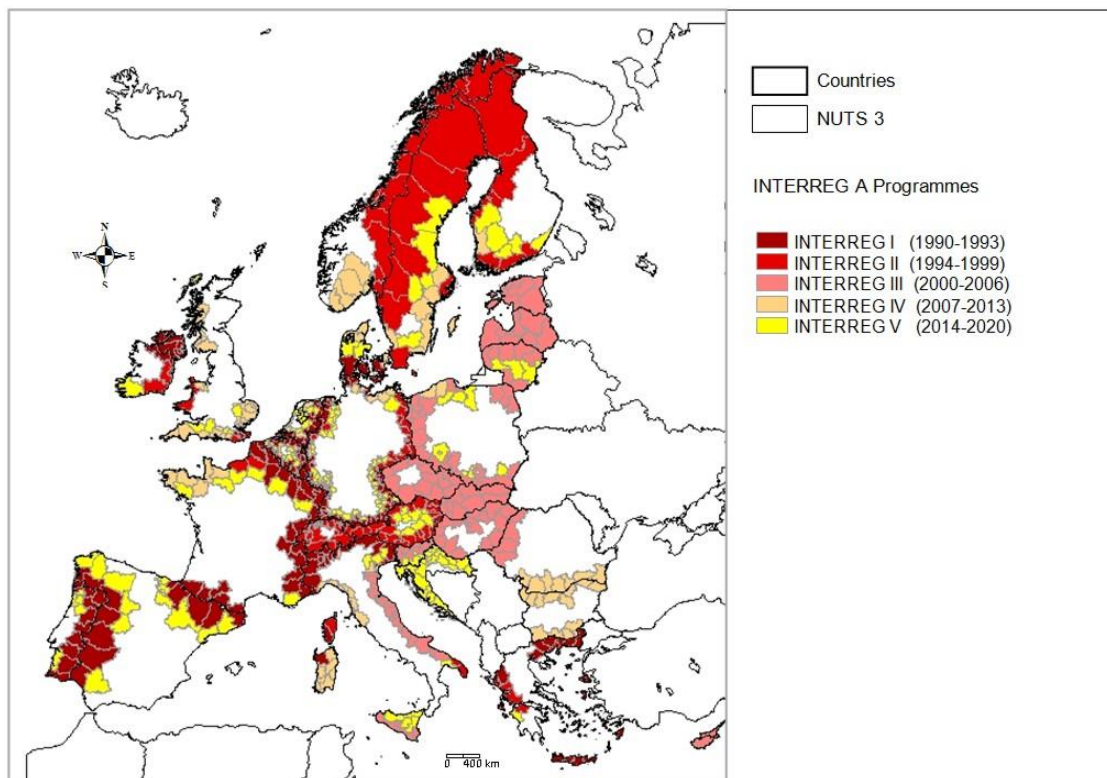
Acronyms

CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CI	Community Initiative
CPS	Cross-border public services
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ES	Spain
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
ETLM	European Transnational Language Mechanism
ETPTM	European Transnational Public Transports Mechanism
EU	European Union
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
ISO	Interreg Specific Objective
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NO	Norway
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OP	Operational Programmes
PT	Portugal
RCI	Regional Competitiveness Index
SE	Sweden
TEN	Trans European Network
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment

Introduction

The Interreg Community Initiative (CI) was introduced in 1990 with the main goal of preparing border areas for a European Union (EU) without internal borders, as well as to compensate for the introduction of the Single Market and soften the blow for border regions. Right from the onset, the Interreg (1990-1993) became the most financed Community Initiative. Basically, it was implemented through 31 Operational Programmes (OP), in its strand A (Cross-Border Cooperation - CBC). Expectedly, this first Interreg-A covered the border areas (NUTS 3) of the older EU Member States (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 Evolution of the INTERREG-A Programmes since 1990.



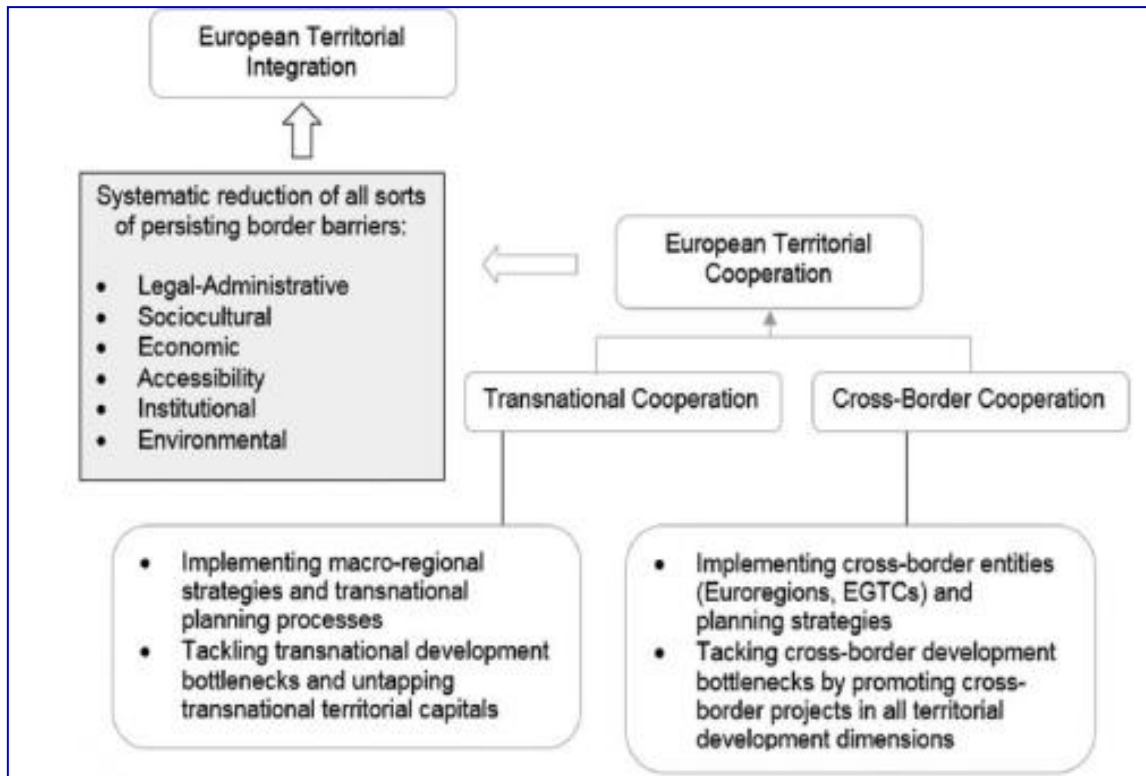
Source: Author

In the following EU Cohesion Policy programming period (1994-1999), the INTERREG II supported 59 OPs, with a total budget of 3,5 Billion € (1996 prices), with the lions-share (more than 70%) concentrated in the strand A. Afterwards, the INTERREG III (2000-2006) saw the available budget for the 79 programmes grow exponentially (around 5.1 billion Euros). For the following programming period (2007-2013) the Interreg IV became the third Objective of the EU Cohesion Policy, under the name of 'European Territorial Cooperation' (ETC) objective. Again, the cross-border cooperation strand received a significant increase in funding (6.44 billion Euros). In the fifth programming period (2014-2020), the ETC objective was maintained, but now as one of the two main goals of EU Cohesion Policy, yet with a similar financial package (6.6 billion euros) to the previous phase. The ongoing Interreg-VI (2021-27) is due to receive almost 10 billion euros, "shared between almost 100 Interreg programmes across the borders, in and outside the EU, which will contribute to implementing EU's cohesion policy main priorities". One novelty in this sixth Interreg generation is the addition of a fourth strand (D: Outermost Regions Programmes) alongside the mainstream strands (A: Cross-Border Cooperation + B: Transnational Cooperation + C: Interregional Cooperation). The following sections discuss how ETC can be reinforced and address challenges to European integration for the post-2017 EU Cohesion Policy phase.

1 What kind of additional instruments should be introduced to tackle persistent cross-border obstacles?

Achieving increasing territorial integration requires a systematic reduction of all sorts of persisting cross-border barriers (Fig. 2). In an EU context, marked by a patchwork of countries and respective national boundaries, cross-border barriers pose relevant direct and indirect problems to the lives of EU citizens and socioeconomic development. Indeed, recently (2015-2016), the European Commission (EC) launched a cross-border review entitled 'Overcoming border obstacles', as recognition that cross-border obstacles in Europe require a deeper understanding, based on data collection and further studies on persisting border obstacles. As a result, a study to provide an inventory of critical border obstacles, together with examples of how these have been addressed on certain borders, was produced, based on an extensive public consultation between September and December 2015 and several workshops with key stakeholders in 2015 and 2016. On closer scrutiny, the deep analysis of the responses from the 2016 DG REGIO border obstacles survey, and a previous (2015) Eurobarometer survey, revealed that there is still a large number of persisting border obstacles across the EU internal and external borders. From these, one can highlight several legal and administrative barriers, mostly related to differences in social security, pension and taxation systems, and also to the lack of recognition of education and qualifications, despite progress being made in legal harmonisation in this field between some Member States. Alongside, EU border citizen also regard language differences, the lack of physical accessibility, as well as economic, social, and cultural disparities, as fundamental barriers to their lives (Annex 2). Their relevance in all EU cross-border regions is more or less similar (Annex 3). Also important is the fact that the lack, or insufficient presence, of cross-border public transport, is regarded as the main of the physical accessibility barrier for EU border citizens (Annex 4). In this context the following topics intend to steer and feed the political discussion on potential solutions on the way forward on how to tackle cross-border obstacles and enhance territorial cooperation understood as a key dimension of territorial cohesion (Annex 5). Here, two main domains are addressed: the first relates to concrete potential solutions to mitigate persistent cross-border barriers across EU internal and external borders; the second embraces a more comprehensive strategic framework to implement more effective EU cross-border cooperation programmes and initiatives to accelerate the process of European Territorial Integration via the reduction of cross-border barriers: cross-border and transnational planning.

Figure 2 Relation between European Territorial Cooperation and European Territorial Integration



Source: Author

1.1 Increasing territorial integration via the reduction of border barriers

1.1.1 The EU b-solutions to mitigate legal and administrative border barriers

Following the EC cross-border review (2015-17), DG REGIO initiated in 2018 an EU b-solutions initiative to identify legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border cooperation and promote sustainable methods to resolve them. This is a concrete solution to mitigate persisting cross-border legal-administrative obstacles of all sorts, and consequently to increase the European territorial integration process that can easily be replicated both in number and geographical scope across the EU. Implemented in 2018 with four calls for proposals until 2021, where 90 cases were selected (Annex 7), the EU b-solutions initiative aims at mitigating cross-border legal and administrative border obstacles all along EU internal borders. In its second phase, b-solutions 2.0 also addresses the EU borders with pre-accession countries. By now (early 2023), 119 cases have been selected. 90 were analysed in the first phase, while only 29 cases have been selected in b-solutions 2.0 so far. 33 (37%) out of the first 90 are directly related to mitigating legal-administrative barriers via institutional cooperation processes (Table 1). They are mostly located on the Iberia Benelux, German and French borders (Annex 7A and 7B). The already finished 90 projects encompassed several thematic areas: employment; health; public transport of passengers; multilingualism; institutional cooperation, eGovernment; evidence and data; and information services.

Table 1 EU b-solutions 90 cases selected and analysed within 8 thematic areas (identified in EC, 2017), in the four calls.

Thematic Areas / Calls	I	II	III	IV	Total
1. Institutional Cooperation	4	12	8	9	33
2. Employment	3	6	5	8	22
3. Health (incl. emergency services)	1	6	4	6	17
4. Public) transport of passengers	1	7	2	1	11
5. Multi-lingualism	1	1	1	0	3
6. Evidence and data	0	0	2	0	2
7. e-Government	0	1	1	0	2
Total	10	33	23	24	90

Source: own elaboration based on AEBR b-solutions database.

Following from the reading of the produced reports of each EU b-solution cases, it is possible to conclude that, if expanded in number and geography (covering all EU internal and external borders), it can be regarded as an ideal EU policy instrument for **reducing legal-administrative cross-border and transnational barriers**.

1.1.2 A European Transnational Language Mechanism (ETLM): Making English an official language on public information as a secondary language

Cultural barriers and especially language-related barriers are regarded by Europeans as the second most relevant cross-border type of barriers to their daily lives. In this regard, and according to the EU survey on Overcoming Obstacles in Border Regions (2015) respondents highlighted that the lack of or reduced knowledge of certain languages can have profound negative effects in many domains, as it can: (i) create difficulties in implementing cross-border projects; (ii) hamper certain individuals from seeking jobs in neighbouring countries; (iii) limit cross-border contacts and cross-border cultural events; (iv) reduce the interest for cross-border shopping activities; (v) create cultural animosities and undermine the sense of belonging to certain regions; and (vi) undermine exchanges of best practices. These language barriers are especially relevant around Germany's borders (Annex 8A). But even within the same language family group of countries (e.g., Latin), language is often regarded as a major cross-border barrier (e.g., France and Spain). Hence, a potential solution to mitigate cross-border language barriers could be an **EU legal mechanism that enforces the obligatory use of English as an official language for public information in all Member States, as a secondary language, following the information provided in the national language(s)**: the potential European transnational language mechanism (ETLM). This mechanism could be applied, for instance, in all/most public transport and other public services in all EU Member States, as well as a non-EU Interreg countries. Another solution, which already has been partially implemented by some European countries, is the potential **use of ETC to finance cultural and sports-related projects which put together young students from both sides of the border, to improve their language understanding from the other side of the border**, and the systematic learning of the neighbouring language across EU internal and external border regions.

1.1.3 A European Transnational Public Transports Mechanism (ETPTM): An EU vision for an integrated transnational public transport network

Rising social environmental awareness requires increasing attention from public authorities to the advantages of using public transport instead of individual means of transportation. The

same goes for the need to provide adequate cross-border public transportation services in most cross-border/transnational passages to cross-border commuters and other potential passengers. In a recent EC initiative (Boosting Cross-Border Regions through Better Transport), some of the main challenges which need to be considered to improve European cross-border transport networks were identified: (i) need for cross-border planning: transport networks and services, as well as transport infrastructure, need to be jointly planned. This includes all operational aspects of transport to connect both sides of the border: ticketing systems, understandable information sources, etc; (ii) Need for harmonisation of legal and administrative procedures: there is a need to create legal and administrative standards or systems when operating cross-border transport. In this regard, mutual recognition or limited derogations from national rules could be considered on a case-by-case basis; and (iii) need for joint management structures: their use can facilitate the establishment and operation of genuine cross-border transport. These structures can take the form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Likewise, respondents to the 2015 EU survey on Overcoming Obstacles in Border Regions proposed solutions to correct cross-border physical accessibility related obstacles: (i) build new, reopen, or modernize cross-border physical infrastructures (motorways, high-speed corridors, railways, and maritime and aerial connections); and (ii) increase the frequency, interoperability, and the quality of existing cross-border transports systems, and reduce their costs.

Indeed, existing studies on cross-border public transport have demonstrated that there is still a wide range of cross-border rail missing links. It has been estimated, for instance, that only 44% of EU border residents have access to rail services. This and other barriers push cross-border commuters away from sustainable collective travel options towards single occupancy vehicle use. It is undeniable that well-functioning cross-border mobility based on public transport as the backbone is a very relevant means of improving the quality of life of border populations. However, cross-border services are not designed to become economically profitable. In this context, a potential solution to increase cross-border permeability is that **public budgets at European and national levels keep on investing in missing rail links and bus network gaps along the borders, together with providing grants under Interreg programmes.** Also, given that border regions perform generally less well economically than other regions, investments in local public transport can pay off in a plethora of ways, including economy, jobs, and environmental benefits. It is therefore encouraging to see that many cross-border transport challenges and opportunities are currently entering a large-scale debate at the EU level. Nevertheless, as public transport is chiefly a local regulatory competence, local public authorities should be more than ever engaged and encouraged to work together to find optimal solutions among a multitude of languages, regulatory frameworks, technical protocols, procurements regimes, and energy power currents, to name just a few of the most obvious issues. Moreover, the development of local cross-border public transport is not only pivotal to reducing the earlier mentioned barrier effect on citizens' mobility but also to help unleash the development of a massive potential of cross-border regions. Besides the growth and touristic potential, developing cross-border transport is also beneficial in terms of accessibility, social and employment interconnectivity and territorial and social cohesion, not to mention the positive environmental impacts. It is estimated that removing obstacles to cross-border interactions could lead to the creation of 1 million new jobs in border regions across the EU. Developing public transport networks would make a significant contribution to this gain.

Given the relationship between cross-border public transport supply and demand, a cross-border public transport (bus and train in the EU cross-border main passages) permeability index was built for the EU national barriers, which revealed that only a few EU borders (NUTS

0) had high levels of cross-border public accessibility. The same methodology was used in a recent EC report with a more detailed territorial (NUTS 3) analysis, which presents a more detailed picture of contrasted public transport permeability along EU borders, which is relatively high for border sections in the Alps and maritime borders such as between Germany and Denmark, Denmark and Sweden, and Italy and France, and generally low for longer border area in Scandinavia, the Baltic States, East European countries, the Pyrenees and the Portuguese-Spanish border (Annex 9B). As such, **a European Transnational Public Transports mechanism (ETPTM) could be regarded as a legal solution to mitigate legal-administrative borders related to the functioning of cross-border public transports.** Moreover, **ETC programmes could join forces with other EU initiatives like the Trans European Network (TEN) to identify, for each Interreg-A and B programmes, cross-border/transnational transport priority projects which can effectively mitigate cross-border and transnational physical accessibility-related barriers, via an effective European transnational public transports mechanism (ETPTM), by better linking medium towns.**

1.1.4 A European Transnational Mechanism for all sorts of border barriers¹

As stated, the EC's 2015-2017 cross-border review revealed that legal and administrative obstacles are regarded as the main cross-border barriers to EU citizens. In this context, a potential solution to mitigate such barriers could be the **creation of a legal mechanism which can effectively normalise legislation and regulations across all EU Member States without any territorial intervention limitation.** For example, this mechanism should allow the use of legislation and regulations from the other side of the border that can effectively mitigate all sorts of cross-border obstacles of a legal and administrative character. This mechanism could be applied, for instance, in: (i) academic diplomas recognition; (ii) the use of social-security and fiscal-related issues; (iii) the access to public services; (iv) the use of cross-border risk management services, etc. Ultimately, this mechanism should contribute a European deterritorialism governance paradigm (Annex 9B).

1.2 From cross-border/transnational cooperation into cross-border/transnational bottom-up planning.

One of the most visible impacts of increasing ETC processes over the past decades is the widespread of cross-border entities, which together with the EU Interreg-A programmes cover more than 80% of the EU territory (Annex 10). These entities started to take the form of Euroregions and cross-border Working Communities. Since 2007, Europe started to witness a rise of EGTCs across some national borders, as a recognition that former Euroregions were somewhat 'old solutions to old problems'. Even so, our recent analysis of the more than 70 ongoing EGTCs (Annex 11A & B) revealed that only 14 are included in the group of Strategic ETCGs, with a clear vision to address the main challenges of the respective cross-border regions, mostly located in the Benelux area. Furthermore, the establishment of twin cities or Eurocities have also become quite 'popular' in several European borders as is the case of the PT-ES cross-border area which, since 1990, have seen the establishment of more than 100 cross-border entities and leads the number of approved EU b-solution projects. As can be seen, there are clear overlapped territories covered by different of such entities. The same goes for ongoing EU Macro-Regions at the transnational level. In both cases (cross-border and transnational) it is up to debate if these entities are contributing to

¹ In the context of on-going interinstitutional work regarding the ECBM file, that proposal is not covered in this paper.

mitigate cross-border/transnational barriers towards a more integrated EU territory, and in **valorising the territorial capital** of the affected regions, understood as the key goals of cross-border and transnational planning processes (Annex 12).

In this context, in which there is a widespread of territorially overlapping cross-border and transnational entities, many times with limited financial and strategic intervention capabilities, and also, in our view, for the most part, with a limited strategic vision for the development of the intervention territories, a potentially effective solution to improve the implementation of ETC processes towards increasing territorial integration and cohesion is the **establishment of longer-term (at least 25 years) 'cross-border and transnational development plans', implemented in a bottom-up or place-based approach**, which must follow two main goals: **reducing the barrier effect and mobilising the territorial capital of the border and transnational areas**. Put differently, these cross-border and transnational development plans could be regarded as a viable EU **instrument supporting the implementation of ETC programmes via, for example, existing cross-border/transnational entities** (e.g. EGTCs/Macro-Regions) which have the capabilities to **implement effective cross-border and transnational development plans** with the following main advantages: (i) concentrated funding: **increasing financial capacity** concentrated in one cross-border/transnational entity rather than a distribution for a myriad of entities with overlapping intervention areas; (ii) time: **longer-term and stable strategic plan** for increasing effectiveness; (iii) strategic soundness: increasing **multi-level strategic articulation** with existing national development plans in several critical policy development domains of border and transnational areas; (iv) effective subsidiarity: **increasing consideration of local/regional needs** with a planning vision focused on border areas (not the all border NUTS 3 or 2) in the case of cross-border cooperation, and in critical transnational cooperation development domains.

2 Should cooperation be further incentivised including in mainstream cohesion policy programmes? How?

We have been evaluating the impacts of EU Cohesion Policy in general, and the ETC process, for around 20 years. From our detailed analysis of several countries (PT, ES, SE, and NO) it was possible to confirm that ETC can be regarded as a success story in mitigating all types of cross-border barriers, and in supporting the territorial capital of border regions (cross-border cooperation). However, despite tangible successes in improving, for instance, physical cross-border accessibilities and in implementing cross-border and transnational governance structures, the challenges for the EU to reinforce ETC in both internal and external borders, are still significant, even in the cross-border and transnational EU regions with higher levels of cross-border and transnational cooperation maturity and intensity (North and Northwest Europe – Annex 11). In this stance, there is a case to support the rationale in which ETC should be further incentivised within EU Cohesion Policy. How? For instance, by improving strategic focus as well as financial capacity and a financial balance between both sides of the border, with the allocation of funding being aligned with socioeconomic development needs and not with demographic contingents. These potential solutions will be further analysed below among others. There is always a possibility of using approved thematic and regional OPs to incentivise ETC by ringfencing a certain amount of funding to this policy goal. However, past experiences have shown that economic crises tend to force the national government to partially rearrange the allocation of EU funds of these thematic and regional OPs towards economic growth and jobs-related projects.

2.1 Strategic orientation: towards reducing border obstacles and green development

The history of the strategic orientation of the Interreg Programmes has lacked strategic focus and has systematically changed since 1990, from one EU Cohesion Phase to the next (Annex 12A & 12B). This is particularly visible in Strand A (Cross-Border Cooperation), in which the initial goals of preparing border areas for the opening of the Single Market, by promoting socioeconomic development, and later on with an added environmental sustainability policy rationale, finally highlighted, by 2007, the need to reduce the negative effects of borders. Indeed, the current EC official information on the goal of the Interreg-A VI is that "It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas while enhancing the cooperation process for the overall harmonious development of the Union"². Two concrete objectives are advanced for the Interreg-A VI:

1. Interreg Specific Objective (ISO) 1: A better Cooperation governance;

- To enhance the institutional capacity of public administrations,
- To resolve legal and administrative obstacles in border regions,
- To promote sustainable democracy,
- To strengthen mutual trust among citizens.

2. Interreg Specific Objective (ISO) 2: A safer and more secure Europe

- For actions in the fields of border crossing management, mobility and migration management, including the protection and economic and social integration of third-country nationals.
- To support employment and labour market measures such as improving access to employment, encouraging life-long learning, promoting gender balance and fostering equal opportunities.

The proposed goals are relevant and indeed include what is, in our view, the main goal of cross-border cooperation processes: **reducing cross-border obstacles**. But only as one topic of a main goal: a better cooperation governance. The second main goal includes some relevant issues for incrementing cross-border cooperation processes. It is, however, debatable if Interreg should deal directly with border security-related issues. Hence, based on the theoretical approach we have supported for a long time, EU cross-border cooperation programmes can be more effective if they focus on two main policy objectives. The **first and more important is the goal of reducing cross-border barriers or obstacles of all sorts** (institutional - legal and administrative; physical accessibilities; economic, environmental, and sociocultural barriers), **towards European territorial integration**. The **second is to mobilise the territorial capital of border regions** or, put differently, to **promote territorial development – towards a more EU cohesive territory**.

Instead, strand B of Interreg has contributed to supporting all kinds of territorial development processes in transnational regions, in several policy areas. The current policy phase (2021-27) suggests support to "a wide range of project investments related to innovation, the green and digital transition, accessibility, digitalisation, urban development, public sector innovation, and interoperability etc." What is lacking, often times, is a more **focused**

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border_en

transnational approach to foster transnational development potentials, like for instance, the exploration of solar energy production in the south of Europe, to limit the EU energy fossil fuel dependency, or the **correction of socioeconomic development imbalances** between the western and eastern European sides of the Danube region. The selection of so many (11) Interreg VI-B programmes is also questionable as there is a wide territorial overlapping and their delimitation is not necessarily adjusted to the EU transnational development potentials and challenges for the EU territory. In this stance, a potential solution to increase transnational cooperation effectiveness could result in a realignment of EU Interreg-B areas by considering transnational socioeconomic and environmental development challenges (e.g., socioeconomic disparities) and potentials (e.g., production of renewable energy sources). That could lead to a reduction of **existing EU Interreg-B programmes**. Another potential solution supports the design of Interreg-B strategies with a **transnational development rationale**, for instance, in **managing: (i) transnational river and ocean basins (blue development – Annex 13); (ii) transnational road and rail accessibility in public transports; (iii) transnational polycentric urban networks cooperation in science and technology and in green development**. Moreover, Interreg-B programmes can be more effective in achieving territorial cohesion and integration by favouring **the investment in territorial cohesion cities** (medium cities in less developed territories) in the selected Interreg-B programmes. Another potential solution to increase the effectiveness of these programmes could be the forging of an **effective strategic link between them and ongoing EU Macro-Regions via similar transnational spatial planning strategies**.

As regards the **Interreg-C**, **its approved projects have contributed positively to fostering knowledge transfer across EU regions. Hence, its current strategic policy implementation rationale could be maintained as they are, whereas its financial muscle could be slightly reinforced (see Annex 14). At the same time, Interreg-C projects could favour territorial cohesion cities' networking as a concrete means to increment territorial cohesion trends. As regards the new Interreg-D** further knowledge is needed to assess its effectiveness since it has started to be implemented.

2.1.1 Link cross-border cooperation projects with the EU b-solutions initiative experience towards effective territorial integration

As developed in topic 2.1.1. the proposed main goal for the Interreg-A towards reducing persistent border barriers could **take stock on the ongoing implementation of the EU b-solutions experience, in finding and implementing concrete solutions to reducing persistent legal-administrative border barriers of all sorts**. Moreover, special attention could be given to **incrementing cross-border physical accessibility, in particular in promoting access to effective cross-border/transnational public transport across all EU borders**. Given current financial limitations of the ETC Programmes, their financial capacity would need to be substantially increased to finance, for instance, cross-border/transnational railway connections. Another solution could be their link with other EU programmes/strategies such as **the EU Trans-European Networks (TEN)** to finance needed projects in this domain.

2.1.2 Facilitate cross-border dwellers and commuters lives via cross-border/transnational public services

Alongside the already mentioned need to reduce legal-administrative, physical accessibility, and cultural barriers, Interreg-A and B programmes could facilitate the **increasing use of cross-border/transnational public services of all sorts**, including health, education,

cultural, civil protection, public security, environment, labour market, spatial planning, transports and sports-related activities across all EU borders (Annex 15).

2.2 Intervention areas: delimiting 'real' cross-border and transnational intervention areas for EU programmes

As previously stated, EU Interreg-A programmes cover quite too many areas without significant border relationships. Take the case of Sweden and Portugal (Annex 1). Ideally, the Interreg-A programmes would cover a 5km buffer zone around EU national border lines. The reality is, however, far more complex, **as a multitude of interconnected factors contributes to identifying 'real cross-border areas'**, understood as territories largely affected in their territorial development by the presence of a national borderline. These factors include, for example, the presence of cross-border functional areas (Annex 16A). In any case, a potential solution to increase the effectiveness of Interreg-A programmes, although its official area should be aligned with the EU border NUTS3, it is to **define an implementation area adjusted according to the proposed delimitation factors** (see example in Annex 16B).

2.2.1 Focus on border cities and cross-border/transnational functional areas as boosters of territorial development

Cities are the engines of territorial development. They concentrate human, financial, knowledge, and innovative capital. Hence, **medium and small cities in border regions should concentrate the bulk of Interreg investment in the domain of territorial development**, in particular in **green development** (intra-city production of renewable energy and food – vertical farms, and also sustainable and smart mobility – public transports).

2.3 Funding: Moving beyond a 2.5-3% European Territorial Cohesion package

Since the onset, ETC programmes receive just a small percentage of the EU Cohesion Policy financial budget (around 2.5% to 3%). Given European territorial integration needs (reduction of persistent border barriers) and the fact that the majority of European border regions face systematic depopulation and socioeconomic exclusion trends, which goes against the EU central policy goal of territorial cohesion, and the positive impacts that ETC has produced in cross-border and transnational cooperation, a potential solution to increase these positive impacts requires a **substantial increase of the ETC financial package within EU Cohesion Policy in all Interreg Strands (Annex 14)**. Here, a special financial emphasis could be placed towards transnational cooperation programmes as an intermediary step towards a fully territorial integrated EU. Moreover, the distribution of **funding could regard not only the preference for territorial cohesion cities but also follow criteria of socio-economic development rather than demographic densities and could be better balanced on both sides of the border.**

2.4 Design, implementation, and Evaluation: Moving from 7y EU programmes to cross-border/transnational planning structures

Topic 1.2 already presented reasons for a paradigm change in **moving from mainstream cross-border/transnational governance, cemented by ongoing cross-border/transnational entities, into a paradigm with fewer yet more effective 'EGTC-like entities' which implement effective, strategic, and longer-term cross-border/transnational planning strategies**, which link existing local, regional and national

spatial development plans. In this context, a potential solution to improve the effectiveness of Interreg programmes could be supported by increasing financial support **to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of cross-border/transnational development plans**. As regards the latter aspect (evaluation), in the design phase, Interreg programmes could **follow a 'regional sensibility analysis'** to identify persistent barriers and territorial development challenges/potentials, to adjust their strategies in a more effective/place-based manner. In the implementation phase, **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as well as academic experts, could be included in the process of project selection and in steering and monitoring committees**. In the monitoring and evaluation phases, **sound (not quick) territorial impact assessment (TIA) methodologies** to assess the main impacts of all Interreg strands could be used. This requires that DG REGIO engages with further collaboration with Eurostat to collect, for instance, annual evidence of several types of cross-border barriers across Europe.

3 Should there be an enhanced strategic framework through joint strategies for addressing transnational challenges (economic globalisation, climate or demographic change)?

3.1 From national to EU transnational strategic planning

To date, EU policies have had a predominantly 'national scale' territorial implementation character, since the stage of a 'complete territorial integration process' is yet to be achieved by the EU. Moreover, spatial planning is not yet a formal competence of the EU. Despite such constraints, the 'EU project' has successfully implemented several transnational development strategies in policy areas such as transport, environmental protection, and territorial cooperation-related programmes and policies. Most fundamentally, the latter (Interreg) have paved the way for increasingly open borders, both at the cross-border and transnational levels and innovative territorial cooperation legal instruments and approaches, such as the EGTCs and the EU Macro-Regions. In this context, Transnational Cooperation could be elevated within EU policymaking, and in particular within EU Cohesion Policy, as a central policy strategic goal to achieve a more developed, integrated, and cohesive EU territory. This rationale is supported by the evidence in which critical EU development and cohesion challenges and potentials have a transnational character and hence require a transnational approach to be resolved (e.g., energy, water, environmental, river and sea basins, etc.). As it stands, EU Interreg-B programmes have limited financial and intervention capacity to achieve such a goal. A potential solution to address such limitations is to **place transnational cooperation at the heart of EU Cohesion Policy, both financially and strategically**.

As can be seen, by the delimitation of the current regional competitiveness processes (Annex 17), these have a transnational dimension and territorial coverage. The same goes for territorial governance processes, innovation capacity, environmental challenges, territorial connectivity challenges, social inclusion challenges, and demographic challenges. Likewise, there are several transnational territorial development potentials for the EU in areas such as blue development, renewable energy (Annex 18), and urban polycentrism.

3.1.1 Transnational Environmental Management

Based on the previous analysis, a more effective implementation of EU Cohesion Policy funding in the policy area of environmental sustainability via a **transnational spatial environmental development strategies** could require a transnational focus on: (i)

exploring **renewable energy potentials** (e.g., fostering solar energy production on cities located in southern Europe); (ii) managing water flows in international river basins with an integrated approach to explore desalinization plants in areas with annual clean water access needs; (iii) **managing sea basins** in several domains (promote the exploration of renewable energy at sea (offshore wind); aquaculture; combat pollution and marine litter; fisheries and potential overexploitation; support tourism & yachting; blue biotechnology; maritime monitoring/surveillance; and implement measures to protect sea coasts from sea rising); (iv) focusing on **transnational self-sufficient cities** networks on the domains of circular economy, intra-city energy and food production, clean water recycling, and smart mobility; (v) focus on protecting coastal areas from rising sea levels; (vi) focusing on **mitigating the number and negative impacts of forest fires via a transnational approach to manage forests**.

3.1.2 Transnational Demographic and Urban Management

EU demographic challenges have a transnational character. For instance, it is common to see EU cross-border areas with systematic depopulation trends. Hence, tackling these trends could require a **strategic transnational spatial planning approach to be tackled**. In this regard, a potential solution could be **favouring the concentration of public funding on medium towns in EU depopulated regions** as they would serve as engines of regional development. Here, transnational regions could strategically favour the implementation of **transnational polycentric urban networks of medium cities** with complementary development domains (e.g., intra-city energy and food production).

3.1.3 Transnational Physical Accessibility Management

Despite positive advances in linking public transportation networks (road and rail) in Europe over the past decades, cross-border public transport is still regarded as a major cross-border/transnational barrier by Europeans. Also, there is a lack of appropriate railway high-speed connections between several European cities like Lisbon and Madrid, which would avoid the need to select airplane connections and consequent increasing levels of air pollution. Hence, a potential solution to mitigate such development constraints could be the support for **spatial planning strategic vision and increasing financial muscle to increment the transnational highspeed railway connections in many EU territories, lacking such vital transport connections**.

3.1.4 Transnational Socioeconomic Management

Europe is known to be a highly socioeconomic developed continent, in a global context. Even so, and despite almost 35y of EU Cohesion Policy implementation, there are still wide transnational pockets of poverty in a European context across Europe, especially in South and Eastern Europe. In this stance, concrete **transnational socioeconomic development strategies could be implemented to favouring technological innovation networks, namely in the domains of green and blue development, and in the already mentioned self-sufficient cities development paradigm, and again by favouring medium cities located in less developed EU regions (the territorial cohesion cities policy rationale)**.

4 Conclusions/Summary

What kind of additional instruments should be introduced to tackle persistent cross-border obstacles?

A: Robust the Interreg in all strands both financially and strategically as the main EU instrument to tackle persistent cross-border and transnational obstacles

B: From cross-border/transnational cooperation into cross-border/transnational bottom-up planning.

- Increasing financial capacity, longer-term strategic development vision, and multi-level strategic articulation and consideration of local/regional needs (subsidiarity)
- Implement cross-border and transnational spatial planning on physical accessibilities, river, and sea-basin management.
- Favour medium towns and reduce territorial overlapping.

C: Increasing territorial integration via the reduction of border barriers

- Focus on reducing persistent legal/administrative border barriers – Build on the EU B-solutions Initiative
- Balance financial packages from both border sides.
- Concentrate on border areas.
- Concentrate on effective EGTCs and Macro-Regions with a place-based strategic vision to reduce barriers and promote territorial development.

Support a European Transnational Language Mechanism (ETLM): Making English an official language on public information.

Support a European Transnational Public Transports Mechanism (ETPTM) and link Interreg with other EU initiatives (e.g., TEN) to boost financial capacity.

Support a European Transnational Mechanism to normalise legal/administrative issues towards a more Territorial Integrated EU: European deterritorialism governance paradigm

Should cooperation be further incentivised including in mainstream cohesion policy programmes? How?

Recommendations to improve territorial cooperation

Interreg-A

Strategic orientation:

A - Reducing border obstacles (Build on the EU B-solutions Initiative by focusing on legal-administrative barriers on cross-border public transport and language) – Towards European Territorial Integration.

B - Mobilising the territorial capital of border regions with an emphasis on green development and border cities – Towards Territorial Cohesion.

- Intervention areas: reduce the official area to border NUTS 3 and focus on border areas delimited via concrete criteria (e.g., cross-border functional areas) for each programme.
- Promote cross-border planning strategies via EGTCs or similar sound governance entities.
- Promote the use of cross-border public services (health, education, cultural, civil protection, public security, environment, labour market, spatial planning, transport, sports)

- Funding: Increase the total allocation of funding within EU Cohesion Policy. Funding distribution should be based on the criteria of development rather than demography and be balanced on both sides of the border.

Interreg- B

- Strategic Orientation: Focus on transnational projects which can foster transnational development potentials, in the domains of physical accessibility (public transports), river and sea basins management, innovation networks, renewable energy production, correction of socioeconomic development imbalances; polycentric urban networks, promote green and blue development.
- Intervention areas: Reduce programme overlapping and several programmes focused on natural areas (ocean and river basins and mountains).
- Promote transnational spatial plans via EU Macro-Regions.
- Favour the development of medium towns located in less developed territories
- Link with other EU initiatives (e.g., TEN) to boost financial capacity
- Funding: Increase the total allocation funding of EU Cohesion Policy to make Transnational Cooperation an Intermediate level to achieve a full Territorial Integrated EU

Interreg-C

- Maintain strategic orientation and implementation process.
- Increase financial package.
- Favour the intercity cooperation between medium towns.

Interreg-D

- Requires further analysis to be subject to a position (a new strand just initiated)

Interreg-A, B, C and D

- Design phase: perform a regional sensibility analysis of each investment priority
- Project selection and Implementation phase: place academic experts and civil society organisations on steering and monitoring committees of the programmes
- Monitoring and Evaluation Phase: use sound territorial impact assessment methodologies and collaborate with Eurostat to collect concrete cross-border and transnational updated data, for instance on persistent cross-border barriers.

Should there be an enhanced strategic framework through joint strategies for addressing transnational challenges (economic globalisation, climate or demographic change)?

Recommendations to improve territorial cooperation

- Strategic orientation: Placing transnational cooperation at the heart of EU Cohesion Policy to go from national into transnational planning and EU development approaches since critical EU development and cohesion challenges and potentials have a transnational character and this requires a transnational approach to be resolved (energy, water management, sea management, food production management, demographic management, and environmental management)

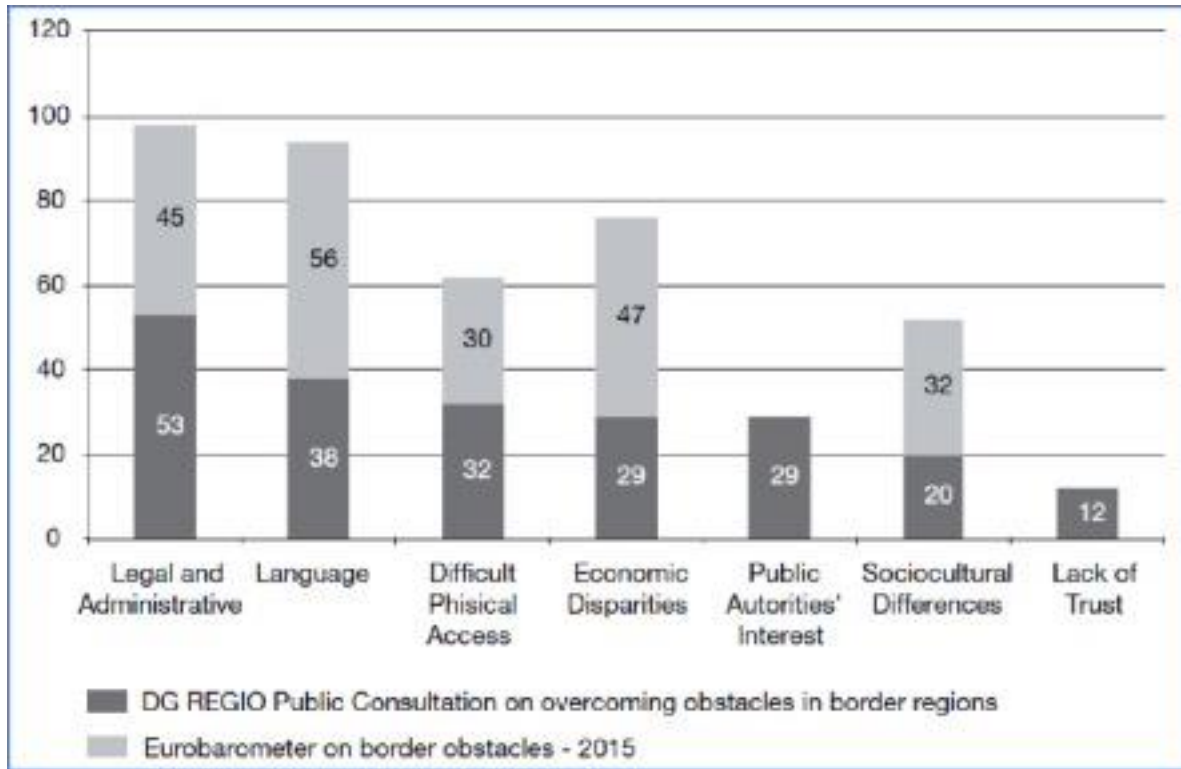
- Intervention areas: selected based on transnational development potentials and needs in reduced yet more financially robust EU transnational entities such as EU Macro-Regions
- Environmental management: implement the EU green deal via a transnational approach to explore renewable energy potentials, blue development, forest management, sustainable transport, and self-sufficient cities in terms of energy, food production, water recycling, and circular economy.
- Demography and urban management: favour the implementation of transnational polycentric urban networks of medium cities with complementary development domains (e.g., intra-city energy and food production).
- Physical Accessibility Management: favour the railway high-speed transnational connections between all major EU cities and medium-towns.
- Socioeconomic Management: favouring technological innovation networks namely in the domains of green and blue development

Annex 1 – EU Interreg-A Programmes



Source: EC

Annex 2 – Persisting border barriers in the EU



Source: Author

Annex 3 – Most important cross-border obstacles according to Eurobarometer survey 2015



Source: own elaboration based on Eurobarometer 2015.

Source: Author

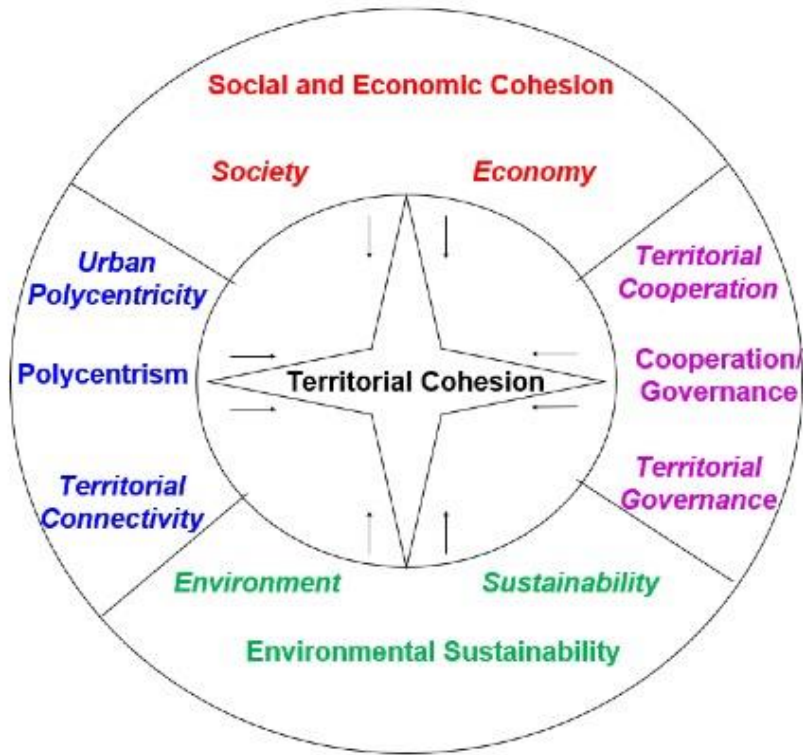
Annex 4 - Identification of main border obstacles in Europe by barrier effect dimension (2016)

Barrier Effect Dimension	N°	(%)
1. Accessibilities	292	23.76
1.1. Public transport	110	8.95
1.3. Rail connections	37	3.01
1.4. Transport systems	9	0.73
1.5. Air transport	4	0.33
1.6. Poor connectivity	100	8.14
1.7. Transport rules, regulations, price	24	1.95
1.8. Maritime connections	8	0.65
2. Social/Culture	358	28.97
2.1. Language	192	15.62
2.2. Trust	32	2.60
2.3. Health	33	2.69
2.4. Education	51	4.15
2.5. Cultural differences	37	3.01
2.6. Security	7	0.57
2.7. Young people	2	0.16
2.8. Mental barriers	2	0.16
3. Economy/Technology	174	14.16
3.1. Economic disparities	84	6.83
3.2. Fiscal issues	15	1.22
3.3. Labour market	49	3.99
3.4. Innovation	2	0.16
3.5. Entrepreneurship	3	0.24
3.6. Use of technology	13	1.06
3.7. Exchange rates	8	0.65
4. Institutional/Administrative	399	32.47
4.1. Legal asymmetries (tax-visa-laws)	166	13.51
4.2. Public authorities involvement	89	7.24
4.3. CBC structures	9	0.73
4.4. Governance	9	0.73
4.5. Information	19	1.55
4.6. Administrative asymmetries	81	6.59
4.7. Mobilising civil society	5	0.41
4.8. EU bureaucracy and budget	21	1.71
5. Environment	8	0.65
5.1. National parks collaboration	6	0.49
5.2. Tourism	2	0.16
5.3. Heritage protection	0	0.00
Total	1229	100.00

Source: own elaboration based on data from DG REGIO Public Consultation on Border Obstacles in Border Regions.

Source: Author

Annex 5 – The Star of Territorial Cohesion



Source: Author

Annex 6 – List of the approved b-solutions cases.

#	Name of the applicant	Title of the advice case	Border(s)	Thematic area
First Call (10 pilot actions)				
1	Cross-border mobility in dual education in the Eurometropolis	EGTC Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai	BE-FR	Employment
2	XBORDER-WORK – tackling administrative issues that hinder free movement of workers	Region Friuli Venezia Giulia	SI-IT	Employment
3	Roadmap for recognition of qualifications for highly demanded professions	Province of Limburg	DE-NL	Employment
4	CB-PUMP – cross-border public urban mobility plan	EGTC GO	IT-SI	Transport
5	When EMS (emergency medical systems) erase borders	Consortium of the Working Community of the Pyrenees	ES-PT- AD	Health
6	Cooperation protocol on administrative procedures on health insurance for frontier workers	EGTC Eurodistrict PAMINA	FR-DE	Institutional Cooperation
7	Lithuanian – Latvian institutional cooperation on cross-border groundwater management	Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre	LV-LT	Institutional Cooperation
8	GeoConnectGR	EGTC Summit Secretariat of the Greater Region	BE-LU- DE -FR	Institutional Cooperation
9	CrossMarket – enhance cross-border selling at local farmers’ market	EGTC Pannon ltd.	HR-HU	Institutional Cooperation
10	Bilingualism in the tri-border region AT-HU-SK	Lower Austrian Government, Department of Pre-Schools/ Kindergartens and Schools	AT-HU- SK	Multi- lingualism
Second Call (33 advice cases)				
11	183 days rule obstructing cross-border mobility	Oost-Vlaanderen Province – Euregio Scheldemond	BE-NL	Employment
12	Juridical obstacles in establishment and financing of trans-national business incubator	Lazdijai District Municipality	LT-PL	Employment
13	Dutch-German cross-border employment of		DE-NL	Employment

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	students originally from outside the EU	The Economic Board Arnhem-Nijmegen		
14	Cross-border work for non- EU citizens	Euregio Rhein-Maas-North	DE-NL	Employment
15	Current social and health insurance regulations as problem for borderland inhabitants working on both sides of border at the same time	Borderland Association Nasza Suwalszczyzna (NGO)	PL-LT	Employment
16	Double personality is a single reality: working in Portugal and paying taxes in Spain due to legal and/or administrative impediments	Duero-Douro EGTC	ES-PT	Employment
17	MOBITRANS - boosting Minho river cross-border mobility	River Minho EGTC	PT-ES	Transport
18	European solution for a vignette for air pollution control	Eurodistrict Strasbourg- Ortenau EGTC	FR-DE	Transport
19	SeaFlix - cross-border mobility	French Riviera Chamber of Commerce - CCINCA	FR-MC- IT	Transport
20	Tackling cross-border obstacles regarding e-bike sharing infrastructure	Ministry of the German-speaking Community	DE-BE	Transport
21	Cross border rail connectivity for the Port of Strasbourg	Autonomous Port of Strasbourg	FR-DE	Transport
22	Trilateral bridge in Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa	Euroregion Nisa	CZ-DE- PL	Transport
23	Launch of a regular passenger transport, with cabotage, between Chaves and Verín	Municipalities of Chaves and Verín	PT-ES	Transport
24	Ambulances without borders: towards sustainable cooperation between emergency services	Municipality of Woensdrecht	BE-NL	Health
25	Cross-border health care between the twin cities of Valga - Valka	Valga Municipality	EE-LV	Health
26	Speedy mutual recognition of qualifications for healthcare professionals	Cerdanya Hospital EGTC	ES-FR	Health

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27	Development of a trans-border water supply network	Kalvarija Municipality	LT-PL	Health
28	Cross-border emergency medical services	French Regional Health Agency Grand Est	FR-BE	Health
29	Cross-border healthcare	Euroregion Nisa, regional association	CZ-DE- PL	Health
30	Making EGTCs more powerful: legal certainty for provision of personnel to the EGTC	Eucor – The European Campus	DE-FR- CH	Institutional Cooperation
31	Cross-border tourism package	QuattroPole e.V. – Luxembourg, Metz, Saarbrücken, Trier	LU-FR- DE	Institutional Cooperation
32	Cooperation protocol aimed at simplifying LT-PL cross-border institutional cooperation in emergency management	Vilkaviskis District Municipality	LT-PL	Institutional Cooperation
33	Simplifying cross-border mobility of minors to carry out cultural or educational exchanges	Galicia-Norte Portugal EGTC	ES-PT	Institutional Cooperation
34	Administrative common barriers blocking real implementation of environmental management system	Galician Food Quality Agency – AGACAL	ES-PT ES-FR	Institutional Cooperation
35	Cross-border share of municipal management services	Arrabona EGTC	HU-SK	Institutional Cooperation
36	Improvement of cross-border communication and care for cross-border children and young people	Winterswijk Municipality	NL-DE	Institutional cooperation
37	Cross-border transport of CO ₂ as a resource for industrial processes	Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen – Euregio Scheldemond	BE-NL	Institutional Cooperation
38	Consolidation of the circular economy concerning the WEEE	Pontevedra Province	ES-PT	Institutional Cooperation
39	Bulgarian-Romanian institutional cooperation constraint – BRICC	University of Ruse Angel Kanchev – BRIE	RO-BG	Institutional Cooperation
40	Shared cross-border public services: French-German crèches	Eurodistrict SaarMoselle EGTC	FR-DE	Institutional Cooperation
41	Joint to protect children	Elvas Municipality	PT-ES	Institutional cooperation

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42	Stop geo-blocking! Overcoming discrimination and developing intercultural competences by providing access to online content across borders	Euregio Meuse-Rhine EGTC	NL-DE- BE	Multi- lingualism
43	Cross-border procurement e-	EGTC GO	IT-SI	eGovernment
Third Call (23 advice cases)				
44	Eems Dollard Region (EDR)	Transparent solutions in the border region for efficient treatment and reimbursement of medical expenses for Dutch and German patients	NL-DE	Health
45	Communauté de Communes Pyrénées Haut Garonnaises	Financing cross-border pupils' education	ES-FR	Multilin-gualism
46	Conseil départemental du Haut-Rhin	Facilitating health data accessibility to initiate cross-border public policies	FR-DE-CH	Evidence & data
47	EGTC ZASNET	ZASNET-Meseta Ibérica Transboundary Tourist Observatory	ES-PT	Evidence & data
48	Ister-Granum EGTC	Cross-border staffing difficulties – ambiguous application of social and health insurance regulations	HU-SK	Employ-ment
49	City of Aachen	Cross Border Transport of Medical Goods per Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (a.k.a. "drone")	NL-DE	Health
50	EGTC Galicia-Norte de Portugal	Removal or simplification of the procedure to obtain the Car Circulation Guide for Cross-Border Workers	ES-PT	Institutional cooperation
51	Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region	Rolling stock approval to foster rail transport between France and Spain	ES-FR	Transport
52	EGTC Euroregion Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra	KOMPAR - Promoting employability in the health & social sector	ES-FR	Employ-ment
53	EGTC Linieland van Waas en Hulst (in cooperation with Euregio Scheldemond)	Making crossborder internship worthy	NL-BE	Employ-ment
54	The Svinesund Committee	Perceived border obstacles linked to	SE-NO	Information services

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		wood construction – Sweden and Norway		
55	Centro de Estudos Eurorrexinais Galicia-Norte de Portugal	Elimination of barriers and 360° evaluation of the mobility of students from vulnerable groups in the higher education ecosystem of the GNP Euroregion	ES-PT	Institutional cooperation
56	Directorate General for External Action, Junta de Extremadura	IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS FOR CROSS-BORDER AERIAL FOREST FIRE CONTROL	ES-PT	Institutional cooperation
57	Lower Austrian Health Agency / EU Affairs & Healthcross	Introducing cross-border healthcare into regular operation	AT-CZ	Health
58	Province of Limburg	Cross-border authorizations of tramway personnel	NL-BE	Transport
59	euregio rhein-maas-nord	The problem of the children's sickness certificate for frontier workers working in Germany and residing in the Netherlands	NL-DE	Employment
60	Arrabona European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ltd.	Coorcurity: Facilitating the coordination of social security systems for cross-border workers and pensioners	HU-SK	Employment
61	EGTC-RIO MINHO	Minho River Nature 2000. Boosting Cross-Border Multi-level Governance	ES-PT	Institutional cooperation
62	EGTC Eurocity Chaves-verín	CROSS-BORDER EMERGENCIES TEAM	ES-PT	Health
63	Gemeente Baarle-Nassau	PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS CONCERNING ACCESS TO ENCLAVES	NL-BE	Institutional cooperation
64	Provincie West-Vlaanderen (on behalf of the Euregion Scheldemond)	Cross border obstacles on cross border transport and use of manure	NL-BE	Institutional cooperation
65	MURA REGION EGTC	Tour guide practice and their activity on both sides of the Hungarian and Croatian border	HU-HR	Institutional cooperation
66	Gate to Europe EGTC	Analysis of legislative borders in employment,	HU-RO	Institutional cooperation

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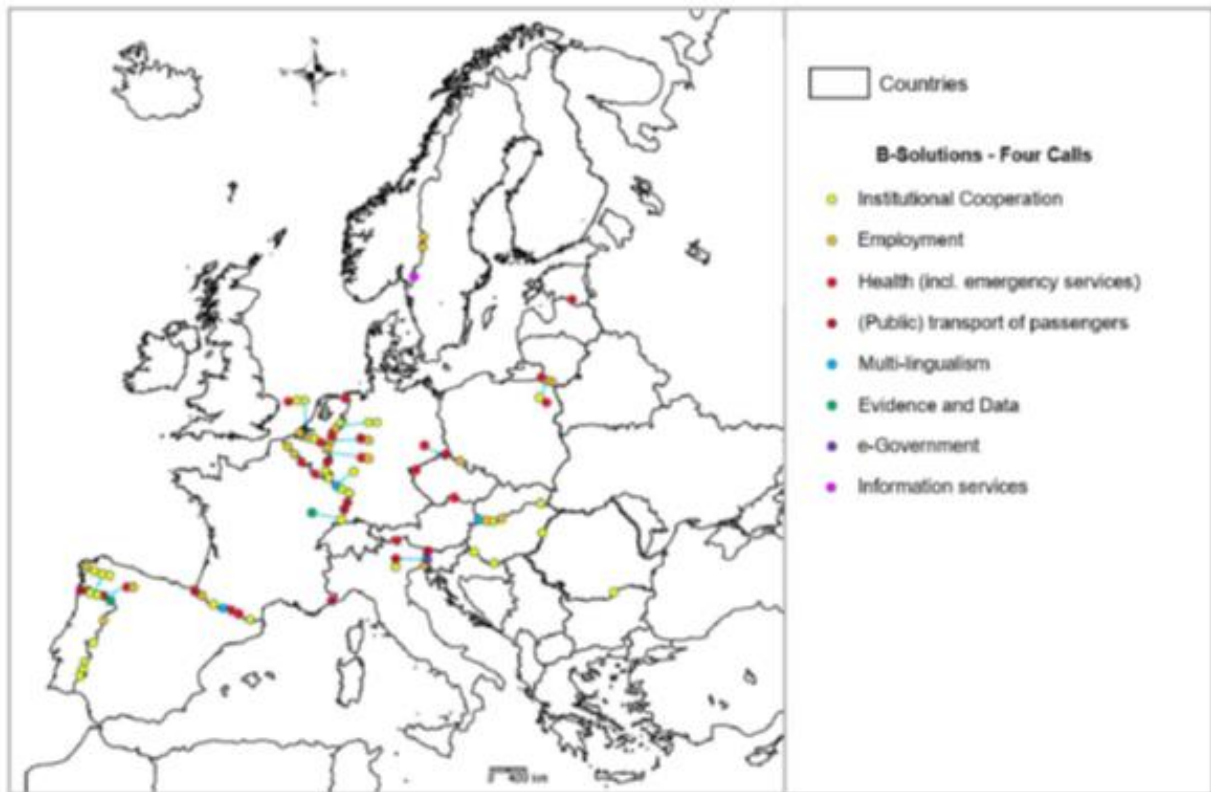
		especially in agricultural field		
Fourth Call (advice cases)				
67	Extremadura Avante	Spanish and Portuguese customs system compatibility to benefit borders regions of Extremadura (Spain), Alentejo and Centro (Portugal) EUROACE Euroregion	ES-PT	Institutional cooperation
68	EGTC "Territory of municipalities: Gorizia (IT), Mestna občina Nova Gorica and Občina Šempeter-Vrtojba (SI)"	GO2GO Cross-border Bike Sharing (GO2GO BIKE)	IT-SI	Transport
69	County Administrativ Board of Dalarna	Transborder vocational quality education	SE-NO	Employment
70	Stichting euPrevent	Applying the GDPR and national legislation in CB public health cooperation	NL-BE-DE	Health
71	Saarpfalz-Kreis	Establishment of a single cross-border entrance situation for the European Archaeological Park at Bliesbruck-Reinheim	FR-DE	Institutional cooperation
72	Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai	CB mobility of jobseekers engaged in vocational training: centre and company accessibility	FR-BE	Employment
73	Województwo Dolnośląskie - Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Dolnośląskiego	s4g - solutions for good	PL-CZ	Employment
74	RRA Severne Primorske Regijska Razvojna Agencija D.O.O. Nova Gorica	Setting up of a special economic zone on the CB area Nova Gorica - Gorizia (SI-IT)	SI-IT	Institutional cooperation
75	Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale (INPS) - National Institute of Social Security	Fa.Re: Facilitating Recovery activities across Italian-Slovenian border	IT-SI	Institutional cooperation
76	Municipality of Trysil	Cross border riding and dog sledge guided tours	NO-SE	Employment
77	EGTC Galicia-Norte de Portugal	Simplification procedures for hire: to work in ES and PT simultaneously; worker in teleworking in a company not	ES-PT	Employment

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		established in the worker's country		
78	Grenzinfopunkt Aachen-Eurode	Corona Pandemic and Home Office – Consequences for the social security and taxation of cross-border workers	DE-BE-NL	Employment
79	euregio rhein-maas-nord	Mini-jobs cause big problems in a cross-border context	DE-NL	Employment
80	Atlantic Transpyrenees Conference	Cross-border cooperation on social benefits and access to social rights	FR-ES	Institutional cooperation
81	EGTC Eurocity Chaves-Verín	Cross-Border Nursing	ES-PT	Employment
82	Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen on behalf of Euroregion Scheldemond	Stimulating cross-border LEADER projects by creating a cross-border regulation and system.	BE-NL	Institutional cooperation
83	Public institution Marijampole hospital	Opportunities to improve cross-border provision of health care and related services	LT-PL	Health
84	Gemeente Winterswijk	Cross-border renewable energy exchange	NL-DE	Institutional cooperation
85	Stadt Emmerich am Rhein	Registering labour migrants in a cross-border context	DE-NL	Institutional cooperation
86	Karlovy Vary Region	Cross Border Health Services, Mountain Rescue Service and Patient Transfer	CZ-DE	Health
87	Observatoire Franco-Belge de la Santé	Towards simplified procedures for cross-border health professionals	FR-BE	Health
88	EGTC Via Carpatia with limited liability	Legal status of a branch office of an EGTC in the partner country	SK-HU	Institutional cooperation
89	Provincie Zeeland	Cross-border healthcare and the reimbursement of cross-border healthcare costs	NL-BE	Health
90	EGTC European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino	On safe legal ground - CBC in disaster response	IT-AT	Health

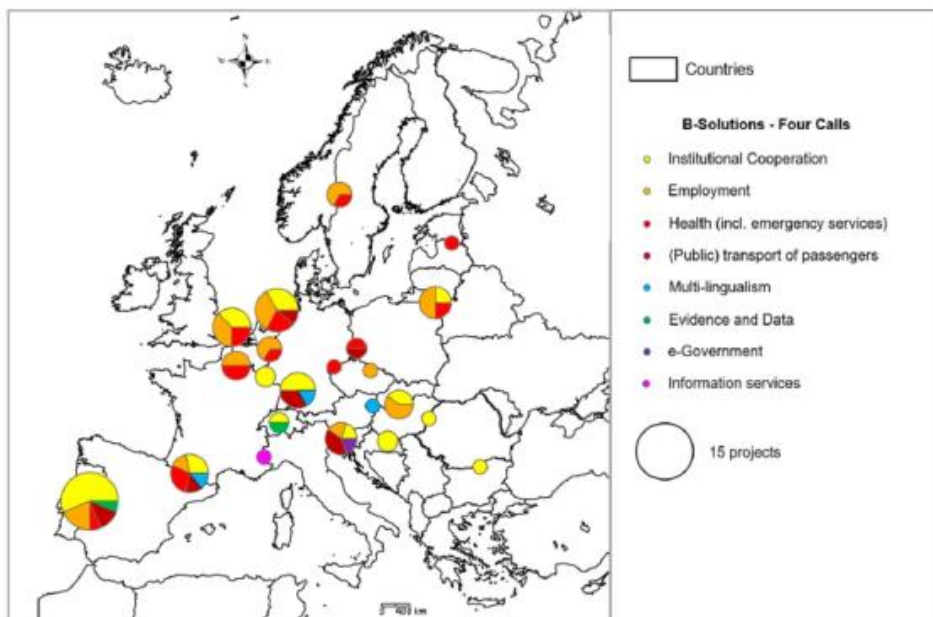
Source: Own elaboration based on AEBR database.

Annex 7 A – EU b-solution projects – location



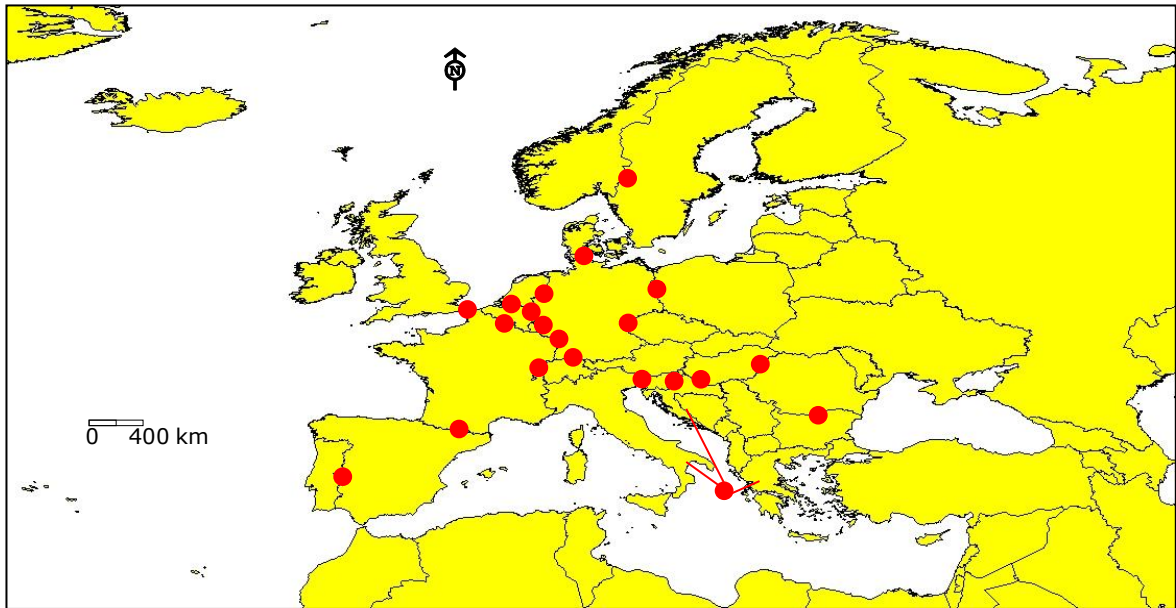
Source: Author

Annex 7 B – EU b-solution projects – themes



Source: Author

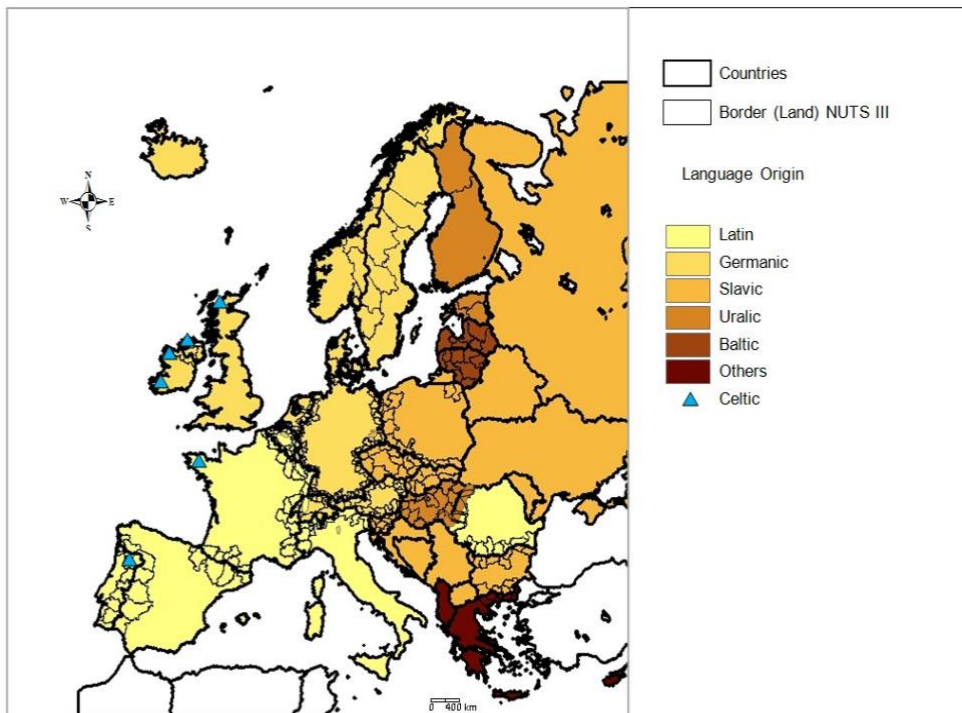
Annex 8A – Presence of language barriers identified by respondents of the EU survey on Overcoming Obstacles in Border Regions (2015)



Source: Author

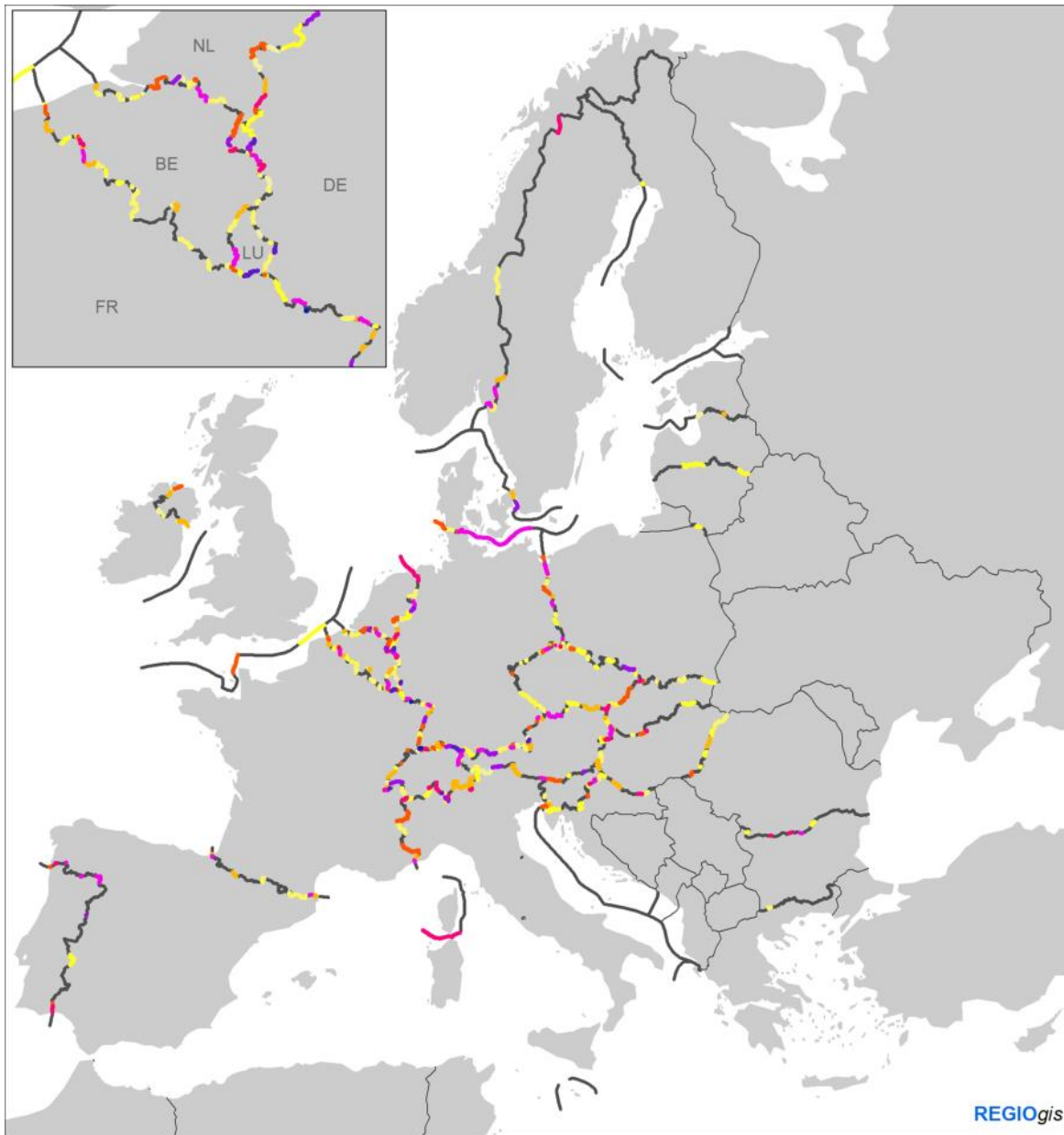
Note: the red dots mark country borderlines which were mentioned in the survey, at least once, as having significant language barriers

Annex 8B – Main family languages distribution in Europe



Source: Author

Annex 9A –Public transport permeability



Public transport permeability of European borders

- No permeability
- very low permeability
- low permeability
- ...
- ...
- medium permeability
- ...
- ...
- high permeability
- very high permeability
- extremely high permeability
- Borders not analysed

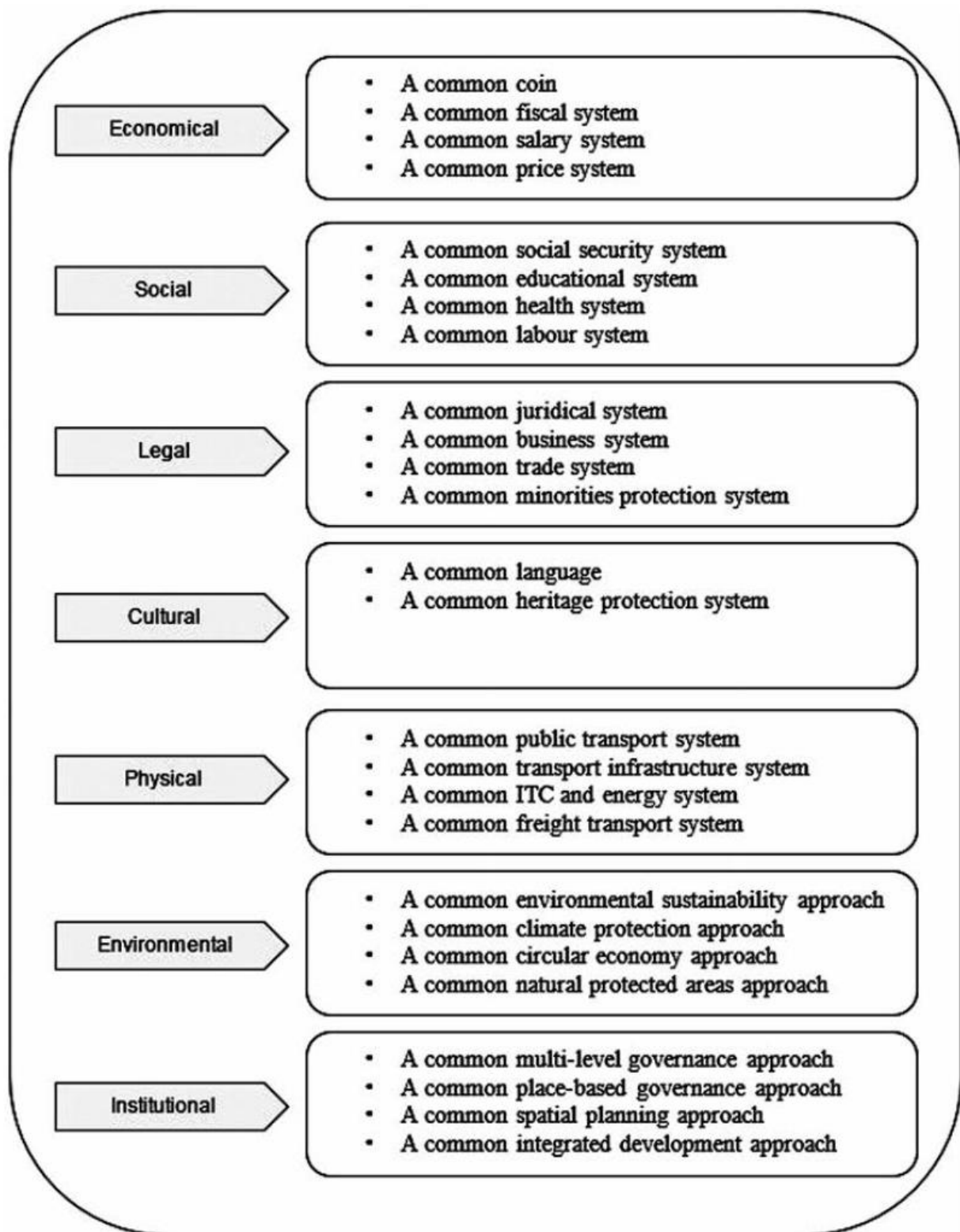
Note:
 Permeability is defined as a function of the number of cross-border public transport services (buses, trains, trams and ferries) (numerator) and the population density and population development (denominator).
 Sources: TCP International (2021)

0 500 Km

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

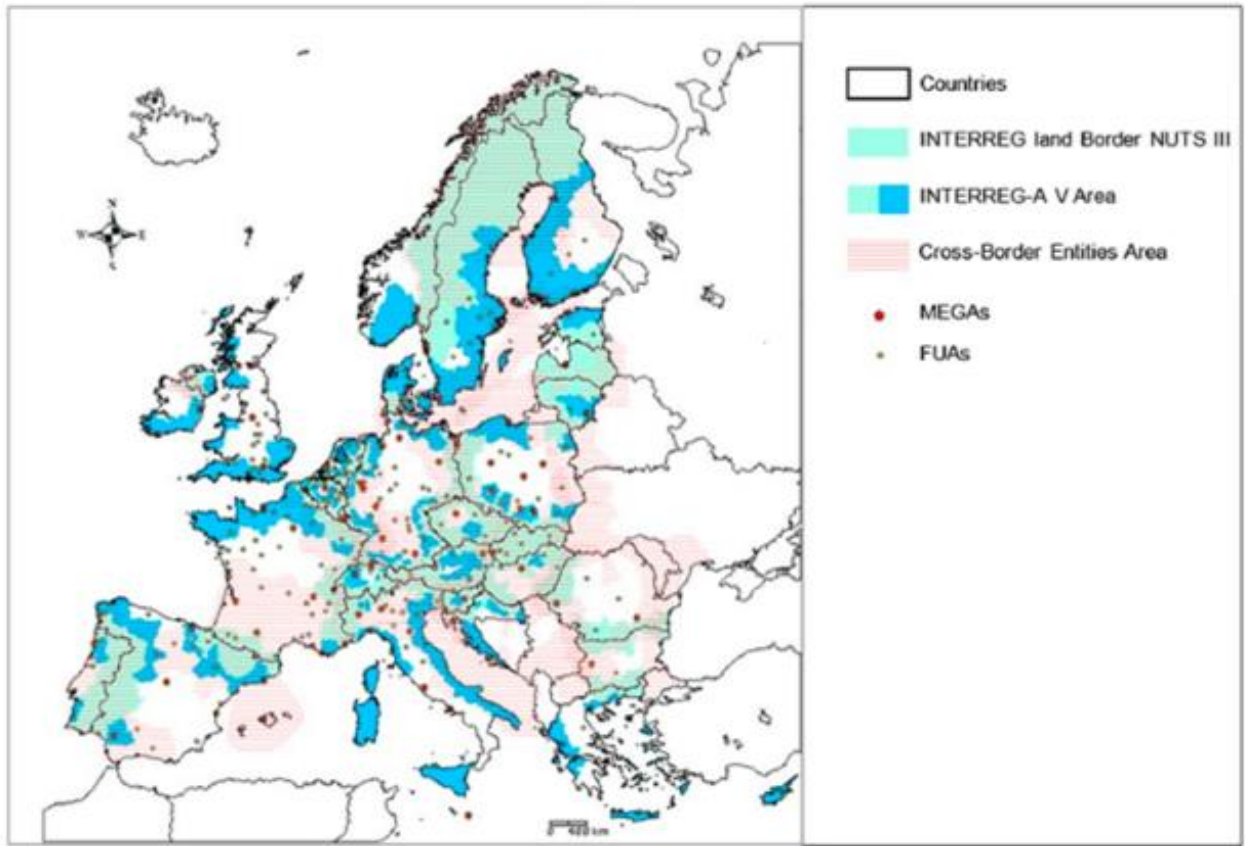
Source: EC

Annex 9B – Main parameters and respective components for a global deterritorialism governance paradigm



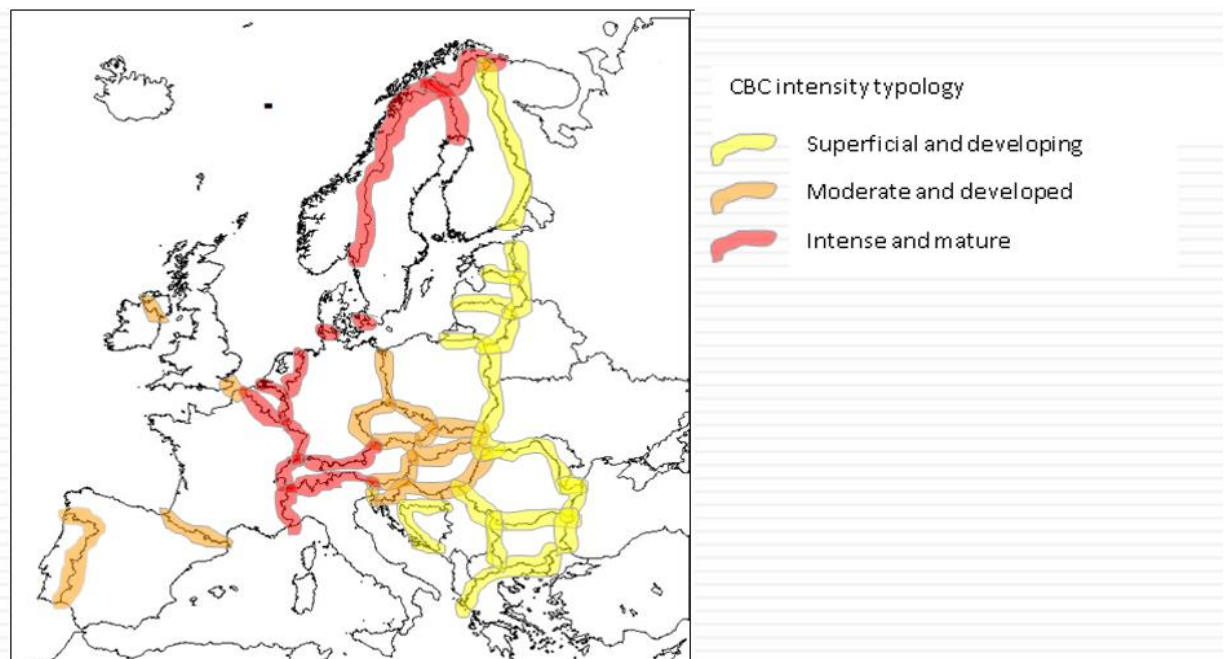
Source: Author

Annex 10 – Cross-border entities and programmes in Europe



Source: Author

Annex 11 – Cross-border maturity level



Source: Author

Annex 12A – Main goals and priorities of the INTERREG-A programmes (1989-2020)

INTERREG-A	Main Goal	Financed policy priorities
I. 1989-1993	Prepare the border areas for the opening of the Single Market, with an eye to economic and social cohesion (EC, 1990a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aid to SMEs – Tourism and culture – Energy supply – Rural development and commerce – Education and training – Protection of environment – Water supply and waste disposal – Accessibilities infrastructure – Spatial planning
II. 1994-1999	Develop cross-border social and economic centres through common development strategies (EC, 2017a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aid to SMEs – Tourism and culture – Energy supply – Rural development and commerce – Education and training – Employment and mobility – Health – Protection of environment – Water supply and waste disposal – Better public administration – Accessibilities infrastructure – Information and communication – Spatial planning
III. 2000-2006	Develop cross-border economic and social centres through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development (EC, 2017b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aid to SMEs – Rural development – Urban and coastal development – Education and training – Culture – Employment and mobility – Health – Protection of environment – Energy efficiency and renewable energy – Better public administration – Legal systems – Information and communication – Transport
IV. 2007-2013	Reduce the negative effects of borders such as administrative, legal and physical barriers; tackle common problems and exploit untapped potential. Through joint management of programmes and projects, mutual trust and understanding are strengthened and the cooperation process is enhanced (EC, 2017c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Entrepreneurship – Education and training – Employment and mobility – Equal opportunities – Management of natural resources – Information and communication – Transport – Link between rural and urban areas – Joint use of infrastructure
V. 2014-2020	Tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union (EC, 2017d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aid to SMEs – Research and innovation – Education and training – Employment and mobility – Social inclusion – Low carbon economy – Combating climate change – Environment and resource efficiency – Sustainable transport – Better public administration – Information and communication

Source: Author

Annex 12B – Main goals and priorities of the INTERREG-A programmes (1921-2027)

Interreg Strand A: Cross Border Cooperation

With a budget of 6.5 billion EUR, cross-border programmes are implemented within the EU and at the EU's external borders.

49 programmes in the EU, making sure to turn border obstacles into opportunities between EU Member States

10 Interreg IPA programmes, which are operating at the EU's border with IPA countries. They mainly contribute to the enlargement policy of the EU.

5 Interreg NEXT programmes, implemented at the EU external eastern and southern borders. Four cross-border programmes support cooperation actions with Ukraine and Moldova.

Interreg Strand B: Transnational Cooperation

14 transnational cooperation programmes will continue to support cooperation activities at larger scale in Europe and beyond.

4 transnational programmes, namely Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Danube Region, Interreg IPA Adrion and Interreg Alpine Space programme will directly support the Macro Regional Strategies covering their geographical area. 80% of their thematic concentration should be align with a Macro Regional Strategy,

Transnational programmes linked to Sea Basin Strategies, like Interreg Atlantic Area or Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin also apply the thematic concentration

Transnational programmes can benefit from additional funding from ERDF, IPA or NDICI.

C: Interregional Cooperation

The interregional cooperation strand aims at boosting the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building between regions (Art. 3(3) ETC Regulation (EU) 2021/1059).

For the period 2021-2027, four interregional cooperation programmes will continue:

Interreg Europe Interact URBACT ESPO

Allocation for this strand amounts to more than EUR 550 million.

The strand C programmes cover all 27 EU member states. Norway and Switzerland will continue to be part of the programmes, as for 2014-2020, with their own funds.

Moreover, URBACT will cover 5 IPA beneficiary countries (Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania). ESPON will, next to Norway and Switzerland, include Lichtenstein and Iceland.

Interreg D : Outermost Regions Programmes

With the new regulation 2021-2027, the specificities of the Outermost regions are recognised through a specific strand (Strand D)

It helps those regions to cooperate with neighbouring countries and territories in the most efficient and simple way.

Calls for proposals can be launched for combined funding under the ERDF, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) established by Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Strand D concerns 4 geographical areas:

Amazonia, Caribbean,

Middle Atlantic/Gulf of Guinea (MAC),

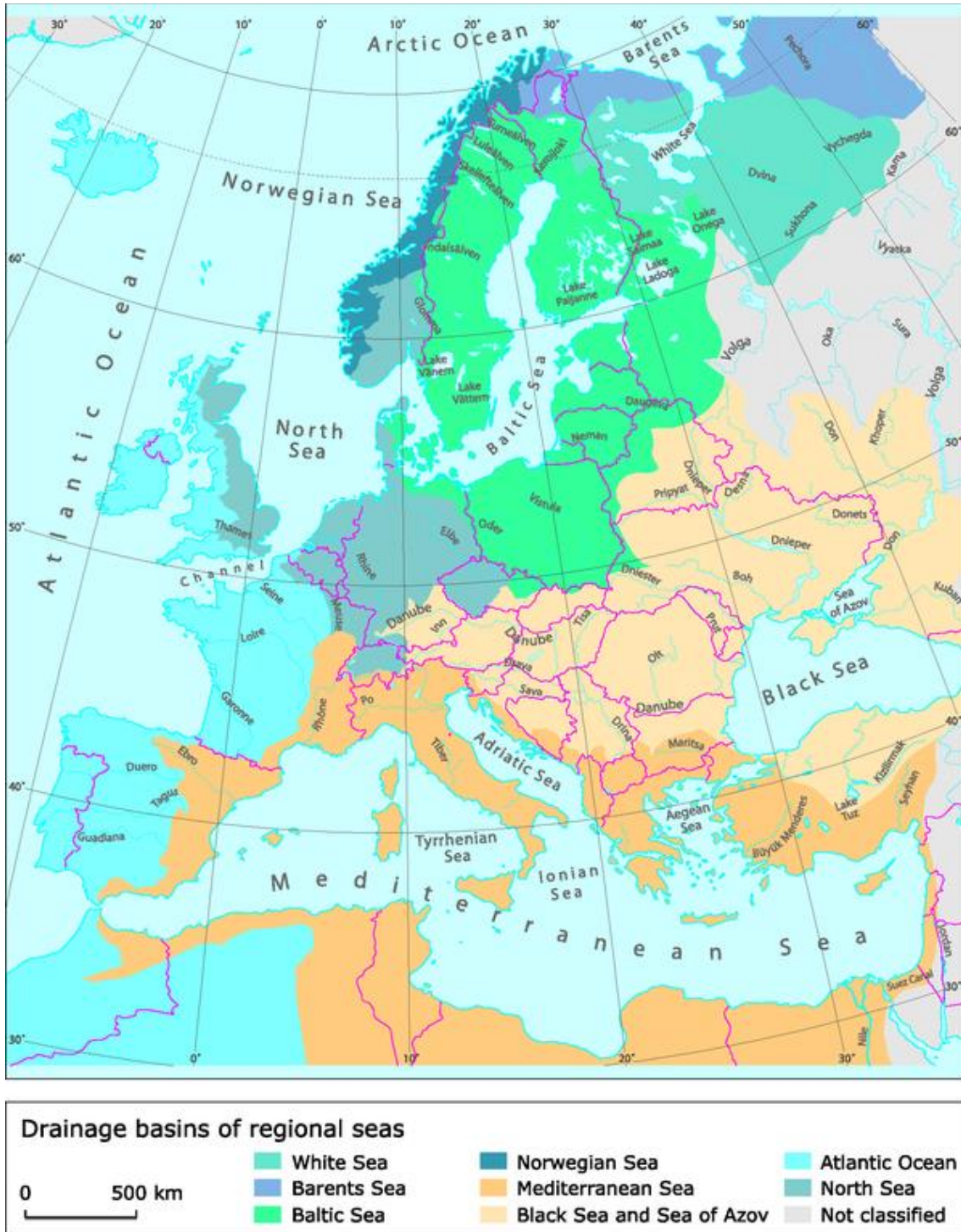
Indian Ocean,

Mozambique Channel.

The financial amounts represent 3.5% of the INTERREG amount or over EUR 280 million.

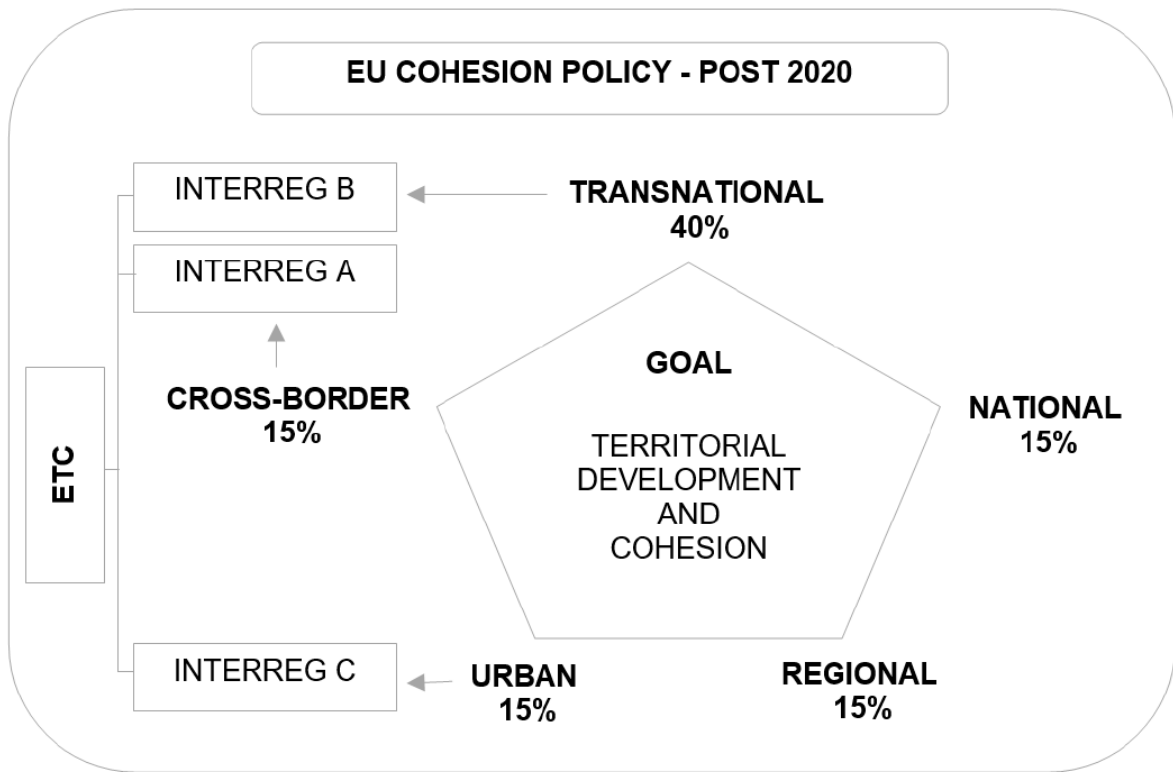
Source: EC

Annex 13 - European Sea Basins



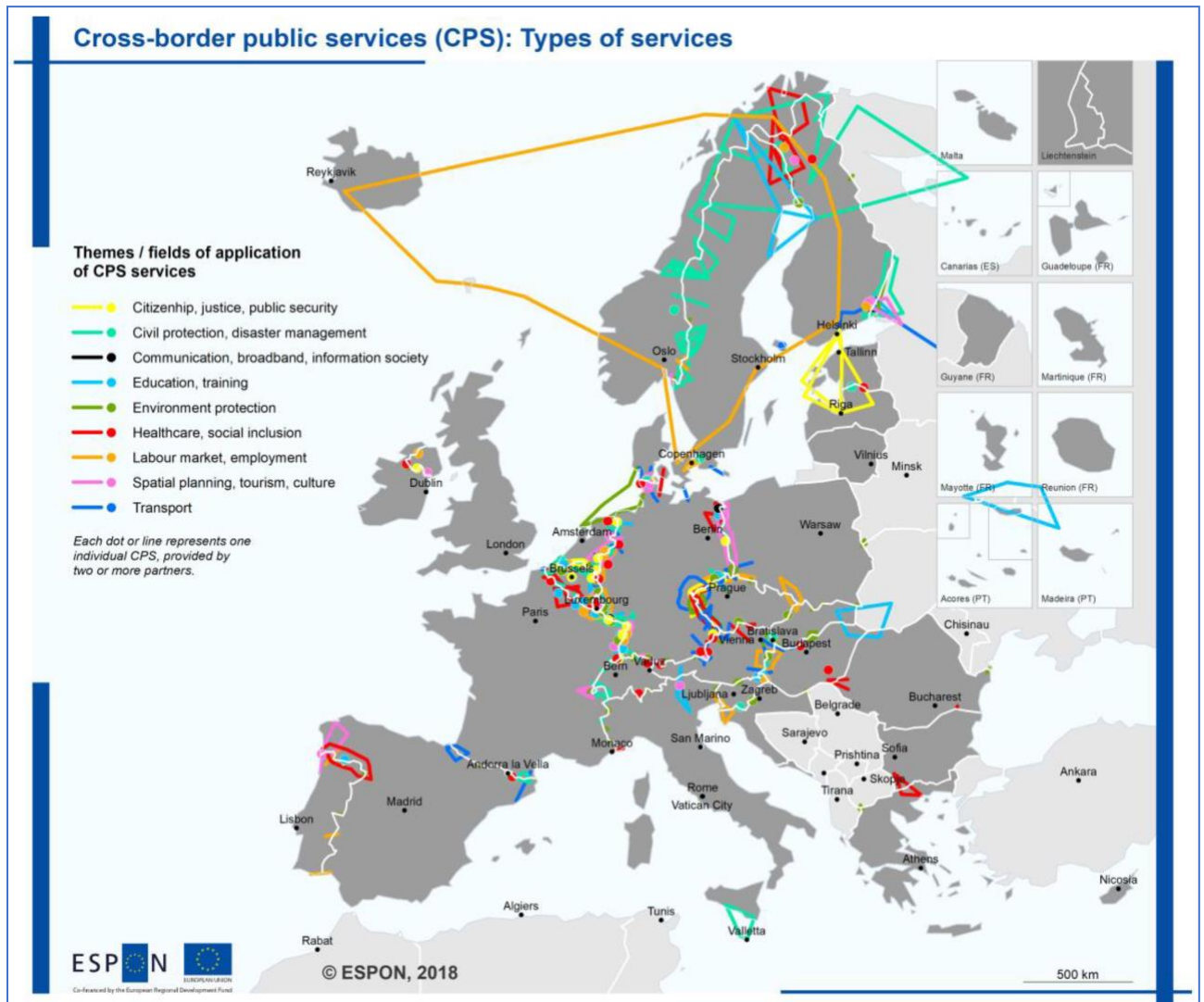
Source: EC

Annex 14 – Proposed Financial Package for EU Cohesion Policy post-2020



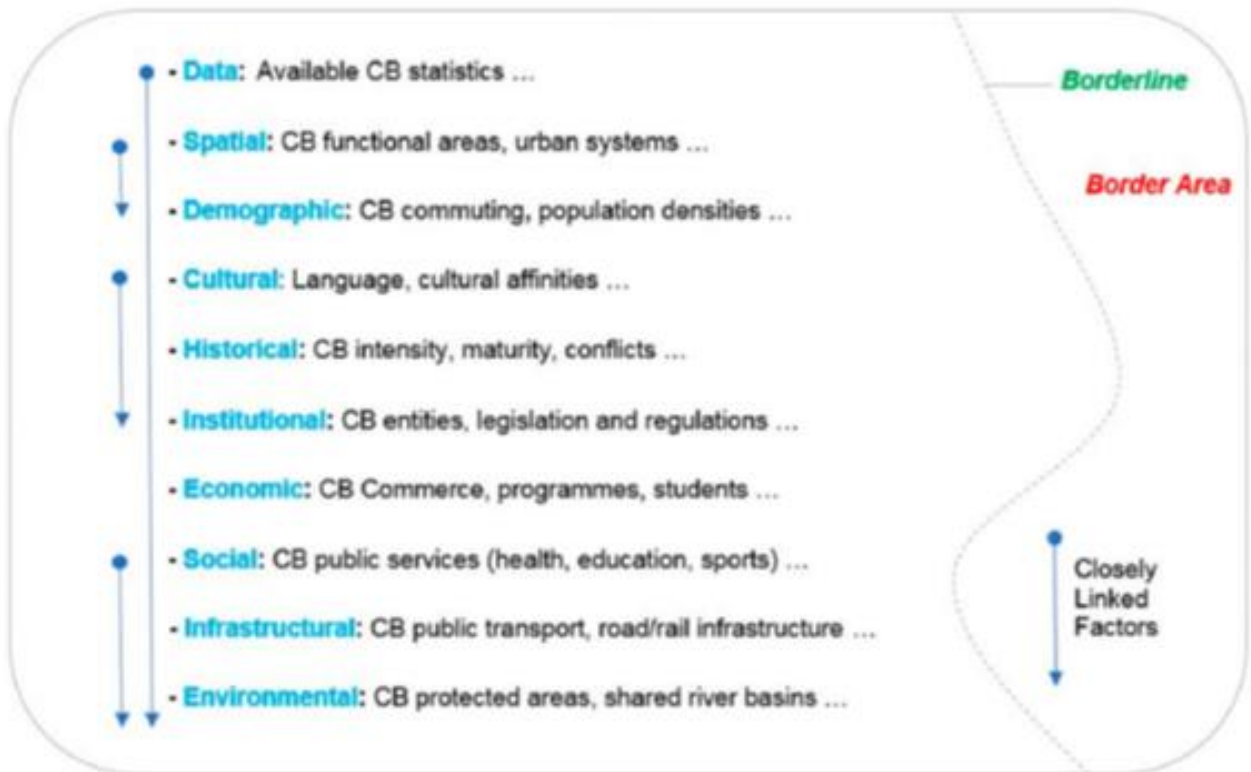
Source: Author

Annex 15 – Cross-Border Public Services in Europe



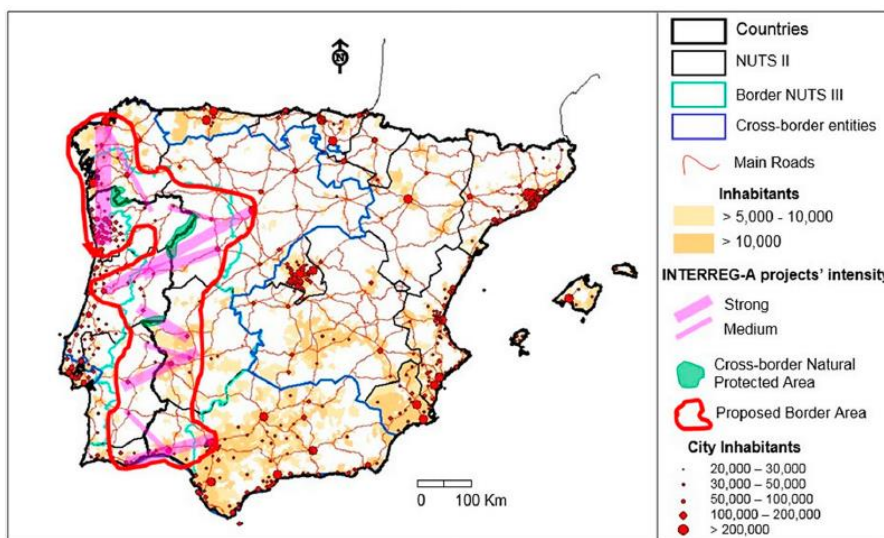
Source: ESPON

Annex 16A – Factors affecting the delimitation of Cross-Border regions



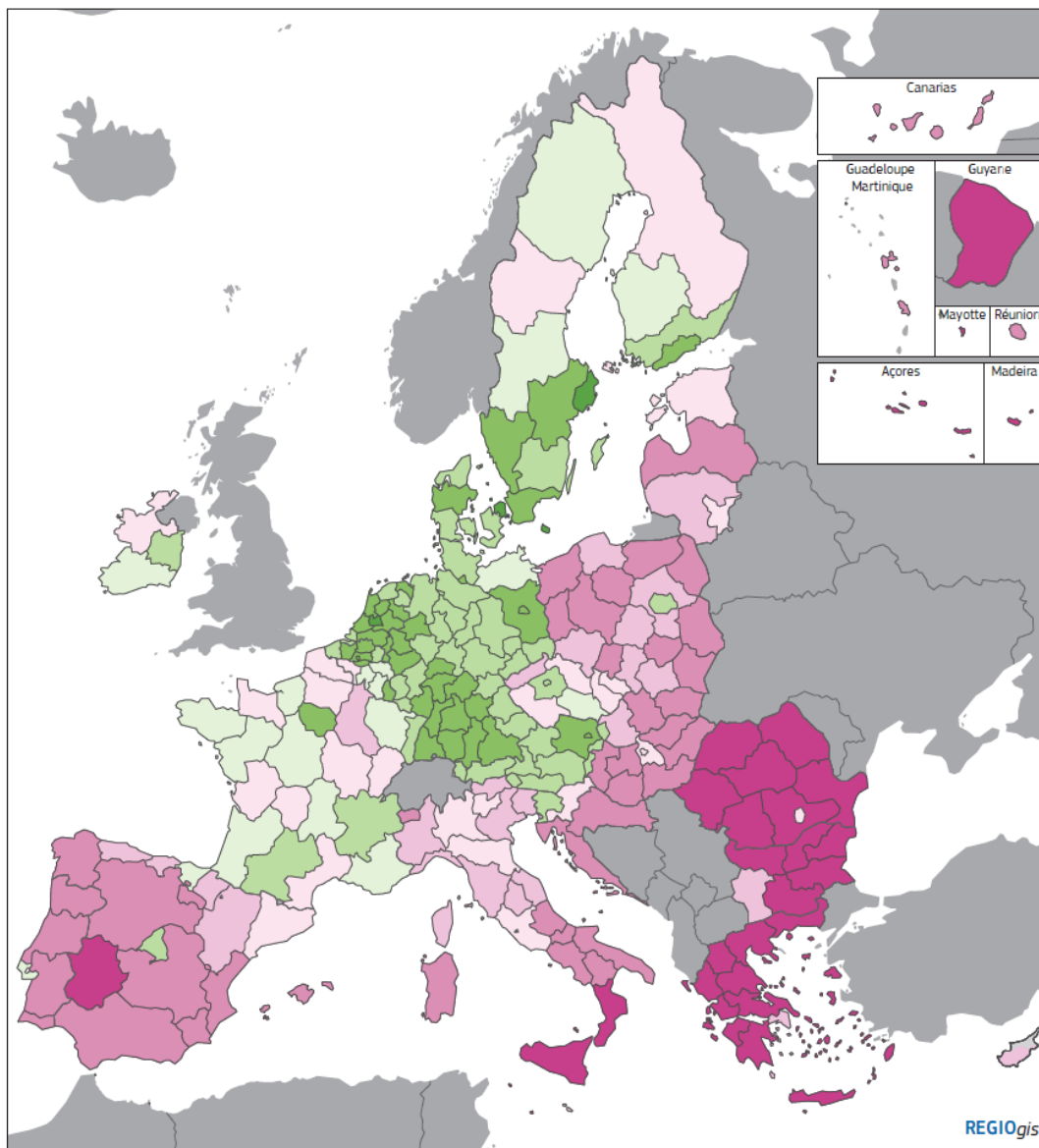
Source: Author

Annex 16B – Interreg-A PT-ES and NO-SE proposed delimitation areas



Source: Author

Annex 17 – Regional Competitiveness Index — 2019



Map 2.11 Regional Competitiveness Index — RCI 2019

Index: values range from low (negative) to high (positive)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ < -1 | ■ 0 – 0.2 |
| ■ -1 – -0.5 | ■ 0.2 – 0.5 |
| ■ -0.5 – -0.2 | ■ 0.5 – 1 |
| ■ -0.2 – 0 | ■ > 1 |

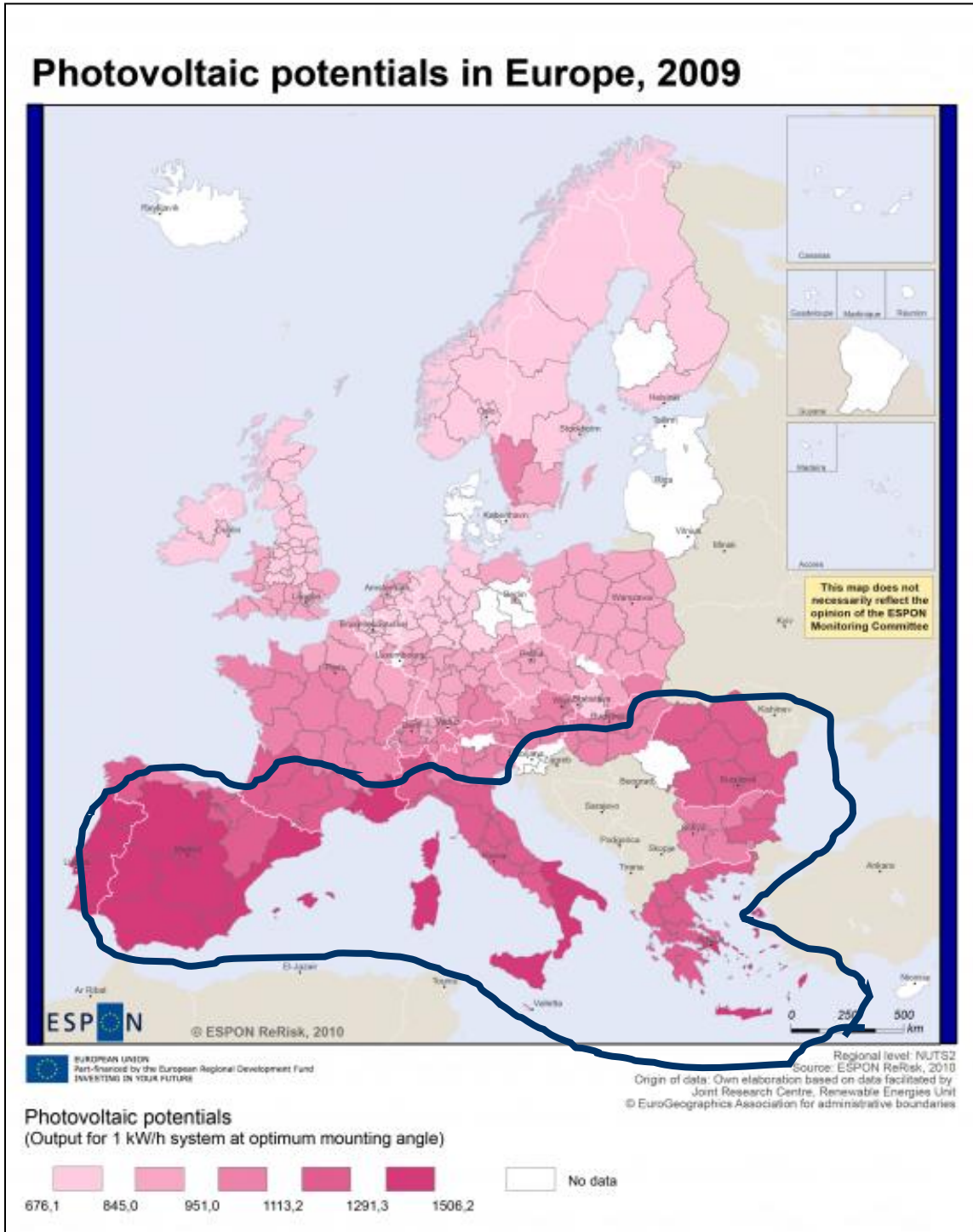
Source: DG REGIO.

0 500 km

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

Source: EC

Annex 18 – Photovoltaic Potentials



Source: EC

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial_en#:~:text=Interreg%20Strand%20A%20%3A%20Cross%20Border,at%20the%20EU's%20external%20border.

¹² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2213624X2100055?via%3Dihub>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy 8 field visits for the exchange of experiences

- 3 International dissemination meetings
- 4 thematic studies
- 8 Policy Improvements https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/trans-national_en