



Balkan Economic Forum 2022

Digital transformation, networking, collaborations and convergences in the Balkans

EUSAIR and EU Territorial Cooperation – vectors for the digitalisation of public and self-governing bodies in the Western Balkans



*IPA/EUSAIR/Accession Negotiations
Team, REGIO D1*

Thessaloniki, 5 October 2022

*#EU4Balkans, #EUSolidarity,
#StrongerTogether*

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1 A Geopolitical European Commission



Our strategic compass for the WB

#EUbudget, #EUSolidarity, #StrongerTogether

Our strategic compass for the WB

1. Western Balkans Agenda – Flagship 5 (2018):

- *“The development of the EU Digital Single Market contributes to developing businesses, creating growth, boosting productivity, promoting innovation, transforming public services and improving citizens' quality of life. It is essential that the Western Balkans are included in the EU's efforts to embrace technological change for them to be able to benefit from digital tools, ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for their citizens”*
- What has the EU done in this context?
 - ❖ Launch of the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans.
 - ❖ Involving the region in EU working groups and structures related to digital policy areas,
 - ❖ Complementing the ‘digital integration’ pillar of the Regional Economic Area,
 - ❖ Supporting preparation of broadband projects,
 - ❖ Capacity building in the area of cybersecurity and support to improve national cybersecurity strategies.

Our strategic compass for the WB

2. Key other developments in 2020:

- Enhancing the accession process A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans COM(2020) 57, 05/02/2020
- Adoption of the Enlargement Communication and Zagreb Summit Declaration (06/05/2020)
- Communication on a new European Research Area for Research and Innovation (COM(2020) 628, 30/09/2020)
- Adoption of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans (COM(2020) 641, 06/10/2020) referring to an: **Agenda for the Western Balkans on Research, Innovation, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport** as a vehicle supporting the deliverables of the Economic and Investment Plan
- Sofia Summit Declaration on Common Regional Market (09/11/2020) supporting a regional innovation ecosystem, **digital transformation**, skills development and green and circular economy
- Full endorsement of the Agenda text at Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platforms on Education and Training & Research and Innovation (02/12/2020)

Our strategic compass for the WB

3. At the EU-Western Balkans Brdo Summit (06/10/2021), launch by the Heads of State and Commissioner Gabriel of the Western Balkans Agenda on Research, Innovation, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport:

- comprehensive, long term strategy for cooperation with the Western Balkans
- contribute to the economic development and regional cooperation
- focused in three main axis: political, regional and thematic
 - ❖ Improving mobility and connectivity
 - ❖ Fostering cultural and regional cooperation

2 EUSAIR and EU Territorial Cooperation – boost for digitalisation



Thematic approach 2021-2027



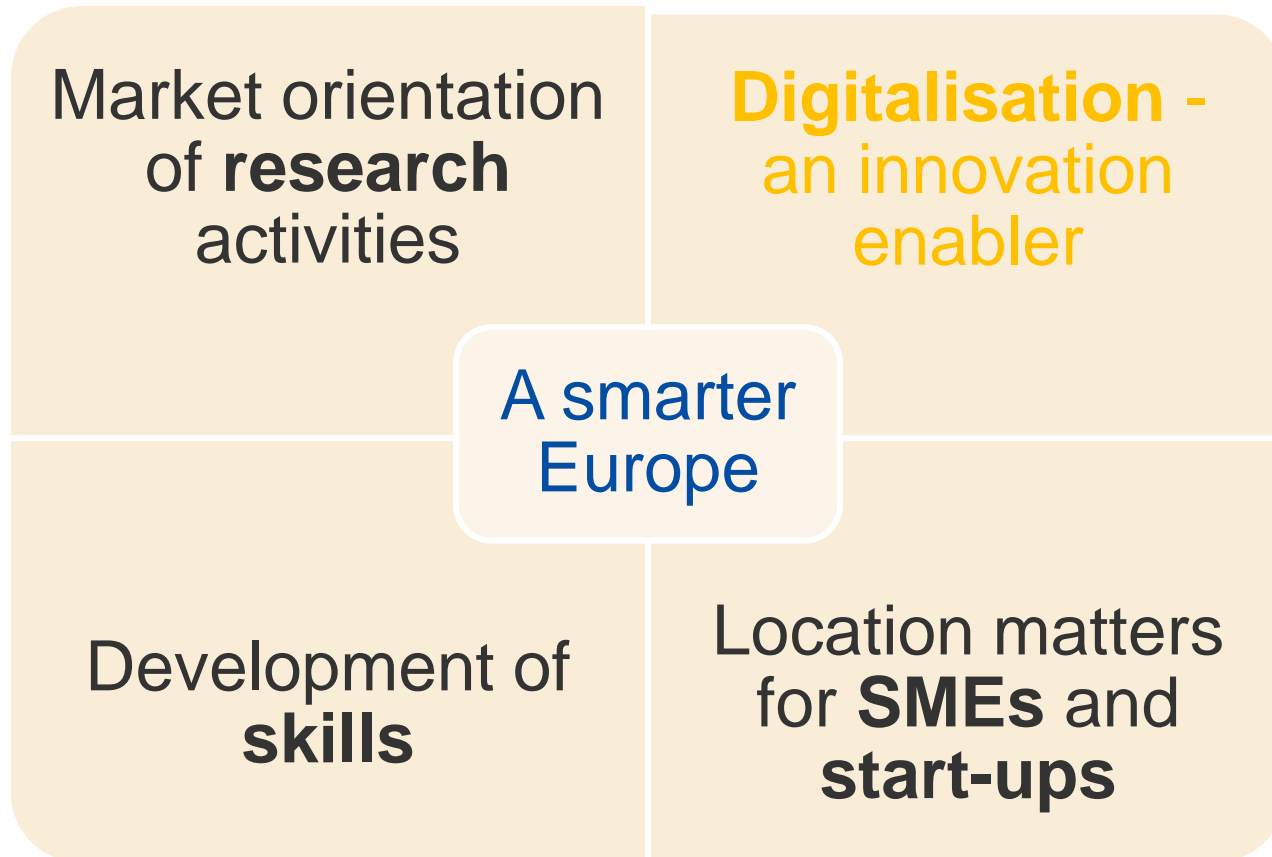
- The 5 CPR policy objectives
- +
- 2 Interreg-specific objectives (ISO)
 - “Cooperation Governance”
 - “Safer Europe”

Policy framework for the smarter Europe



- Smart Specialisation Communication COM(2017)376 final
- A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation COM(2018)306 final
- The New Industrial Policy Strategy COM(2017) 479 final
- Start-up and scale-up initiative COM(2016) 733 final
- New Skills Agenda: Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills COM(2016) 381 final
- The Renewed EU agenda for higher education COM(2017) 247 final

A smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation



Interregional cooperation in value chains

Digital transformation



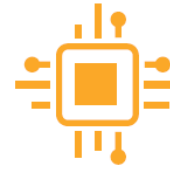
Supercomputing



Artificial
Intelligence



Cybersecurity
and Trust



Advanced
Digital Skills



Ensuring
the wide use of
digital technologies
across the economy
and society

SO1.2 Reaping the Benefits of Digitalisation

- **Priorities**

- ✓ ICT uptake in SMEs; B2B; B2C;C2C
- ✓ E-government
- ✓ E-inclusion, e-health, e-learning, e-skilling

- **Non priorities**

- ✓ IT equipment or applications not linked with the reform of public services/not interoperable
- ✓ Operating cost e.g. subscriptions to digital services

EUSAIR and Territorial Cooperation in the Western Balkans

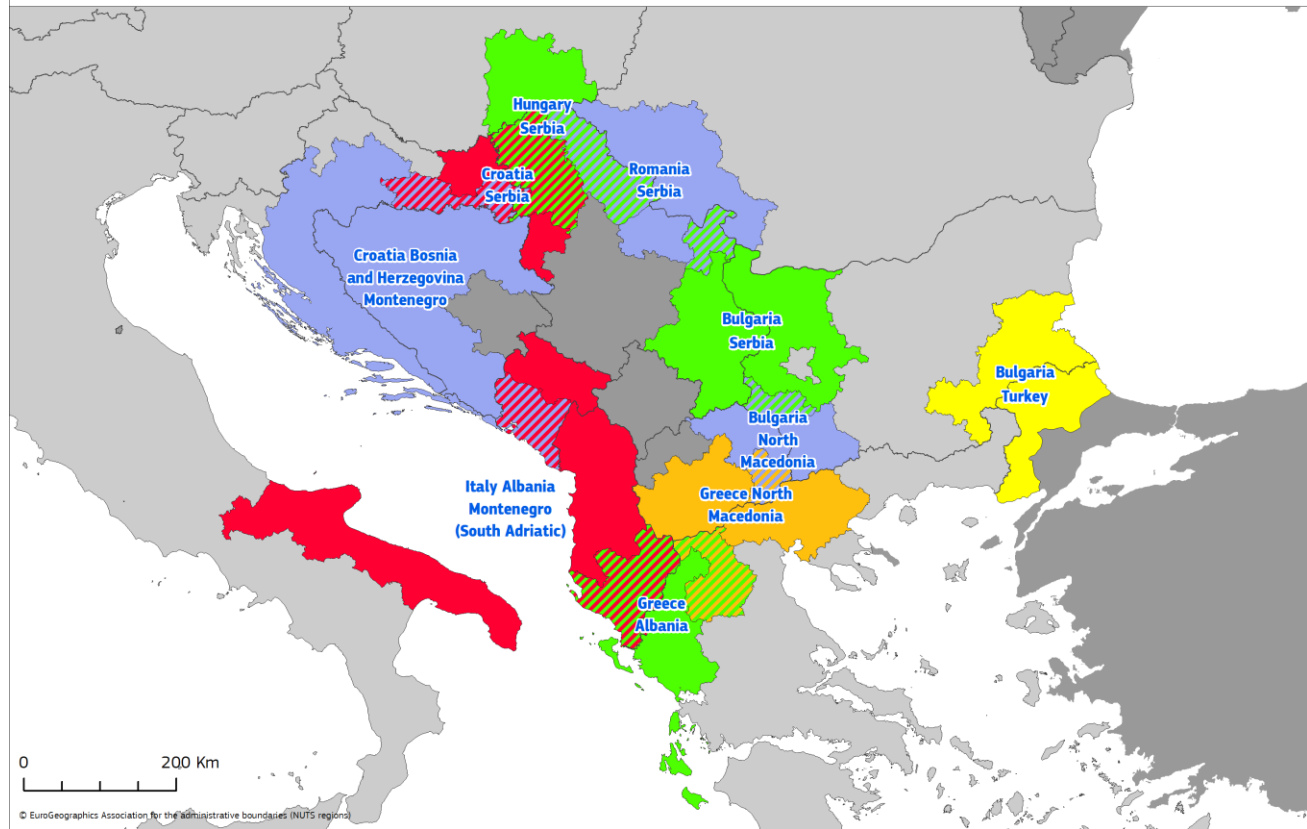
#EUBudget, #EUSolidarity, #StrongerTogether

Interreg IPA next gen

10 Interreg IPA CBC programmes

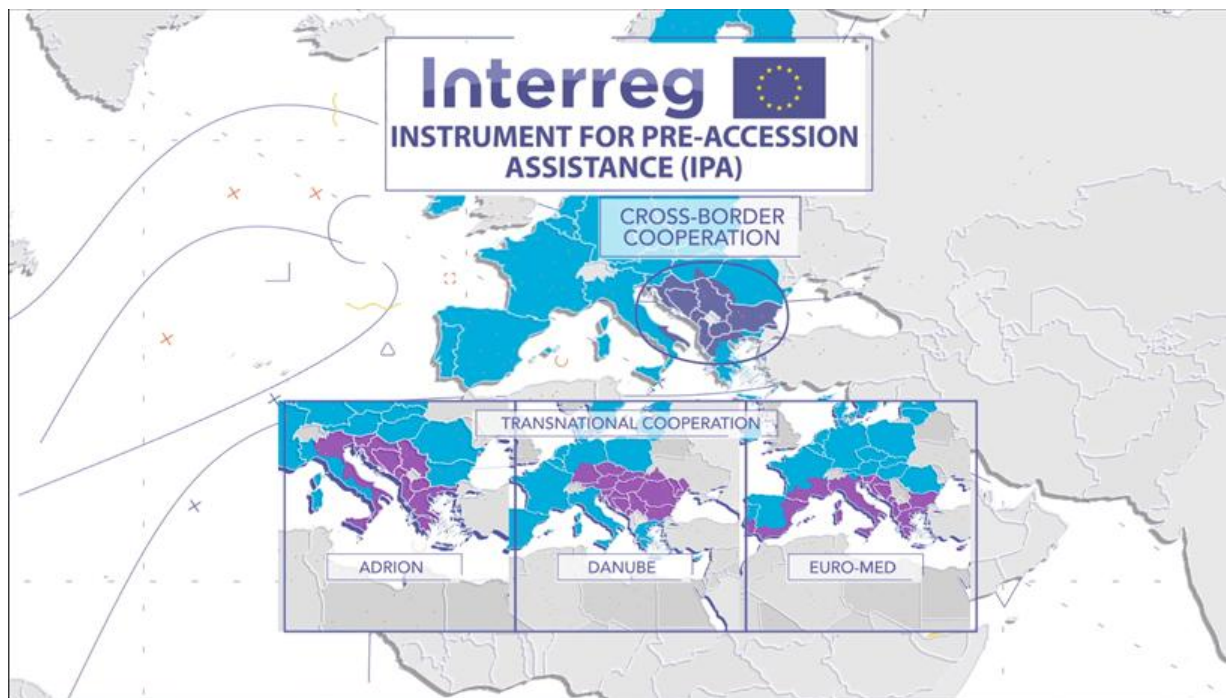
- Post 2020 Interreg IPA programmes -> **much more « IPA » oriented** programmes
- Post 2020 IPA allocation: **+6,2%** vs 2014-2020 allocation
- For all Interreg IPA CBC, IPA allocation > ERDF allocation

Interreg VI A IPA CBC programmes 2021-2027



Interreg IPA next gen

3 Interreg IPA TN & 1 Interreg IPA IR programmes



NEW

+ URBACT IV
(enlarged to 5
IPA countries)

NB: EURO NEXT MED &
NEXT Black Sea -> also
partially financed
through IPA.

- IPA Adrion -> supports EUSAIR -> its post 2020 IPA allocation has been multiplied by **351%** vs 2014-2020
-> main purpose: higher degree of territorial integration

EUSAIR MRS, a boosting platform for digital transformation, networking, collaborations and convergences in the Balkans

- A regional dimension that reconnects the WB to the EU;
- A horizontal cooperation based on equal footing;
- A convergence of interests on the enlargement between EU member and IPA countries;
- A capacity building effect;
- An emphasis on the relevance of territorial cooperation and cohesion;
- An inclusive approach towards stakeholders with participatory processes (consultation, engagement and mobilisation).



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black sleeveless top, black leggings, and black boots, is captured in a dynamic pose against a bright yellow wooden plank wall. She is holding a purple umbrella with her right arm extended upwards. Her left leg is kicked out to the side, and her left arm is extended horizontally. The overall mood is energetic and positive.

Let's work together!

Any Questions?

#ThisistheEU

#ThisIsTheEU



The EU is built
on solidarity

Thank you

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- Pictures, source: Unsplash