



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY

European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programme Implementation I
The Director

Brussels
REGIO.D.2/CM

Subject: Young volunteers to support post-2027 consultation on cooperation - webinar for programme authorities

Dear Interreg programme representatives,

The European Commission and its Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) are committed to actively involving young generations in territorial cooperation. This commitment drives the purpose of this letter.

As announced during the Interreg Annual Event in Santiago de Compostela on 26 October 2023, the Commission wishes to engage a broader spectrum of individuals and organisations in shaping the future of territorial cooperation and Interreg. In Santiago, we have therefore invited Interreg programmes to contribute to this consultation and seek opinions, comments, and suggestions on key questions such as the role Interreg should play, themes to be addressed and ways to strengthen cooperation in the next programming period post-2027. This collective effort is essential to define the future of Cooperation Policy: we need a stronger bottom-up approach as well as a more inclusive policymaking process.

To help you organise such a consultation process, I would like to invite you to host a volunteer through the Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY) initiative. As you certainly know, IVY is an initiative of the European Commission for all Interreg programmes and project beneficiaries based in the EU and all third countries taking part in Interreg programmes.

With their diverse skills and interests, IVY volunteers bring fresh ideas in shaping the consultation process. They can bring valuable assistance in organising stakeholders or citizens' events – or indeed in making effective use of new technologies. Each programme can define roles and concrete tasks for the volunteer(s) involved in the consultation. This can include tasks such as assisting in identifying stakeholders to consult, supporting the development of the consultation plan and facilitating stakeholder engagement. The latter includes providing stakeholders with necessary information, gathering their input through activities like organising public meetings, conducting online surveys, and setting up focus groups. Additionally, the volunteer can offer support in evaluating the consultation results.

Managed by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) on behalf of DG REGIO since 2017, IVY deploys volunteers in two strands: *Interreg Reporters* and *Interreg Project Partners*. Interreg Reporters support communication activities of the programme, such as writing articles and posts for online and offline communication media, interviewing stakeholders, and assisting in the organisation of events and conferences.

Interreg Project Partners undertake tasks for the Interreg project for which they are volunteering. Among other responsibilities, communication activities can also be expected from volunteers hosted by Interreg project beneficiaries. However, each host organisation collaborates with the volunteer to define the specific tasks and content.

Interreg Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats, National Authorities and Macro-regional Strategies can apply to host one additional IVY volunteer who will be actively engaged in the consultation process. Programmes can host up to two volunteers each year, either concurrently or consecutively. Hosting a third volunteer is possible, but this third volunteer must be involved in the implementation of the consultation. Regarding Interreg project beneficiaries, they can host a maximum of one volunteer per project year and per host organization. IVY volunteers can be recruited for a period of up to 6 months. More than 800 volunteers have been deployed so far, which is a resounding success.

Some programmes have not yet called upon young volunteers to date. We encourage programmes and projects to continue participating in this unique action attracting young generations to territorial cooperation. AEBR staff will be happy to help programmes with practical arrangements and advise on existing (legal and administrative) solutions to ensure that every interested programme can benefit from the young volunteers.

To get more information how IVY works, how it can help Interreg programmes to host a volunteer and how the support to the post-2027 process will look like, the Commission is organising a **webinar** scheduled at **10 AM CET on 11 December 2023** to which you are strongly encouraged to participate. You will receive the invitation to this online event in the coming days.

For more information on IVY, please contact AEBR's team at ivy@aebr.eu or visit <https://www.interregyouth.com/>.

For more information about the webinar, please contact clara.menasseyre@ec.europa.eu or Beniamino.BRUNATI@ext.ec.europa.eu

Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed

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