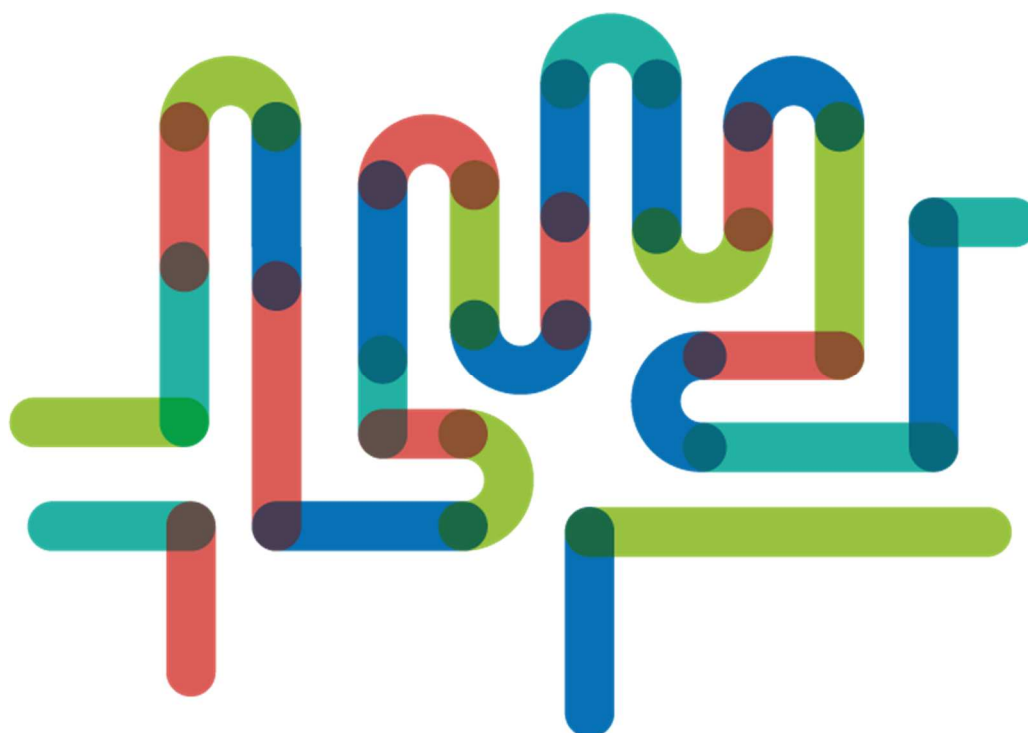


INTERREG VI-A ITALY-SLOVENIA 2021-2027

CONSULTATION POST 2027 PROGRAMME STAKEHOLDERS, CITIZENS AND SCHOOLS



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FOREWORD



The consultation focused on the potential topics of cross-border cooperation between Italy and Slovenia, for the next period 2028-2034.



The consultation process is being implemented through 2024 by all European INTERREG Programmes. The outcomes of the consultation will be transmitted to the European Commission, responsible for defining the legislative framework for the seven-year period after the year 2027.

This Report regards the outcomes of consultation on the future of Interreg Italy-Slovenia post-2027 for: Programme stakeholders, citizens and – inserted as an Annex and as a pilot-initiative - school children aged 9 to 11.

Respondents were **75 stakeholders** (48 from Italy and 27 from Slovenia), **36 citizens** (18 from Italy and 18 from Slovenia) and **297 pupils** (from Italy, Italian and Slovene nationalities).

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Not many stakeholders nor citizens displayed detailed answers/open comments.

Responses to questions with many options were quite fragmented.

Most stakeholders and citizens, both in Italy as in Slovenia, agree that living near the border is an advantage. None of the participants considered it a disadvantage though citizens reflected some challenges for residents into the comments (cross-border transit, greater sensitiveness towards illegal immigration).

By both stakeholders and citizens, cross-border cooperation allows exchanges and comparisons, multiculturalism, professional opportunities, complementarity of solutions to common problems, tolerance and acceptance/flexibility.

As for objectives of cooperation, there is a preference for PO1, PO2 and PO4 by all, with some differences among Italian and Slovene stakeholders. It is interesting that this is true also for citizens but for them also items under PO3 are important (in both countries).

Under PO1, a strong focus on research and innovation capacities and advanced technologies (SO 1.1) was brought forward by the stakeholders, whereas citizens confirmed this only in Italy, in Slovenia it seems more important to support companies (SMEs) and enable sustainable growth and competitiveness.

Under PO2, the stakeholders focused mainly on strengthening the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure and the promotion of climate change mitigation (SO 2.4. and 2.7), whereas Italian citizens pointed on renewable energy sources and in Slovenia to access to water and sustainable management of water resources. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and preservation of biodiversity were very important in both countries.

Under PO3, rather poorly quoted in general for stakeholders, the most important specific objective for them was SO2, i.e. a stronger focus on local mobility rather than on bigger networks. This choice towards local and regional action was confirmed for the citizens.

Under PO4, the most important specific objective for the stakeholders was SO5, i.e. equal access to health care and resilience of health systems. Similarly, for the citizens adding also "Labor markets, quality employment" in both countries.

Under ISO1, the most important specific objective for stakeholders and citizens is ISO1b promoting an efficient public administration, rather than increasing mutual trust, even though citizens' comments highlighted obstacles and difficulties connected with different culture and different approaches to work and conflict resolution based on cultural differences.

Stakeholders are interested in stronger networking and capitalization of projects, greater involvement of young people and youth NGOs, more policy-making for cross-border collaboration. Synergies with other

European Programmes/projects are considered very important and to be improved. Also, citizens are interested in the involvement of youth and in durability of projects results.

The strengthening of cross-border partnerships appears to be the aspect which worked best for stakeholders. Synergies with macro-regional strategies is not a popular item.

Both for stakeholders and citizens, language barriers need to be addressed, as well as other administrative obstacles and differences in legislation.

As for stakeholders, there seems to be the need for some infrastructure projects, mainly green infrastructure, infrastructures related to risk prevention, railway infrastructures, those for water supply and electricity, including green energy.

Citizens mentioned a lot of different ideas for better youth engagement, the possibilities include language courses (free or mandatory), the possibility to work on environment and cultural projects, organizing joint events, creating employment and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Citizens seem well aware of the existence of Interreg Italy-Slovenia projects: ITI, big and strategic projects were mentioned but there seems to be potential to invest in tourism, mobility, competitiveness.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

PO1

A smarter Europe

Stakeholders

Research and innovation capacities and advanced technologies (SO 1.1.).

Citizens

Support to companies (SMEs) and enabling sustainable growth and competitiveness.
Research and innovation.



PO2

A greener Europe

Stakeholders

Strengthening the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure and the promotion of climate change mitigation (SO 2.4. and 2.7).

Citizens

In Italy renewable energy sources and in Slovenia access to water and sustainable management of water resources. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and preservation of biodiversity were very important in both countries.

PO3

Stakeholders and Citizens

Rather poorly quoted in general for stakeholders, the most important specific objective for them was SO2, i.e. a stronger focus on local mobility rather than on bigger networks. This choice towards local and regional action was confirmed for the citizens.

PO4

A more social Europe

Stakeholders

SO5, i.e. equal access to health care and resilience of health systems.

Citizens

Similarly adding also labor markets and quality employment, in both countries.



IS01



Better governance

Stakeholders and Citizens

Promoting an efficient public administration, rather than just increasing mutual trust.

CONCLUSIONS / FINAL COMMENTS BY PUPILS AGED 9 to 11

These questionnaires allowed the collection of interesting data and opinions.

The knowledge of actual EU policies and matters is limited among the target group because of the young age and because school programs do not cover these subjects in such an early stage of education. On the other hand, the respondents demonstrated to have a clear understanding of the notions of “borders” and “cooperation”, which comes mainly from their personal experience.

From the answers that were given, it is clear that a positive view on the topic is prevalent among the majority of participants, who clearly perceive the border as an opportunity and an advantage. The answers demonstrate that the youngest share the European ideals and values and are willing to collaborate to shape the European future.

The full report is available on Programme website at <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/documents/post2027>
