

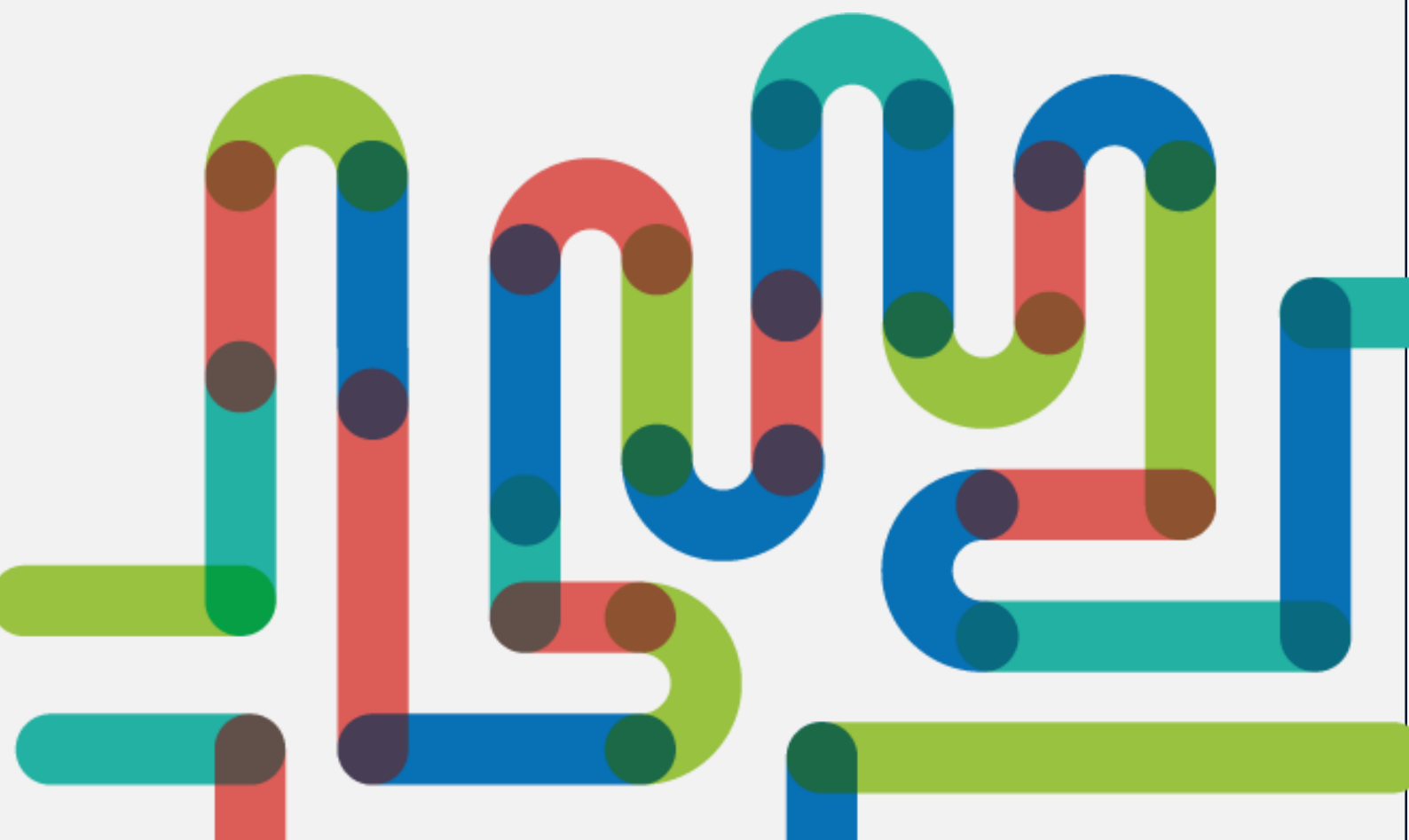
Students4Cooperation

Interreg High School Competition

3rd Edition

Guidelines

September 2026



Foreword

The Directorate of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, responsible for managing European funds for cross-border cooperation between Italy and Slovenia, invites high schools in Italy and Slovenia located within the area covered by the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme to participate in the third edition of the **Students4Cooperation** competition, which is organised by the Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia 2021–2027 cross-border cooperation Programme.

The competition is funded by the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, supported by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) of the European Commission through the *Youth4Cooperation* brand.

The competition aims to raise young people's awareness of European Union policies by giving students the opportunity to propose their own idea for a cross-border cooperation project.

This document represents the “High School Competition Guidelines”, and serves as the complete Info Pack, providing detailed rules and useful information on the procedures for participating in the competition.

The following documents are included with these Guidelines:

1. Annex 1 - Registration form and the consent form for the processing of personal data
2. Annex 2 - Template for the project proposal
3. Annex 3 - Grading table for the assessment of the project proposal (first phase) and grading table for the assessment of the presentation (second phase)
4. Annex 4 - Overview of Cohesion Policy, European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) and Interreg Italy-Slovenia

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1. Who we are

1.1 Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme

The Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme is one of the many Interreg Programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of the European Cohesion Policy. Interreg Programmes support cooperation between cross-border areas and local stakeholders to reduce disparities in development, economic growth and quality of life across European regions, while strengthening the role of borders as drivers of cooperation and opportunities rather than obstacles.

Interreg Italy-Slovenia finances cooperation projects implemented jointly by Italian and Slovenian partners. Its mission is to achieve *"Enhanced cross-border cooperation for improving the quality of life of the population, preserving and promoting cultural and natural heritage and enhancing the climate neutrality of the Programme area through sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth"*.

The area involved in the **Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia 2021-2027 Programme** covers a total surface of 19,841 km² and is home to approximately 3 million inhabitants. The **Programme area** covers:

- the whole Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Province of Venice on the Italian side and,
- Primorsko-notranjska, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška regions on the Slovenian side.



To achieve its mission, the Programme is guided by the following objectives:



For more information, please refer to Annex 4.

For more information on the projects funded by the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme 2021-2027, visit the Programme [website](#).

1.2 Youth4Cooperation

The Youth4Cooperation brand is an initiative of the European Commission that brings together several initiatives dedicated to young people within the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). It encompasses activities targeting different age groups, from primary school children to young professionals. In addition to the Students4Cooperation competition, the Youth4Cooperation brand also includes:

- **Interreg Volunteer Youth:** a volunteer programme dedicated to young people between 18 and 30 years of age who are involved in Interreg programme and project activities;
- **Cross-Border Ambassadors:** an initiative promoted by the Border Focal Point Network that aims to involve young people in dialogue with institutions in the field of cross-border cooperation;
- **Youth Councils of the European Union's macro-regional strategies:** collective bodies created within the strategies that actively collaborate in their definition and implementation.

2 Description and objectives of the competition

The **competition aims to engage young people in cooperation** activities and increase their awareness of European Union policies that shape citizens' everyday lives. It also provides students with an opportunity to express their vision of European cooperation and contribute to creating more inclusive and opportunity-rich territories where young people choose to stay and build their future.

Participating teams of high school students are invited to prepare and submit a written proposal for a cross-border cooperation project between Italy and Slovenia.

The project proposal should outline the benefits it would bring to the local community and the wider cross-border area, while involving partners and stakeholders from both Italy and Slovenia.

The project proposal should focus on one of the themes referred to in section 4.1, while the required format is outlined in section 4.2.

Students are allowed to use any publicly available sources for their research. However, the final submission must be their own original work, i.e. copy-pasting or AI-generated text is not welcome.

For more detailed information on participants, rules and procedures, please refer to the following sections. These guidelines, together with all annexes, are available on the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme [website](#).

3 Participants

This competition is open to all high schools (in Italy) and middle schools (in Slovenia) within the Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia 2027 Programme Area (see Section 1.1 for details on the Programme area).

The competition is an extracurricular activity and is not linked to any specific school subject. Students and teachers from all subject areas are therefore welcome to participate on a voluntary basis.

Students participating in the competition must be enrolled in one of the last two years of secondary school during the 2026/2027 school year: 4th or 5th year in Italy, and 3rd or 4th grade in Slovenia.

Each team may consist of a maximum of six (6) students, who are accompanied by one teacher. The teacher is responsible for registering the team before the deadline, maintaining contact with the organisers, and accompanying the team throughout the relevant stages and activities of the competition. **Participation is open to teachers of all subjects.**

The organisers reserve the right to cancel the competition if the number of teams registered is lower than six.

4 Themes and format of the project proposal

4.1 Themes

Each team must choose one theme on which to focus the project proposal.



The themes are inspired by the four Policy Objectives of the Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia Programme, as summarised in Section 1.1 above and in Annex 4 and take into account the recommendations set out in the Declaration by Young People on the Future of Territorial Cooperation, adopted on 15 November 2024 ([Info regio - The Declaration by young people on the future of territorial cooperation](#))

The project idea shall propose an innovative solution to the challenge presented by the chosen theme. The **four themes** are:

1. **Making cross-border territories more appealing to younger generations, particularly in terms of mobility, education, employment and civic participation.**
2. **Strengthening links between education, vocational training and the labour market to create meaningful opportunities for the future.**
3. **Fostering greater integration and interaction among young people across border regions.**
4. **Strengthening dialogue between young people, institutions and local communities, creating the conditions and providing the tools for young people to have their voices heard.**

Every project proposal should present **an innovative solution to the challenges identified within the chosen theme.**

4.2 Format

4.2.1 First phase

The **Project proposal** should be submitted as a digital document of up to **1000 words** (font: Times New Roman, 11).

For the preparation of the project proposal, please use the template as in Annex 2. The template is designed to help students develop their proposal and ensure a consistent format for easier evaluation and selection.

The Project proposal should be prepared in the following **language combinations**:

- Italian and English **or**
- Slovenian and English

Please note that the English version of the project proposal can be a translation of the original text.

Translation tools may be used to prepare translations. However, translations shall be carefully checked so that both English and Italian/Slovenian versions match. Recommended translation tools are:

- [DeepL](#)
- [PONS](#)
- [ETranslation](#)

4.2.2 Second phase

Only the **finalist teams** will proceed to the second phase of the selection procedure (see Section 5 below) and will be invited to **present their project to the jury**.

The project idea must be presented **in English**. Each team will have a **maximum of 15 minutes** to present its work. **The format of the presentation is up to the students**: in addition to a traditional presentation, teams may choose to use a video or any other format they consider suitable for effectively presenting their project idea. The jury may ask questions about the project idea following the presentation.

The project ideas will be **presented in person on 19 March 2027**. **The venue and schedule of the event will be confirmed at a later date and communicated to participants in due time**. The order of presentations will be determined by a draw held before the presentations begin.

The winning team will be announced at the end of the presentations.

5. Procedure

The procedure consists of several steps:

5.1 Registration

Each teacher must register their team by completing the application form (Annex 1) and sending it by email to info.itaslo@regione.fvg.it **no later than 31st October 2026 at 23:59 CET**. Please include the following in the subject line of the email: **"Students4Cooperation – 3rd edition"**.

5.2 Submission of project proposal

The written proposals must be submitted in **PDF** to info.itaslo@regione.fvg.it by email **no later than 18th December 2026 at 23:59 CET**. Proposals must meet the requirements set out in Section 4.2.1. The email subject line should read **"Students4Cooperation – 3rd edition"**.

5.3 Assessment and Selection

The selection process will be carried out by a jury composed of the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme staff, a representative of the European Commission, and a representative of Interreg Programmes and organisations promoting activities for young people.

The Project Proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the provided in Annex 3.

The jury can consider a proposal ineligible if:

- it is submitted after the deadline set in Section 5.2;
- it does not focus on one of the themes as in Section 4.1;
- it does not meet the requirements set in Section 4.2.1 (bilingual, exhaustive concept);
- it does not benefit local cross-border communities or involve actors from both sides of the border.

The selection process will consist of two phases.:

5.3.1 First phase

The jury will:

- 1) Assess the eligibility of the proposals and their compliance with formal requirements (section 4);
- 2) Assess the content of the proposals, based on the criteria set out in the grading table as in Annex 3 - Section 1;
- 3) Create a **temporary ranking list**;

The ranking list will be published on the Programme website ([link](#)) **by 29th January 2027**. The outcome of the selection process will be communicated by email to all participating teams.

5.3.2 Second phase

The second phase of the selection process gives students the opportunity to present their project proposals in a clear and creative way, demonstrating their language skills and communication abilities. Only the 10 teams with the highest scores will proceed to the second phase.

The presentation format is described in Section 4.2.2. The jury will evaluate the presentations based on the criteria set out in Annex 3 - Section 2, and will establish the final ranking list.

6. Selection criteria

In the **first phase**, each proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the grading table (Annex 3 – Section 1). Each member of the jury will assess every proposal and award a **maximum of 30 points**.

Only the 10 teams with the highest scores will proceed to the second phase.

In the **second phase**, each presentation will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the grading table (Annex 3 – Section 2). Each member of the jury may award a **maximum of 20 points** for each presentation.

The points awarded in the second phase will be added to the points received in the first phase. The **winning team will be the team with the highest total score across both phases of the selection process**.

If two teams have the same total score at the end of the two phases, the team with the higher score in the first phase will be declared the winner.

7. Prize

The winning team will win a **study visit to Brussels**, planned for May 2027. The visit will give students the opportunity to learn more about the European Union through visits to the main European institutions, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region Liaison Office in Brussels, and other organisations and institutions working at European level.

8. Visibility of the project proposals

All eligible project proposals will be published on the Interreg VI-A 2021-2027 Italy-Slovenia Programme website and official social media channels, to share students' ideas and inspire future cooperation projects.

The winning project proposal may be presented at relevant future Programme events, providing with an opportunity to connect with key Programme stakeholders. This could also help further develop the idea into a potential proposal for a future Interreg project.

9. Final provisions and data protection

The proposals published on the Programme website and official social media channels will include information about the authors (e.g. names of students and professors involved, class and name of the school, picture and/or videos).

Once the project proposals have been published on the Programme website and made publicly available, the organisers are not responsible for any use of such material by third parties.

By participating in the competition, participants:

- Accept the rules of the competition included in these Guidelines and its Annexes;
- Authorise the Programme authorities to publish the works and the names of the authors on the official social media channels and website of the Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia programme;

After the conclusion of the initiative, the authors may freely publish, share or otherwise use their contributions.

The processing of participants' personal data is necessary for the organisation of the competition and for the evaluation and selection of the best project proposals. The processing of personal data received as part of a competition will be done in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (GDPR). Further information is provided in the PRIVACY STATEMENT PURSUANT TO ARTICLES 13 AND 14 OF REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 of the Interreg VI-A Italy-Slovenia Programme 2021-2027)

The personal data processed may include:

- a) names, surnames, class and school of each participating student as well as of the teachers and their contact details;
- b) for finalist teams: photographs, materials used during the second phase of the selection process.
- c) additional information provided in the application form. This data is important in terms of establishing an applicant's eligibility to apply for the competition.