

Annual Implementation Report 2021

CITIZENS' SUMMARY

The Annual Implementation Report of the Interreg Euroregion Meuse-Rhine programme (Interreg EMR) for 2021 provides detailed insight into the programme's activities between 1 January and 31 December 2021. This Citizens' Summary presents **key points and highlights** from the year.

The European Union strives to reduce disparities in the levels of development, growth and quality of life in and across Europe's regions. Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine contributes directly to this objective by supporting cross-border collaboration between the **Netherlands, Belgium and Germany**.



The Year 2021 in Numbers*

This year, our cooperation projects saw **312 partners** in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium work on shared goals and building **long-lasting networks and partnerships**.

Objectives of Interreg EMR

We aim to create **a favourable cross-border atmosphere**, to

encourage people to seek and also build business opportunities and other forms of **cooperation** beyond their national limitations.

Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine has selected four investment priorities for the period 2014-2020:

- Innovation
- Economy
- Social inclusion and education
- Territorial development

Also in 2021 we funded projects in all of our priority axes. On the right you will find a graphic that breaks down the distribution of all of our projects (including closed projects) according to priority axes.

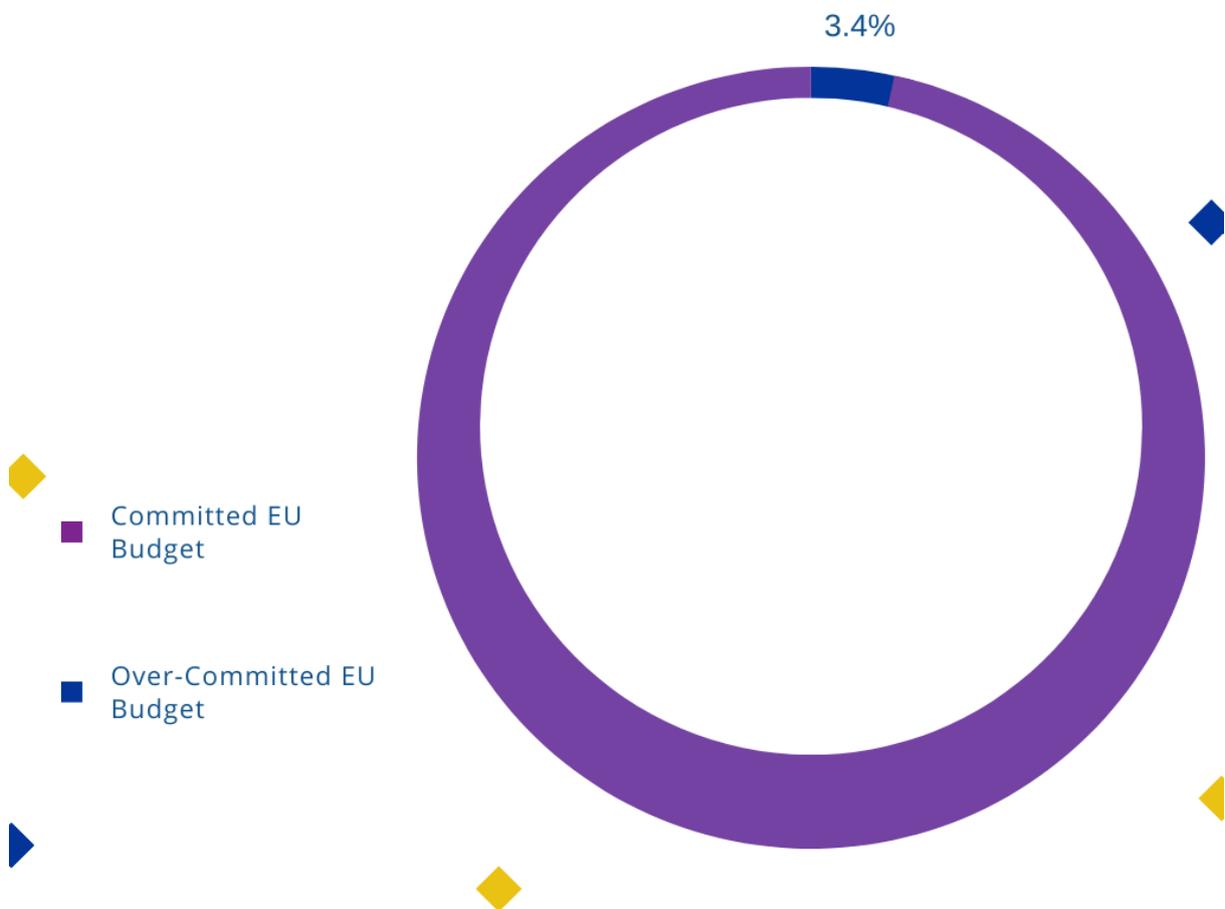


Budget

From 2014-2020, the European Union provided a budget of **EUR 96 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** for cross-border projects in our programme area, the border region of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Furthermore, EUR 44 million are envisioned to be invested in

Interreg EMR projects by other means of funding (e.g. regional or private funding) within the programme period.

As indicated below, until the end of 2021, the programme has committed almost **EUR 99.5 million** of the European Union funding through 7 regular calls for projects and the specific COVID-call. This means that the programme is operating in **an over-commitment of 3,4%**, as, according to the team's financial monitoring, the programme will receive **returning funds** from some of our projects.



These returning funds will be committed to the **Call 9 in 2022** for projects focused on the **flooding problems** in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. Any residual budget may be made available for a **final Call 10** for projects at short notice in 2022.

Here, it is important to note that while the end of 2020 has marked the **end of the programme period (2014-2020)**, the eligibility period for the projects selected in this programme period runs **until December 2023**.

Events

Our programme has started off 2021 by organising **several stakeholder events** in January, February and March concerning the **next programme period**.



On March 25 and March 31, 2021 we organised the **Lead Partner event** for all of the Lead Partners of the Call 6 projects and three months later, the programme also organised a **Call 8 launch event**.

In September, the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine team has organised an **European Cooperation Day** event during which the public could get to know several of our projects and see how the European funding improves the situation in our region.



In November the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine team presented its new programme during **Limburg Leads** as well as in the **Europe in Rhineland-Palatine event** and December saw the programme taking part in the **Regiostar Award ceremony**.



Furthermore, our projects have organised **18 kick-off and final events** as well as **several workshops** and other **online events**.

Call 6

The **sixth call for projects** of the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme has closed on November 10, 2020. This call provided funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a maximum **co-financing rate of 50%**. Applicants could apply under all **four priority axes** and **19 consortia** have come forward to do so.

The Monitoring Committee has taken the final decision on the selection of projects in the beginning of **February 2021**. **13 new projects** receive funding under the framework of Call 6 of the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine 2014-2020.

Call 6 Projects

The following projects have been awarded with European funds in the sixths call of the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme:

- **Blockchain4Prosumers - BC4P - € 1.399.927 EU-funding:** The aim of this project is the development of a concrete, innovative blockchain key technology for a secure energy market using renewables.
- **ET2SMEs - € 1.149.995 EU-funding:** This project will ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are profiting from the economic and social effects of the future implementation of the Einstein telescope in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine.
- **Food Screening EMR - € 953.040 EU-funding:** This project aims to support local SMEs in the transition to sustainable agriculture.

- **euPrevent PROFILE - € 741.084 EU-funding:** the project “prevention of loneliness in old age in the Euregio”, or just PROFILE, stimulates cross-border cooperation in order to prevent and combat the undesirable loneliness of older people.
- **EMRWINE - € 639.674 EU-funding:** The main aim of the project is to create a cross-border network in viticulture in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.
- **COMPAS - € 1.079.869 EU-funding:** The COMPAS project will increase the organisational capacity in the medical sector by developing a comprehensive training course addressing health care, patient safety, and innovation.
- **Skills4you - € 1.408.189 EU-funding:** The aim of this project is to strengthen the skills of teachers concerning online teaching and to enable them to tailor their approach to the different abilities and requirements of the students.
- **EMRLingua - € 1.359.242 EU-funding:** This project aims to strengthen the importance of the neighbouring languages: French, German, and Dutch as well as intercultural competencies.
- **EMR Digital Twin Academy - € 2.058.134 EU-funding:** The border region between Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany has the potential to become an area of excellence for digital twin technologies.
- **FUNFORLAB - € 605.374 EU-funding:** The FUNFORLAB project will encourage medical professionals in general and facilitate more persons to work as medical-technical assistants.
- **EUTech - € 633.978 EU-funding:** This project will improve the position of STEM subjects among students, but also among teachers.

- **Crossquality - € 149.983 EU-funding:** The project asks about the quality of cross-border cooperation in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine and which influence Interreg projects have on the region.
- **From Waste to Profit - € 2.600.341 EU-funding:** The project partners aim to strengthen the waste management within SMEs in the programme area.

Call 8

On August 17, 2021, the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme has opened a **special call** for projects with an **energy focus**. This Interreg EMR call was open for initiatives that contribute to a **more efficient use of resources** in SMEs with solutions in the fields of green hydrogen, energy communities, the use of low-voltage direct current technology, and the development of local production of technology for integrated photovoltaics.

With this call for projects, the programme and its partners are investing more than **€ 3.8 million** in the climate-friendly economic cooperation in the border region, with an European contribution of more than **€ 1.9 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**. The Call 8 projects have received their grant letters in the beginning of 2022 and started their work now, which means that the programme is supporting **63 projects in 2022**.

Press

In 2021 our projects and Interreg EMR have been represented in the press and media several times. The following selection will give you a none-exhaustive insight into the **media coverage 2021**:

RegioStars Awards

The Regiostars awards are “*Europe’s label of excellence for EU-funded projects, which demonstrate innovative and inclusive approaches to regional development*” (Regiostars 2021 Guide for Applicants). In 2021, the Interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme has supported four different projects with their Regiostars applications.



REGIOSTARS 2021

From these four suggested projects, the TREE project made it under the 25 finalists and ended up **winning the REGIOSTAR award** in the FAIR EUROPE category (jury’s choice). TREE is therefore **one out of three Interreg projects** that has been awarded with a REGIOSTARS award this year.

Future Programme Period



In the next programme period, which will be running from 2021 until 2027, our programme will be called **Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)**. During this upcoming programming period, we will continue to support **interregional cooperation** in our programme area.

The programme is working hard on the **future programme**. To guide the overall process, take formal decisions on the content of the future programme and select

our thematic priorities, we have set up a **working group**. The working group is made of delegates from the partner regions who take the decisions. An observer from the European Commission as well as the programme's managing authority take part, but without any decision-making powers. We have also hired **external experts** to help us draft the new programme.

The current **envisioned programme focus** will be:

- Industrial transition
- Greener society
- Healthier citizens
- Tourism
- Living and working across borders

As stated above, in 2021, the programme has also organised specific **expert meetings** on these topics in order to gather further insights **from the stakeholders** themselves. The programme is currently expecting to sign the **official partnership agreement** in March 2022 in order to send the future programme to the European Commission for approval.

* These numbers are based on our internal monitoring. Please understand these numbers as a minimal amount, as the possibility cannot be ruled out that further exist.

You want to know more about Interreg EMR?

... Please do not hesitate to contact us!

On our **website**, www.interregemr.eu, you can find out more about us as well as all of the projects that we support.



Would you like to receive more information about a call and the application process?

Please get in touch your regional contact person.

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