

Stories of European cooperation

Italy and its neighbours



Want to read more interesting stories about how Interreg is benefiting people all over Europe? Check out the Interreg Highlights blog, launched on European Cooperation Day 2018! Click on www.interreg.eu

Introduction

“Interreg Volunteer Youth” (IVY) is an initiative of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG Regio) and the Association of European Border Region (AEBR) promoting volunteering experiences in cross-border, transnational and interregional programmes and projects, all of them falling within the scope of European Territorial Cooperation i.e. Interreg. IVY emphasises solidarity and cooperation across the EU, and as such is part of the European Solidarity Corps.

With IVY, young people take part in Interreg programmes and their related projects and promote cooperation amongst European regions by getting involved in the implementation of projects and by informing about their results in a new way. Interact and AEBR present this publication, in which young people hosted in Italy tell about their experience as IVY volunteers: we can learn how Andrea, Clémence, Élodie, Mattia, Piero and Silvia contributed in the regions of Italy to enhance solidarity with other regions in the European Union.

The volunteers were involved in different projects and their testimonies show diverse aspects of European cooperation: local authorities from different countries can join efforts to improve health services or to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; to enrich the common cultural heritage as well as strengthen the fight to reduce pollution or to safeguard biodiversity. Interreg is about sharing and coordinating resources to implement projects which are costly but yet important for the future, following borders of a natural area rather than national ones. This way, Interreg benefits local communities - as the volunteers learn.

These stories show what cooperation allows local actors to achieve, and how relevant the input of regional policy-makers is in a European context. Thanks to European Structural and Investment Funds regions are empowered to realise the projects which best suit their citizens’ needs and to do so collaborating with other regions, making their development more sustainable and inclusive.

Andrea, Clémence, Élodie, Mattia, Piero and Silvia enhanced their sense of European solidarity, citizenship and civic engagement, while Italian regions’ endeavour to cooperate with their neighbours advances further. Since March 2017, about 300 volunteers are supporting Interreg all over the European Union.



Martín Guillermo Ramírez
Secretary General of AEBR

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Nature lovers: this project is for you!



How to protect and maintain biodiversity in practical terms?

First of all, we need to map an area and assess the state of its ecosystems services. In other words, ecosystems services are the benefits that nature give us depending on the type and state of the ground. For example, a cropland will give us food, a glacier will give us potable water and a forest will give us wood.

Once the assessment is created, it will be easier to identify all the groups and actors that have a stake in maintaining the ecosystems services. Finally, the last step is to involve the stakeholders by establishing a system of payments that can be used to protect and maintain the natural areas.

Stefano Santi, Head Manager of the Julian Prealps Nature Park, explains why the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) is so important: *“When we think about biodiversity, we are not only discussing about something that is important ‘per se’, we are talking about something that has a paramount role in our economy. This idea is not understood by all people, for this reason, it is necessary to identify and evaluate the role of ecosystem services in our society. An economical assessment is the only way to evaluate the hazards that can occur when we have a loss of biodiversity.”*

Nowadays, the ecologists no longer need to go on the ground to map and measure the different types of soil. NAT2CARE researchers are currently exploiting the use of a WebGis system. *“The main purpose of a WebGis is to collect and organize a great number of data and map them on the ground. This operation is done in real time and with great precision. This simplifies the ecologist’s work and makes it easier for the general public to better estimate the importance of the ecosystem services”*, says Stefano.

Another important step to stop the loss of biodiversity is the creation of common monitoring technics . Since many animals cross the border with regularity, it’s necessary to share knowledge to understand better their behaviour. During the last year, NAT2CARE researchers monitored the Brown bear, the Golder jackal, the Gray wolf, the Corncrake and the Rosalia longicorn. The results from their monitoring will be used not only to develop new academic literature but will serve the publication of a bilingual handbook with the animals’ identification sheets.

Italians and Slovenians cooperate to preserve and restore their Natura 2000 areas

By **Andrea Luzzini**

Good news for nature! Since December 2017, a cooperation project between Italy and Slovenia, named NAT2CARE, is acting against the risk of fragmentation, reduction and loss of biodiversity within the limits of three important Natura 2000 areas: The Julian Prealps Nature Park, the Natural Park of the Friulian Dolomites, and the Triglavski Narodni Park.

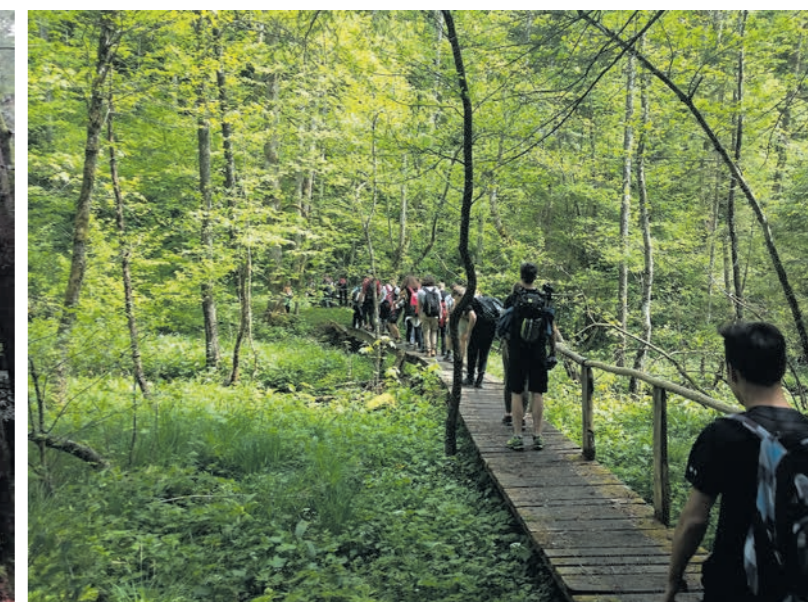
The Natura 2000 areas were born in 1992, when the governments of European regions adopted a common legislation to identify and protect a network of wildlife areas, important for their great abundance of animals and plants species. Today, the overall quality of wildlife

areas in the world is declining; human activity is destroying their habitats and putting in danger many animal species. The loss of biodiversity is a serious problem not only for plants and animals but also for all of humanity.

Wildlife areas give us potable water, food and natural resources that are essential for human life. They are also important to prevent and mitigate natural disasters such as floods, avalanches and landslides. For these reasons, the Nature 2000 network aims to preserve habitats and animals species taking into consideration the human economic, social and cultural needs in order to promote a sustainable development.



Workshop in Radovija (Slovenia).



Workshop in the Olsevek Adergas Forest (Slovenia).

The project has organised guided tours, summer camps and launched the INaturalist App



The Brown Bear.



The Ural Owl.



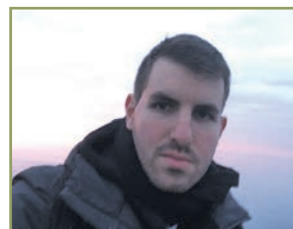
The Gray Wolf.

Last but not least, the necessity and the direct involvement of local communities in order to increase knowledge and ecological awareness. This is the only way to decrease human impact on nature. If more people will be interested in changing their everyday habits, it will be easier to maintain the ecological heritage. During the last year, the NAT2CARE project organised several activities on the ground, such as workshops, nature walks, guided tours and summer camps. These activities were addressed to children, students, rangers, hunters, farmers and lay people.

In order to promote ecological awareness, NAT2CARE is encouraging local communities to use the 'iNaturalist App' to identify animals and collect more data about their behaviour. Stefano Santi stresses the importance of this tool: *"iNaturalist App is a simple and effective tool that everyone can utilise during their everyday life. When you spot an unidentified animal or just his traces, you can ask the experts' advice to understand your discovery. Thanks to everyone's help, researchers will increase the available data at their disposal, while people will be more aware about the ecosystem which surround them."*

Much is still to be done, but the project is on the right path to success.

More information: <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/nat2care>



Andrea Luzzini

- Age: 27
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Inclusion, development, empowerment.

Dai il tuo contributo! Dajete svoj prispevek!

Interreg ITALIA-SLOVENIJA NAT2CARE

IT: Con iNaturalist puoi aiutarci anche tu nel monitoraggio delle specie del progetto Nat2care! Scarica gratuitamente sul tuo smartphone l'app di iNaturalist iscriviti e cerca il progetto Nat2care. Potrai condividere con noi le tue osservazioni delle specie più interessanti aiutandoci a proteggerle. L'app di iNaturalist è facilissima da usare e sicura da utilizzare anche con i bambini. Che aspetti, aiutaci a osservare la natura!

SLO: Z aplikacijo iNaturalist nam lahko pomagate pri spremljanju vrst, ki so vključene v aktivnosti monitoringa projekta Nat2care! Prenesite brezplačno aplikacijo iNaturalist na vaš pametni telefon, se prijavite in poiščite projekt Nat2Care. Z nami lahko delite vaša opazovanja o zanimivih vrstah in nam jih pomagate zaščititi. Aplikacija iNaturalist je enostavna za uporabo in varna tudi za otroke. Kaj še čakate, pomagajte nam opazovati naravo!

1 Download iNaturalist

2 + Nat2care Project

3 Upload Observation



Creation and development of start-ups: the project ENISIE

Ortigia, the historical centre of Syracuse (where Impact Hub Siracusa is located).

Italy and Malta have created a business accelerator to promote social innovation in the area



By Clémence du Tertre

At the beginning of September 2018, I arrived on the beautiful Sicilian island for a six-month IVY volunteer assignment with Impact Hub Siracusa. I was immediately immersed in a reality very different from the one I am used to in France, in a land of economic and social challenges but which is also full of surprises both for the eyes and for the palate. Impact Hub Siracusa is first and foremost a network, composed of entities present throughout the world, and which make social innovation a priority, a philosophy of life and work itself.

It is not only that, but it is also a space for co-working, exchange, and sharing, where personalities and skills meet to help each other and to innovate, create and face local challenges. Lastly, it is a business incubator, an accelerator of start-ups and as such, the cooperative helps to create projects and companies that want to

have a positive and sustainable impact in economic, environmental and social terms.

Impact Hub Siracusa is part of the cross-border cooperation project ENISIE, in which Italy and Malta have participated in since early 2018. That's where my volunteer work comes in: I was sent here to give a voice by communicating on this ambitious and demanding project. As a volunteer, I have the opportunity to get involved in many events and initiatives: I observe, learn and give a boost as soon as possible in the field. Having a Master's degree in translation and interpretation, I handle both internal communications translations for the project and for my host organisation. I also handle as well interpretation during meetings with our Maltese partners or during activities in which we participate.



Malta, the second island involved in the ENISIE project.

The project has engaged more than 40 SMEs and start-ups and has set up a Euro-Med platform for social innovation

Bringing together enterprises and the third sector

ENISIE is a cross-border cooperation project designed by some of the main actors of innovation practices in Sicily and Malta to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the area. They do this by supporting a new generation of social enterprise environments. The project encourages the creation and development of enterprises in the fields of digital health, food tech, and sustainable tourism, with the capacity for creating actions moving towards the domain of social business and corporate social responsibility.

A crucial role is played by the so-called 'innovation spaces', meaning physical places like hubs, incubators, co-working spaces, that will host study training and exchange programmes among enterprises, start-ups, researchers and young self-employed professionals.

The project also works on motivating and engaging decision-makers at the Mediterranean level so that they initiate or update innovation practices to fill the gap between the business enterprises and the third sector: a great opportunity of development for territories where current social and economic challenges determine the future of youth, workers and citizens of all ages.

The Euro-Med platform, innovation spaces and much more!

The activities of the ENISIE project concentrate on designing new and innovative services to promote social businesses in all entrepreneurial contexts. With the set-up of a Euro-Med platform dedicated to the main actors of social innovation; and activities of public and institutional awareness to shorten the gap between enterprises and the third sector.

So far, the project has engaged with more than 40 SMEs and start-ups and about 100 young talented people in orientation and support activities. It is now working on mapping the cross-border entrepreneurial and third sector environments to understand the needs and wishes in common to most organisations. ENISIE project then plans on designing services and programmes to support the cooperation between the two islands. A full year of activities still awaits: exchanges and cooperation among enterprises, third sector and researchers; training and incubation programmes to help the beneficiaries work together, internationalise and scale; business acceleration programmes to attract funds and many other events.

More information: <https://enisie.eu/project/>



Presentation of the project by the Maltese and Sicilian partners, during the Tech Stars Start Up Week in Catania, 12 November 2018.



TESTIMONIALS

Thanks to this cooperation project...

Giancarlo Sciuto, 27 years old, young entrepreneur

"I have always been passionate about strategy and marketing and ended up founding a start-up: www.seotesteronline.com, used by marketers, e-commerce and web agencies in more than 25 countries around the world. It helps to monitor and improve the visibility of their website thanks to innovative tools designed for SEO and web marketing.

The ENISIE project has allowed us to strengthen and further develop our business, giving us the opportunity to access a real 'ecosystem of innovation', a sort of bridge for the development of our start-up. Taking part in and experimenting with a path of new services with high added value such as the ENSIE project is an opportunity that every entrepreneur, as we have done, should not miss!"

Andrea Bartoli, 48 years old, Farm Cultural Park founder

"In 2010, together with my wife Flo, we created the Farm Cultural Park, a cultural and independent center in Favara (Italy).

We offer art, culture, and education as tools to grow and improve individuals and the cities in which they live. Thanks to ENISIE, we got in touch with other entities in order to promote social innovation in this area. We hosted Invitalia, the National Agency for Enterprise Development, for an in-depth study on funding opportunities for young people who intend to embark on a business path."

Carlo Sciuto, SME Park Smart founder

"I co-funded Park Smart, an innovative start-up that uses an artificial intelligence computer vision software to identify, through cameras, free roadside parking. Through an app drivers are guided to the nearest parking lot and can automatically make a payment as well... Another app will indicate to the controllers the occupied but unpaid parking lots, in order to optimise their work.

The ENISIE project has helped us to get in touch with some Maltese stakeholders who are crucial for the commercial development of our company and others who are important for the research activities we are constantly carrying out. Moreover, through some targeted events, it is creating important visibility to our development project."



Clémence du Tertre

- Age: 26
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Sicily (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Building bonds, making a difference, strengthening links among people.



Claudia Mazzoli, project manager for the Emilia-Romagna Region, Italian partner of the SHERPA project, shows the good practices of energy efficiency in public buildings developed in her region.



How to improve energy efficiency in buildings?

By *Élodie Joseph-Auguste*

The fight for the reduction of pollution and emission of greenhouse gas (GHG) has a specific resonance and importance in the region of Emilia-Romagna. Due to its human and natural circumstances, it is one of the most polluted areas of the continent: its population densities and mobility rates are among the highest, and the Alps and Apennines mountains bordering it on the north, west, and south, prevent the dispersion of its pollutants. And just like in the rest of the Mediterranean region, buildings represent one of the main sources of GHG emissions. According to

EUROSTAT, buildings in Europe consume 40% of Europe's total energy and 36% of CO2 emissions. That is why policies for better air quality have been tackling the problem of energy consumption and the implementation of energy efficient practices, notably through diverse European programmes.

Many need heavy upgrading and renovations to reach the '20% energy efficiency target' set by the European Union for 2020. The priority is of course the population's health, security, and better living



The SHERPA partners.

SHERPA project evaluates the type of renovation and its costs

standards at a fairer price, as well as a better environmental future. But it is also a capital evolution for the quality and sustainability of our architecture, and for the economic prospects it represents, in terms of reduction of energy costs and the development of a 'new market' creating new job opportunities.

Thus, through SHERPA, regional authorities in Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Croatia and Greece, take the lead in the fight for cleaner energy by strengthening the local authorities' capacity to improve the energy efficiency of their public buildings (such as hospitals, schools, public residences, libraries, ...). Their chosen tactic is the exchange of experiences and innovative practices among owners and managers.

They began in November 2016 by creating a common methodology and technical support that could be used, and then transferred and adapted to public buildings

all over our regions, especially in places where construction zones are limited. Based on a transnational and peer-to-peer approach, they all collected data on a sample of 10 buildings by region (100 in total) to create a tool of propositions of measures of upgrading, economic diagnostics, financial schemes, and training sessions.

By promoting this sustainable change in our housing stock and developing the competency of those responsible for it, the aim of SHERPA is to offer the latter a very accessible way to evaluate what kind of renovation they could undertake and how much it would cost them.

This part of the project was called the 'Testing Phase', where several measures of energy efficiency were highlighted: external insulation of the building, window and door frame substitutions, adoption of



Shared knowledge for Energy Renovation in buildings by Public Administrations.

solar panels for photovoltaic energy, change of cooling and heating systems for less energy-consuming alternatives ...

The freshly begun second phase, ‘the capitalisation phase’, will see this methodology applied to another 100 public buildings from municipalities located in the participating regions.

SHERPA in Europe: its present and future

The near future for the project is the writing of “a Roadmap by each region, which, once put together, will form a Joint Action Plan”, explains Claudia Mazzoli, the project manager for the Emilia-Romagna partner. With a wider Mediterranean scale, this plan will contain the results of the SHERPA project, a set of toolkits describing methodologies and experiences, and above all, the partners’ policy recommendations and ideas for potential future interventions at transnational and regional/local levels. It will be presented in Brussels, with the aim of helping shape the future policies and programmes at European and national levels.

Claudia Mazzoli also adds that this will be the opportunity to point out the limitations of the actual programmes and advisable changes for future planning.

“As an architect, a technician, and more than just an administrative”, she considers the general well-being of the people the core of her profession’s actions. “It would be easier, more achievable, with a more global and less sectorial point of view”. Indeed, she stresses the other crucial aspects to consider in building constructions and renovations: security, health, hygiene, seismic risks, ... They are all also intrinsically linked to energy efficiency in buildings. But “when funds are allocated to energy requalification, they can only be used for energy-centred actions [as in SHERPA], when a more global work may need to be done. There needs to be a balance”.

But she is optimistic, as the last European directives begin to point in the direction of larger synergies, and as projects like SHERPA offer communities and on-the-field technicians bigger support, experimentations will have a big part in influencing and defining the future European policies.

More information: <https://sherpa.interreg-med.eu/>



Élodie Joseph-Auguste

- Age: 30
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Emilia-Romagna (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you: Synergy, community, openness.



San Michele's Abbey, in Turin (Italy). It's a milestone of the Italian stretch of the Via Alta and symbol of the Region Piemonte.

The VIA Alta project has re-discovered an ancient route ranging from Avignon (France) to Turin (Italy)



By Mattia Polito

Only a few centuries ago, before coal and steel gave birth to railways, oil and asphalt to motorways, and planes could give the opportunity to travel all over Europe on a single-weekend round trip, people’s mobility used to be something very different from what it is now.

Whatever the reason for travelling was, mobility has been a key propellant of the European culture: since 300 BC Romans started building their network of roads which provided overland movement for armies, officials, and civilians, as well as the inland carriage of official communications and trade goods.

Throughout history, travellers and merchants have walked down paths and roads which connected major cities. In the Medieval ages, new itineraries were opened; two particular categories, merchants and pilgrims, used to walk down those routes which

connected the major cities, ports and religious sites. These long-distance roads helped in shaping the urban development of the European continent.

The European project ‘VIA Alta’, financed by the cooperation programme Interreg Alcotra, has helped to re-discover one of these ancient routes. The project’s goal is to improve the attractiveness of the historical axis which links territories rich in cultural heritage such as Avignon and Turin and extending itself until the town of Vercelli in Italy, a milestone of the Via Francigena, and Arles in France, where the Via Tolosana (leading to Santiago de Compostela) begins. Thus ideally, the Via Alta constitutes the link between two of Europe’s most popular pilgrim routes - *The Way of St. James* and *the Via Francigena* - both labelled European Cultural Routes and recognized by the Council of Europe.



Lavender field, in Provence (France). Typical landscape of the Provence Region, crossed by the Via Alta route.



A view of the historical centre of Avignon (France), a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995.



Remains of the Roman Acqueduct (IV Century A.D) in Susa (Italy).



Arles Amphitheatre (90 A.D), France. Part of a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1981.

What is this project doing?

- It is developing a touristic route in the spirit of European Touristic Itineraries, with the aim of creating a common cultural identity, determined by a century of constant exchanges.
- It promotes the transboundary historical, cultural and environmental assets, encouraging a new community to discover it (pilgrims, outdoor hikers, seniors, etc.) with a new recreational approach to the route and its natural and cultural sites.
- It supports local tourism structures through tourism operator training.
- It boosts the attractiveness of the territory involved through communication material and campaigns.

Michele Dosio, pilgrim expert and passionate hiker, has himself walked the entire path, and especially the Italian stretch of it “many, many times”. He explains that “this route has very ancient relevance for pilgrims, because it crosses the easiest mountain pass through the Alps between Italy and France, the Mont Genève. The first findings date from 333-334 AD”. Large portions of the route retrace the old ‘Via Domitia’ built around 120 BC to link the territory of Rome with its western provinces of France and Spain. The route started in Turin and crossed the southern part of France to eventually reach Spanish provinces.

With his words, he guides us through the uniqueness of this route ranging from the Po Valley plain’s foggy paddy fields to the lavender and sunflower covered hills - like those depicted by Vincent Van Gogh - located at the opposite stretch in Provence, through high mountain pine forests and canyons. The itinerary is a wonderful showcase for these regions highlighting their cultural dimension, their history, their environment and the hidden jewels of their sacred art.

“While the French stretch was already part of the long-distance footpath network, the Italian partners had to almost retrace the whole route given that the official itinerary was using paved roads” he says. He actively took part in the development of the itinerary and helped with writing the official guide for the Italian stretch (one of the project’s outcomes). In this guide, before the description of the route for every stage, he wrote a commentary to communicate his own experiences, emotions, and reflections:



“I kept note of my thoughts and impressions while walking down the path, alone with the help of an audio recorder. Hiking alone allows you to develop a non-conventional, non-ritual spirituality. You can distance yourself from the struggles of everyday life and this is going to make you more conscious about your inner-self, the nature surrounding you and relationships with others. Despite the world going faster with technology, someone feels the need to balance the pace, we are not really meant to conduct this hyperkinetic life that forces you to directness. Directness is more instinctive and less reasoned. I believe that human beings can be more than this, they can have more deep and profound experiences as well as understand the hidden sides of their personalities”, Dosio expresses.

Today some of the outcomes of the Via Alta project are tangible: according to the register of a hospitality structure in Vercelli, in 2018 around 10% of the travellers’ journeys included the Via Alta path,

whereas this flow was almost non-existing few years ago.

Moreover, the project has been instrumental to drive the regional touristic strategy, involving local enterprises and product branding around the Via Alta route. Finally, the Italian stretch of the Via Alta has been officially recognised as part of the network of the ‘Via Francigena ways’ - which has just recently been registered on the UNESCO tentative list to become part of the Cultural World Heritage.

While this candidature process would take up some years, local policies to implement a comprehensive strategy of promotion are already on their way. Their bet is already placed.

Would you accept this challenge and travel through the ages and sceneries? I am sure you will not regret it.

More information: <https://www.via-alta.com/it/>



Mattia Polito

- Age: 28
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Piedmont (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you:
Exploring, discovering, comparing and finally advancing together. I guess it’s four words!

Promoting energy efficiency of public buildings and sustainable mobility

The 'Energy Care' project is already improving energy use in Koper (Slovenia), Trieste and San Donà di Piave (Italy)



183 photovoltaic panels have been installed in Trieste and a pedibus has been set up in Koper, among other infrastructure actions

By Piero Graziano

Italians and Slovenians are working together on 'Energy Care', a project financed by the European Union. The main goals of this project are to reduce CO2 production and improve energy use in the cross-border area and beyond. Project manager Laura Zorzenon explains: "All change has to start from the bottom, from the local communities: the inhabitants, the students and their families, the school staff, the members of the realities (organizations) operating on the territory. This is what we are doing in 'Energy Care'. All of them will not only be beneficiaries of the investments on the areas in which they live, but they will also be the drivers promoting energy efficiency measures".

During the spring and summer of 2018, a total of 30 residents from either side of the Italy-Slovenia border lead a sustainable lifestyle for a month. This was

done to help people understand how their small daily actions can reduce emissions. At the end of that month, many people decided to continue with their new lifestyle. They felt encouraged by the effective energy savings achieved and by a renewed feeling of respect for their environment. Taking part in the initiative and learning from their experience was an 'awakening' for them.

"The activities of 'Energy Care' have as their fundamental objective the reduction of CO2, in order that the results persist over time, we must act on people, directing them towards a sustainable lifestyle and on public institutions, strengthening governance for energy management and planning actions and long-term interventions to improve livability, cohesion and social inclusion", says Laura.

The main advantages gained - both environmental and economic - stem from environmental sustainability interventions. Residents benefit directly, and at the same time actions on sustainable mobility have positive effects on

residents and on the general public, including the tourists who use the cycle paths in the area. Public and private sectors are working together on local action plans in the cross-border area that focus on the general public.

What results has the project already obtained?

- Some of the testimonials, after the first month of experimentation, decided to continue with the new lifestyle, stimulated both by the effective energy savings and by a renewed feeling of respect for the environment.
- Many citizens participate in the planning of infrastructural interventions and support it. They are also very active on project social networks by sending messages in favor of an energy-sustainable lifestyle (the so-called 'virtual postcards').
- In November 2018, in Capodistria/Koper a pedibus for the students of the Škofije school was launched.
- In San Donà di Piave the participatory planning of the cycle path is at its final stage. The resulting document will highlight the needs of the population and will be used by the technicians appointed to design the mobility intervention. In 2019 the same activity will be carried out in Trieste and Capodistria.
- In Trieste the preparatory interventions for the installation of photovoltaic panels have been already carried out.
- San Donà di Piave has installed the security camera and the system to monitor the flow of cyclists, while the cycle path will be built from 2019.

And much more to come!

The project will keep on promoting the good use of energy, but with more focus on communication and raising awareness. “Our goal is to work intensively to communicate the European content and objectives in terms of environmental sustainability and what the project did to achieve their objectives. Through the communication strategy we try to involve a

broader range of people and local communities. We would like them to speak up and be ambassadors for energy efficiency”, Laura says. She also explains they will make communication messages more simple and innovative, using visual images, videos and infographics.

More information:
<https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/energy-care>



The mosaic in the centre of Piazza Transalpina-Trg Evrope, once divided by the border. This area connects two cities now.

‘Energy Care’ key elements: How does the project promote energy efficiency?

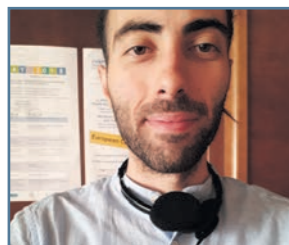
- Taking innovative actions that involve people living in pilot area communities in Italy and Slovenia actively taking part in the project. These allow us to target a wider, more diverse population and to measure how small daily actions can lead to an effective change.
- Using tools that encourage sustainable mobility and energy saving: both involving local people and providing training and technical support to public administrators to improve their ability to manage energy, plan low-carbon mobility and bring about changes in citizens' lifestyles.
- Developing an innovative and replicable cross-border plan of territorial planning and social innovation to reduction energy consumption and bring about sustainable and intelligent multimodal mobility.



Ponziana ATER complex, installation of 183 photovoltaic panels.



Sustainable mobility ‘Pedibus’ in Oskar Kovačič Škofije Primary School.



Piero Graziano

- Age: 25
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you: Inclusion, future, challenge.

Building a healthcare service network across a border



Italians and Slovenians are working together to create an advanced model of territorial cooperation

By Silvia Fumis

On the border between Italy and Slovenia, the cities of Gorizia (Italy), Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba (Slovenia) gave birth to a completely new experience at the European level. After creating the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) GO in 2014, they created a strategy for an integrated development in their territories. One of their priorities is the creation of a common network of health services for both countries. Another one is the creation of a cross-border natural park. And both have been translated into two actual projects.

In this sense, the project ‘Salute-Zdravstvo’ (‘health’ in Italian/Slovenian), financed with 5 million euros by the Interreg cooperation programme Italy-Slovenia, is managed directly by the EGTC GO as a sole beneficiary and it’s a unique case in Europe. ‘Salute-Zdravstvo’ is an ITI project, which means that it is developed by using an integrated territory investment, a tool that gives the opportunity to receive funds from different programmes or from more topics/areas within the same programme. Until now, there have been no other examples in Europe of an ITI launched on both sides of a border.

Over 70.000 people live today in the area of Gorizia, where you'll find two active hospitals, one in Slovenia and one in Italy, and many outpatients clinics. However, the sad fact is that neither hospital can offer patients a complete range of services. Because of differences in language and procedures, people have to travel many kilometres within their own country to find the same service they could find in the neighbouring country, which is just a short distance away.

And in the end... success!

Since the early 2000s, when Slovenia became part of the European Union, many attempts have been made to connect these two healthcare systems. This work produced some very useful comparative studies about the law systems and technical obstacles in the two countries. However, it didn't actually manage

to change the situation. This is something EGTC GO kept in mind, to avoid making the same mistakes. Another big source of inspiration for the 'Salute-Zdravstvo' project was the Hospital of Cerdanya, on the border between Spain and France, where both countries managed to create an integrated healthcare system.

The actual implementation of the project started in 2017, and by the end of 2021 the services will be operative. The project focuses on several areas of healthcare: pregnancy, autism, mental health and social services. For each of these areas, a specific group of Slovenian and Italian experts is working on implementing the tasks. These experts are also offered language lessons in order to better understand each other and avoid any communication problems.



The common healthcare network will help more than 70.000 people living in the area along the Italy-Slovenia border

Offering broad support to future mothers.

Pregnancy, autism, mental health and social services

The pregnancy experts' group participated in three study visits to Holland, Denmark and The United Kingdom, all of which are considered to have very advanced healthcare systems in this field. The goal is to import such practices to the area of Gorizia. Other significant services that are going to be

implemented are bilingual info-points, a series of innovative courses for parents, and the possibility of offering home-births.

Within the second field, autism, early diagnosis is very important, sometimes as early as 18 months. This is considered very useful to help the child adapt and develop social skills as he/she grows up. A few meetings were also organised for

teachers and other key persons who are often in touch with the children and their families, so that they can redirect the parents when help is needed.

The third field is mental health and social services for the disadvantaged. The aim here is to offer treatment to people in the 18-to-35 years' age group when they are feeling very bad, progressively helping them find a job and their place within society again. This segment relies heavily on the Italian 'Basaglia model', which steers away from the practice of admitting people to psychiatric hospitals. Instead, it's based on the idea of healing within the community. This is done by connecting the social services offered by the two hospitals with private associations that are active in this area.

A health model that can be exported

Last but not least, the 'Salute-Zdravstvo' project is also setting up an integrated bilingual information system for the two hospitals, so that booking medical

appointments in a different Member State won't be as difficult as it has been before. All in all, this is a pilot project that aims to perform well in order to become a sustainable standard in the future. One day the same model could be used for other types of services, even in areas other than healthcare, and hopefully covering a much wider geographic area.

More information: <https://euro-ego.eu/en/>



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The geographic area of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba.



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- Age: 27
- Nationality: Italian and Slovenian
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Brotherhood, engagement, hope.