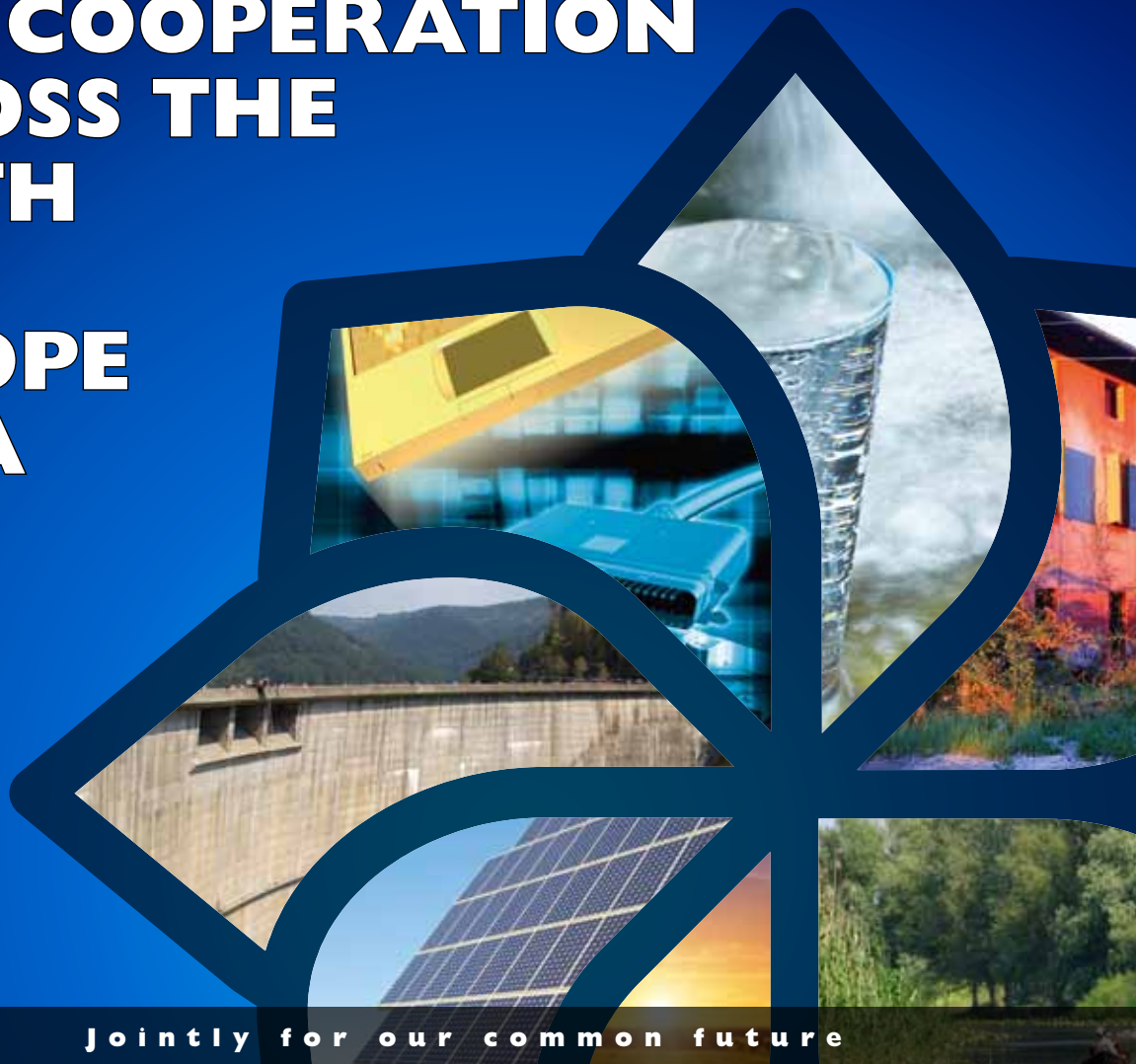


DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST EUROPE AREA



Jointly for our common future



A transnational approach to cooperation in South East Europe



The SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme provides a framework for the development and implementation of projects around the South East Europe area. By means of joint activities carried out at a transnational level between the 16 beneficiary countries, the Programme works to make the SEE region more competitive and better integrated.

The Programme brings a valuable contribution to the overall efforts made at the EU level towards reducing economic and social disparities in the SEE area and to strengthen relations between the 16 beneficiary states in South East Europe. Both the potential and need for cooperation in the area are very high, enhanced by the economic, social, and cultural diversity of Europe's South East countries.

THE SOUTH EAST EUROPE PROGRAMME IS A UNIQUE INSTRUMENT THAT, IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL POLICY'S TERRITORIAL COOPERATION OBJECTIVE, AIMS TO IMPROVE INTEGRATION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN AN AREA THAT IS AS COMPLEX AS IT IS DIVERSE.

Another important characteristic of the Programme is that it actively seeks to contribute to the transfer of knowledge and expertise between the EU-member countries of the region and their counterparts in the Western Balkan countries and the neighbourhood countries (Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). The value of this type of cooperation lies in its capacity of turning boundaries into connections, bringing together important ideas and resources, and providing people with the opportunity to work together via the exchanges, networks, or other joint activities developed around a project.

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Transnational cooperation is challenging by bringing together different cultures and different ways of ‘doing things’ and making them work together. The main challenge and the main benefit at the same time can be summed up in one word: ‘together’ ...or better said, ‘jointly’!

Andreea Tutuianu – Member of the Monitoring Committee of the SEE Programme, Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, Romania

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The projects can be developed along thematic areas that are important in the European context, and at the same time particularly relevant for the SEE area, such as environmental protection, accessibility, or innovation.

In the period 2008-2011, € 120.473.721 from the total ERDF budget of € 194.290.146 was allocated to 66 projects as a result of the first two calls for proposals. The activities of these projects are diverse and include, for example, establishing a drought-management centre for South East Europe, protecting the Intellectual Property Rights of SMEs in the SEE area, or the revitalisation of traditional industrial areas in South East Europe. More calls are expected in the next period, as the need for cooperation in various fields is higher than ever.

Snapshot of the Programme area

SEE is the transnational programme that gathers the biggest number of participating countries: 16 in total. Eight of these are EU-member states, six are candidate and potential-candidate countries, and two are countries participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy. Regardless of their location or political status, various institutions and organisations from these countries are benefiting from the Programme by working together for developing joint projects.



PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
 ALBANIA,
 AUSTRIA,
 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA,
 BULGARIA,
 CROATIA, GREECE,
 HUNGARY, ITALY,
 THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA,
 REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA,
 MONTENEGRO,
 ROMANIA,
 SERBIA, SLOVAKIA,
 SLOVENIA,
 UKRAINE

The Programme area is characterised by economic, social, infrastructural, technological, administrative, and institutional disparities and diversities. That said, the political, cultural, social, ethnic, and religious diversity of Europe and the Orient meets in the cooperation area, and this great diversity lends enormous potential to the foundation of cross-border and transnational cohesion. The diversity of the area's topography not only determines the spatial and settlement structures but also forms the spatial framework for the economic base and development perspectives. The regional GDP per-capita performance shows that the Programme area is far from being cohesive, with differences between rich and poor regions being more than tenfold.


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The South East Europe Programme is unique and innovative, as it represents a platform for European territorial cooperation between European countries of different statute – member states, candidate countries, potential candidate countries, and partner countries. It is based on the good will to proactively participate and cooperate in a consensual environment. It is as well an attempt to overcome national and institutional barriers by establishing quality partnerships, strategic representative projects, and innovative solutions to common challenges.

Asya Hristova – SEE National Contact Point, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria

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The SEE area is also in the focus of the newly elaborated EU Strategy for the Danube Region, as most countries participating in the Programme are also part of the Danube region. This initiative seeks to develop the huge economic potential and improve environmental conditions of the region. Cooperation within a 'macro-regional' framework, such as the Danube region, intends to produce even more effective coordination; it aims to complement the development of the region, to advance integration, and to serve its interest as a whole, while taking into account its diversity.



Why transnational cooperation in SEE?

Territorial cohesion lies at the crossroads of competitiveness and integration policies. Its aims are to reduce regional disparities, coordinate coherent sector policies, and achieve added value compared to the results expected by the implementation of single programmes and initiatives.

Territorial cohesion in South East Europe is more than the sum of all national and regional policies of the participating regions and states.

The SEE Programme shall improve the territorial, economic, and social integration process and contribute to cohesion, stability, and competitiveness through the development of transnational partnerships and joint action on matters of strategic importance.

The Programme strategy has been elaborated as the result of the interaction of three conditions:

- the instrument is financed and implemented in the frame of the Cohesion Policy, therefore reflecting the aims and sharing the objectives of this EU policy;
- the involved territories of SEE have specific needs and challenges that have to be taken into consideration when planning actions;
- the field of actions and type of cooperation have to be in line with the European Territorial Cooperation.

COMPETITIVENESS IS ABOUT UTILISING AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES WHILE UTILISING THE TERRITORIAL CAPITAL AND DEVELOPING GROWTH POLES. INTEGRATION IS ABOUT REMOVING BARRIERS OF FREE MOVEMENT, BUILDING UP NETWORKS, AND ENHANCING INTERACTION AND COOPERATION.

Focusing on high-quality partnerships across countries

Effective transnational cooperation in the entire Programme area can only be achieved through the promotion of partnerships resulting in high-quality result-orientated transnational projects of strategic character, relevant for the Programme area.

Broad partnerships with a wide range of actors means that the mobilisation of the skills and knowledge of various partners has the potential to improve effectiveness of both planning and implementation. Moreover, the partners enjoy a wider perspective and this helps their work to get a more strategic, transnational dimension.

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For many Austrian actors on an administrative or political level, the European perspective has already become an essential component of strategic planning and also operative implementation. Transnational cooperation often facilitates exchange of experiences and common learning processes. For some of them this already clearly became part of daily business. Cooperating at a transnational level also means dealing with a broad diversity of structures, different administrative cultures and business etiquettes – therefore there is not only a thematically orientated, but also institutionally orientated learning effect. In addition, it is remarkable that cooperation across borders also activates or enriches inner-Austrian cooperation.

Kathrin Gruber – SEE National Contact Point, Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning at the Federal Chancellery, Austria

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As another consequence of this approach, the Programme also supports efforts that focus on and have a clear positive impact on larger transnational geographic areas such as river basins, transport corridors, or polycentric developments. This emphasis is especially important to the Programme since transnational geographic areas could be highly relevant to integrated economic, social, and environmental development, but are not typically targeted by other programmes such as cross-border or interregional cooperation programmes.

The SEE Programme's contribution to EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies



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South East Europe provides a political dimension to transnational cooperation that is unique in Europe. With all the candidate and potential candidate countries for membership of the European Union in the region, there is a strong moral obligation to take cooperation forward, to build links between authorities and organisations, and to create projects and results that will deliver real benefits to all the people in the region. In this way, the South East Europe Programme becomes a bridge to the Union, a link to the EU's Cohesion Policy, and a tool for disseminating good practise to the candidate countries.

Danuta Hubner – Member of European Parliament and former EU Commissioner for Regional Policy

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SEE stands proudly as the most complex programme in the field of European territorial cooperation. The main part of the Programme budget comes from the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), but it is additionally supported by two other financial instruments: Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), which concerns Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia; and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), concerning Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The history of territorial cooperation of EU member states with non-EU member states dates back to the CADSES Programme. The further development of CADSES allowed the non-EU countries to participate in its projects and benefit from the opportunities provided by this programme. Their participation was enabled through financing instruments CARDS, PHARE, and TACIS CBC.

The participation in the CADSES Programme, the precursor of the 2007–13 South East Europe Programme, provided the first opportunity for Western Balkan countries, as well as Ukraine and Republic of Moldova, to get involved in transnational cooperation with EU-member states and, by the same occasion, to get familiar with the procedures of INTERREG programmes.



The SEE Programme has positively continued what had been initiated under CADSES. The stakeholders from the Programme area have embraced the possibility to work together on overcoming common challenges, and the partnerships, driven by the common need and desire to turn to each other, are impressive. The partners from IPA/ENPI countries are highly represented in the Programme, which testifies how important transnational programmes are as a tool to deal with much wider and complex issues that could not be solved in other ways.

The importance of transnational cooperation is highlighted especially with regard to the Western Balkan countries that strive to become members of the EU. Regional cooperation is one of the prerequisites of EU accession, and SEE offers the right platform.





Apart from meeting the accession requirements, networks have already been established, national stakeholders are building durable relations, and the region is newly perceived as a whole. Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, through their participation in the Programme, are given an opportunity to work together around key common challenges, and most importantly the area is not left aside but enjoys EU-neighbour relations.

SEE is starting a new phase of funds management (called “integrated management”) during the 2010-2013 period, aiming to stimulate and streamline the participation of partners coming from non-EU countries. The initiative, which is a novelty for European Territorial Cooperation policy, came from the European Commission, and the Programme authorities invested efforts in designing the new management system. In the new phase the IPA funds are fully integrated with the idea to give equal possibilities and responsibilities to the partners coming from IPA countries. This will improve the management of not only IPA funds but also of the Programme itself.

The SEE Programme has also made substantial efforts to get closer to ENPI funds, regarding which implementation differs substantially from the ERDF and IPA funds. The ENPI funds will be available for the third call and will be administered by the Managing Authority of the Programme. This is considered as a significant step forward compared to previous approaches. The period 2010-2013 has to be seen as a transition phase towards an even further integrated approach to be considered for the post-2013 programming of transnational cooperation. The integration of IPA/ENPI funds in the South East Europe Programme goes in the direction of better cooperation between candidate/potential candidate states and EU-member states, as also envisaged by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

Innovation, environment, accessibility, and sustainable growth



Over the period 2007-2013, the SEE Programme is focusing on important areas such as innovation, environmental protection and climate change, accessibility, and sustainable growth, making clear the commitment of the partner states to economic and social development and a more equal and integrated Europe.

Types of projects developed within the four priority areas include activities such as networking and exchange of information activities, studies and operational plans, capacity-building activities, promotional actions, set-up of services, and preparation and conduction of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable.

THE FOUR PRIORITY AXIS AREAS FOR THE 2007-2013 PERIOD ARE:

- FACILITATION OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
- IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY
- DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSNATIONAL SYNERGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AREAS



AN INNOVATION-ORIENTATED
DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

Priority Axis I: Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship

The ultimate goal of Priority Axis I is to facilitate innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy, and to enhance integration and economic relations in the cooperation area. This Priority Axis shall contribute specifically to the future development of South East Europe as a place of innovation, contributing indirectly to the economic growth and employment in the technology sector.

In particular, Priority Axis I projects are working along three Areas of Intervention (Aoi) and support transnational partnerships and actions that contribute to:

- Development of technology and innovation networks in specific fields
- Developing the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship
- Enhance the framework conditions and pave the way for innovation

Within the first two calls for proposals, 17 projects addressing Priority Axis I were approved, tackling issues such as: industrial informatics, valorisation of R&D, serious gaming, the agro-food and textile sectors, clustering in the automotive sector, development of business parks, and improvement of IPR-related support services, social entrepreneurship, innovative support services, and new financial instruments for innovative entrepreneurship.

ENVIRONMENT: FROM CLIMATE CHANGE
TO RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Priority Axis 2: Protection and improvement of the environment

South East Europe is characterised by a large and diverse setting of natural environments ranging from alpine to continental and Mediterranean regions. The ultimate goal of Priority Axis 2 is to override the constraints imposed by the national barriers in foreseeing and preventing future environmental threats and to develop common transnational action for the protection of nature and humans.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to support partnerships and actions that:

- Improve integrated water management and flood-risk prevention
- Improve prevention of environmental and technological risks
- Promote cooperation in the management of natural assets and protected areas
- Promote efficiency of energy and resources



Within the first two calls for proposals, 19 projects addressing Priority Axis 2 were approved, dealing with issues such as: drinking-water supply and protection, flood-risk reduction in the Danube Region and water pollution, maritime environmental risks associated with port operation, shipping-related waste management on the Danube, drought management and transnational environmental monitoring, creating a protected-areas network and joint strategies for the promotion of protection areas' development potential, exploitation of hydropower, resource management of aggregates and solar collectors, energy-efficient public procurement, and the promotion of renewable energy-investments in marginalised areas.

ACCESSIBILITY IS A KEY FACTOR FOR COOPERATION

Priority Axis 3: Improvement of accessibility



Accessibility is considered to be one of the prime requirements for economic development and growth, and finally for territorial cohesion. It facilitates the exchange of goods and ideas and the movement and interaction of people.

The objective of this Priority Axis is to promote physical and virtual accessibility to the Programme area. The Programme can complement bigger and more specific programmes and plans in the transport field by providing a platform for coordination and agreement among states, developing common standards and harmonisation of policies, and establishing a forum for negotiations with international financing institutions and donors. In this context, the specific objective of Priority Axis 3 is to promote coordinated preparation for the development of accessibility networks and the support of multi-modality.

This Priority Axis supports transnational partnerships and activities that contribute to:

- Improving coordination in promoting, planning, and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks
- Developing strategies to tackle the “digital divide”
- Improving framework conditions for multi-modal platforms

Within the first two calls for proposals, ten projects addressing Priority Axis 3 were approved, tackling (among others) issues such as: inland water navigation and transport on the Danube, urban public transport, analysis and development of railway transport corridors, mobility and tourism in sensitive natural areas, or harmonised logistical and multi-modal development capacities of smaller Danube ports.

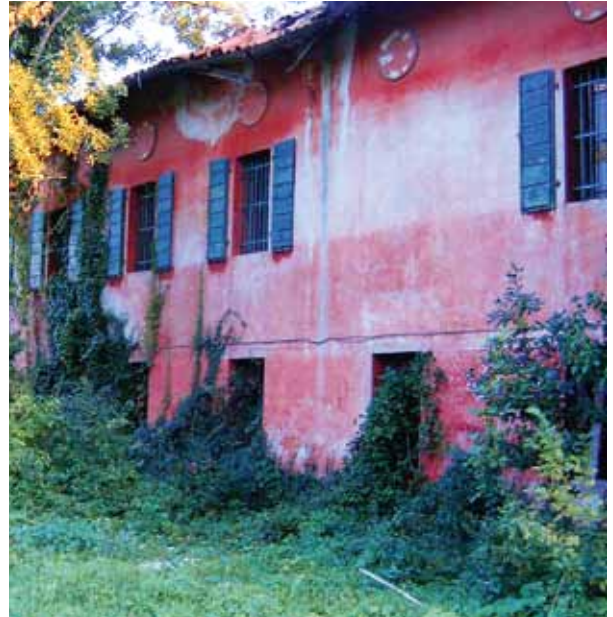
SUSTAINABLE URBAN GROWTH – DEFINING THE CITY LANDSCAPES OF TOMORROW

Priority Axis 4: Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas

This Priority Axis facilitates the development and implementation of integrated strategies for metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements, working towards optimal polycentric structures in the Programme area and the use of cultural values for sustainable development. The objective of Priority Axis 4 is to take different forms of preventive measures and development factors, showing a specific cross-sectoral character strongly interlinking economic, environmental, social and governance issues in sustainable urban and regional settlement development.

This Priority Axis seeks in particular to:

- Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements
- Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas
- Promote the use of cultural values for development



Within the first two calls for proposals, 20 projects addressing Priority Axis 4 were approved, tackling issues such as: integrated urban development in historical towns, conversion of military brownfields (two projects), improving the capacity of governmental agencies, management of municipal real estate, business clustering and territorial marketing of the Adriatic-Danubian area, development of tourism along the Danube, promotion of the concept of sustainable production in manufacturing, better information access on marketable real estates, improvement of spatial planning in Danube regions, and improvement of cooperation within the Tisa basin.

The South East Europe Programme 2007-2013

EU STRUCTURAL FUND PROGRAMME FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION UNDER THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION OBJECTIVE													
Timeframe	2007-2013 (implementation until 2015)												
Objective	To improve integration and competitiveness of the South East Europe area												
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship • Protection and improvement of the environment • Improvement of accessibility • Development of transnational synergies for sustainable growth areas 												
Participating countries	<p>EU*: Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia Non EU*: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine *in Italy and Ukraine only certain regions are eligible; please check the programme documents for more information</p>												
Number of funded projects so far	66												
Number of project partners so far	more than 900												
Average total project budget	€ 2.1 M												
Who are the project partners?	Eligible partners are public administrations at national, regional, and local levels, public equivalent bodies, and non-profit private bodies												
Transnationality criteria	A minimum of three partners coming from three different countries of the eligible area (at least one shall be an EU-member country)												
Funding sources	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td>European Regional Development Fund:</td> <td>€ 206.691.645</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) non-integrated phase:</td> <td>€ 10.436.461</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) integrated phase:</td> <td>€ 16.500.000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):</td> <td>€ 2.000.000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total:</td> <td>€ 235,6 M</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">+ national co-financing</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	European Regional Development Fund:	€ 206.691.645	Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) non-integrated phase:	€ 10.436.461	Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) integrated phase:	€ 16.500.000	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):	€ 2.000.000	Total:	€ 235,6 M	+ national co-financing	
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European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):	€ 2.000.000												
Total:	€ 235,6 M												
+ national co-financing													
Co-financing rates from the programme	85% ERDF and IPA; 90% ENPI												

Participating countries:

Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine

Source: EUROSTAT, © EuroGeographics 2001 for the administrative boundaries.

■ Programme area (NUTS 2)



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