

Wide public consultation kick off - Questionnaire Cooperation Programme Interreg VI-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027”

As a cross-border cooperation Programme, the planning of the «Interreg VI-A Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027» Programme, is mainly the subject of the widest possible participation of local stakeholders. For this reason, the public consultation begins firstly with the sending of the attached questionnaire to capture the views, assessments, directions and general proposals of the stakeholders. Upon its completion, in a second step, stakeholders will be asked to specify their proposals.

Main purpose of the Program, is to strengthen the cooperation between public and private stakeholders and civil society on both sides of the Greek-Bulgarian borders, to jointly promote the development of the region.

The region includes:

- Seven Greek Regional Units: Evros, Xanthi, Rodopi, Drama, Kavala, Serres and Thessaloniki
- Four Bulgarian Regions: Blagoevgrad, Haskovo, Smolyan, Kardzhali

The area is populated by more than 2.7 million inhabitants (1.9 on the Greek side and 0.8 on the Bulgarian side), but with aging and migration in recent years, with one of the lowest per capita GDP in Europe (below 50% of average in the European Union), with strong internal disparities (especially between Bulgarian and Greek territories) and with economic and productive imbalance (stronger presence of the agricultural sector on the Bulgarian side and of services on the Greek side).

During the five previous consecutive programmes, since 1990, remarkable results have been achieved in the region, both in the implementation of projects of common interest and projects concerning the connection of the two sides, as well as in promoting cooperation between stakeholders across the border and gaining an understanding regarding the common challenges, common problems, common perspectives and common possibilities.

The new Program, capitalizing on the experience gained, aims to strengthen further the development effort in the region, within the framework of the policy objectives which are applicable to all programs for the period 2021-2027:

- a “smarter” Europe (innovation, digitization, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises)
- a “greener” Europe without carbon emissions (implementing the Paris Agreement, investing in energy transition, in renewable energy resources and in the fight against climate change)
- a more “connected” Europe (strategic transport networks and digital networks)
- a more social Europe (European pillar of social rights, quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare for everyone)
- a Europe “closer” to the citizens (with development strategies at a local level and sustainable urban development across the EU),

by always considering the peculiarities of the cross-border area.