



STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

**pursuant to Art.9(1)(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC
for the Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014 - 2020**

**Prosecuting authority: Managing Authority of the
Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014 - 2020**

The Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014-2020 went through a strategic environmental assessment (SEA), as required by Art. 55(4) Regulation (UE) No 1303/2013 and defined by the Directive 2001/42/EC.

Art.9(1)(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC ('SEA Directive') requires that Environmental Authorities (EAs) and the public are informed about the result of the SEA consultation process through "a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Article 8 and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with".

Hereafter are summarised the considerations on the identified issues.

- How have environmental considerations been integrated into the Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014 – 2020?

According to the SEA Directive, "the adoption of environmental assessment procedures at the planning and programming level should benefit undertakings by providing a more consistent framework in which to operate by the inclusion of the relevant environmental information into decision making. The inclusion of a wider set of factors in decision making should contribute to more sustainable and effective solutions".

The assessment follows the SEA Directive's methodological prescriptions. It is first referred to the 2 Seas Programme area (Chapter 1). During a preliminary scoping phase, the relevant environmental objectives (mentioned in Ch. 3) and related indicators have been identified. They form the basis for the state of the environment's description and its development trends in the Programme's area (Ch. 2) as well as for the assessment of likely significant effects of the Programme on the environment (Ch. 5). The CP's potential effects on the environment were assessed in a qualitative manner, considering the contribution of the CP to the achievement of the environmental objectives. The significant issues related to climate change, energy, biodiversity water, soil, landscape, air, health, and natural/cultural heritage have been analyzed and described. Eventually, cumulative effects between the environmental issues and cross-border effects are detailed, highlighting interdependencies and effect chains (Ch. 5).

Furthermore, effects on Natura 2000 areas were taken into account and fully assessed by the SEA analysis, with a methodological approach appropriate for the scale of the Programme and the nature of its provisions.

- How has the environmental report been taken into account?

The Environmental Report is an integral part of the Cooperation Programme and has accompanied its elaboration and approval process allowing identifying, already at an early stage, measures or amendments aimed at enhancing the Programme sustainability. In the Environmental Report have in fact been identified, described and evaluated all the significant impacts that the implementation of the proposed plan might have on the environment and on cultural heritage (Chapter 5). The Environmental Report also defined the environmental context (Ch. 2), sustainable environmental objectives (Ch. 3), and mitigation measures, compensation and orientation (Ch. 6) to reduce, prevent and mitigate the negative effects the plan or enhance its positive effects. This information and assessment provided by the Environmental Report has been integrated into the Cooperation Programme in sections 1 and 2.

The reformulation of the actions described in some Specific Objectives, as recommended in the mitigation measures in Chap.6, has allowed avoiding possible negative effects. Environmental indicators suggested for the SEA monitoring system (Ch. 7) have been incorporated, where appropriate, in the Programme indicators (section 2 of the C.P).

- How have the opinions expressed and the results of the consultation been taken into account?

Consultations have accompanied the whole drafting of the Cooperation Programme and the SEA process. During a preliminary consultation in the SEA scoping phase, the authorities responsible for environmental issues in all four Member States have been contacted and asked for feedback on the environmental context indicators, the relevant environmental objectives for the cooperation area and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental report. Experts' comments and the way they have been taken into account were detailed in a final Scoping Report.

In accordance with the dispositions made by Article 6 of the Directive 42/2001/EC, the draft Cooperation Programme and the Environmental report were made available to both the general public and the authorities having specific environmental responsibilities as designated by the Member States. At the end of the consultation, taking national and regional arrangements into account, the SEA experts offered recommendations to be included to the Managing Authority (MA) and Programme authorities, and discussed these during a joint meeting with the CP drafters. The Environmental Report's recommendations and the opinions expressed by the Environmental Authorities and the public gathered by the environmental experts have been incorporated, where relevant, by the C.P drafters. The Annex 2 of the Environmental Report lists all these recommendations and opinions and explains how they have been taken into account.

- Reasons for choosing the plan or Programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

Annex 1(h) of the SEA Directive requires that the SEA provides "an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information".

Based on the environmental analysis carried out by the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the section 8 of the Environmental Report concluded that the proposed strategy clearly contributes to the improvement of environmental conditions in the cooperation area and therefore must be considered as a good alternative from an environmental point of view.

In addition, the Environmental Report assessed cumulative effects on the various environmental components of the proposed Cooperation Programme, and compared them to a baseline scenario "zero-option" which considered an absence of the Programme over the 2014-2020 period and to two CO2 emission scenarios using the Compare model taking into consideration different actions to be implemented by the Programme. The assessment of such alternatives allowed concluding that the 2 Seas Programme can have a positive influence on the various environmental components permitting them to achieve a better state than the one which would naturally occurred when not implementing the Programme.

The Managing Authority of the Interreg 2 Seas Programme 2014 – 2020



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