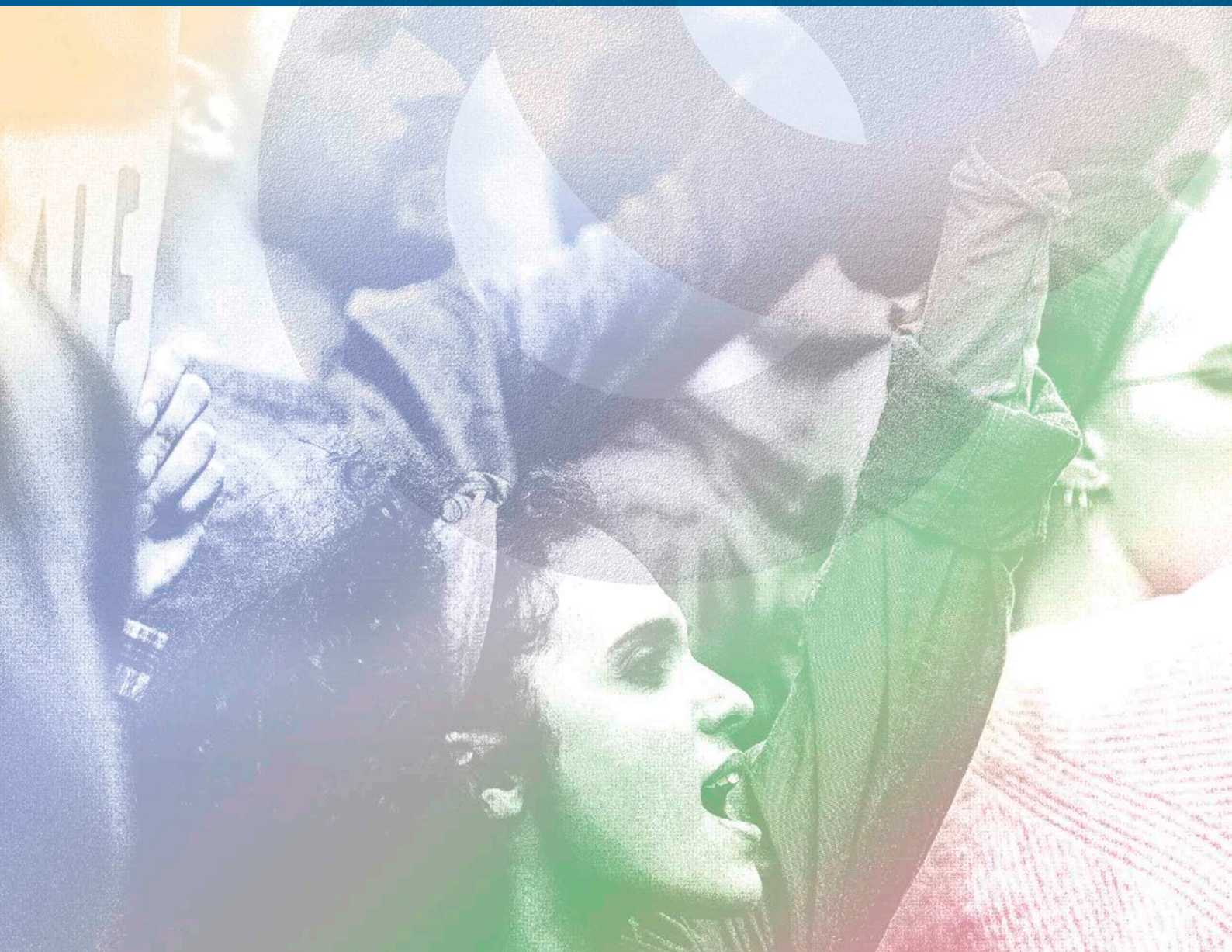


# Stories of European cooperation

Youngsters building together a better Europe



# Introduction

This edition of 'Stories of European Cooperation' is dedicated to the empowerment of all young people to build a better Europe. This choice could not have been timelier. As we approach the end of the European Year of Youth, I would like to take this opportunity to look back at what this Year was all about and everything we have achieved together.

The European Year of Youth was conceived to put young people centre stage, to listen to their points of view, and of course, to act upon them in an effective way.

The Year has brought into being many opportunities for Europe's youth to share their views, and further develop their skills and ideas. It offered an occasion to mobilise, encourage and support the efforts of our Union, its Member States, regional and local authorities for the benefit of our young people - Europe's next generations.

These efforts are guided by the Year's four objectives. They are, first and foremost, to make young people aware of the opportunities provided by the green and digital transitions; to help young people become more engaged and active citizens; to make them aware of the opportunities available at EU level; and, last but not least, to mainstream youth perspectives into EU policy-making.

True to our tradition, the Year's activities were brought to life in the spirit of collaboration between young people, national coordinators, stakeholders and EU institutions across Europe. Defining the legacy of the Year will equally require a collective effort from all involved parties - from those in Europe's largest cities to those from the smallest communities.

This Year has given birth to many achievements. One of these is strengthened cross-sectoral cooperation on youth issues. In total, the European Commission has presented more than 100 policy initiatives spanning all fields of our action, guided by the Year's eight policy areas. Many of these initiatives target youth in Europe's regions. Youth4Outermost Regions, Youth4-Cooperation and Thriving young talents in EU regions are just a few examples.

Youth participation has emerged as the Year's most popular topic in the eyes of young people. Fittingly, the European Year of Youth has seen the introduction of brand new formats and tools for youth participation, such as the Youth Voices Platform, the Youth Policy Dialogues with European Commissioners, the Youth Talks and the Pool of European young journalists.

All in all, we have invested more than EUR 127 million in achieving the objectives of the Year, including funding from EU instruments such as the European Regional Development Fund, the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

The Year's flagship initiatives provide a diverse array of opportunities to young people across our continent to learn and actively engage as citizens of Europe. These actions are empowering young people to acquire the required knowledge, skills, competences, values and attitudes to move forward with confidence.

Part of the legacy of this Year will be the European Commission's renewed efforts to seek out more comprehensive, innovative and inclusive ways of ensuring youth participation in EU policies and policy-making.

I am convinced that the upcoming European Year of Skills will build on the successes of the European Year of Youth, which continues to honour, support, engage and empower all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities.

Let me thank the young Interreg volunteers involved in assembling this fascinating edition. I look forward to your continued involvement - and that of all young Europeans - in shaping the future of our Union.

I hope you enjoy this edition of 'Stories of European Cooperation'!



**Themis Christophidou**  
Director-General for Education, Youth,  
Sport and Culture (DG EAC)

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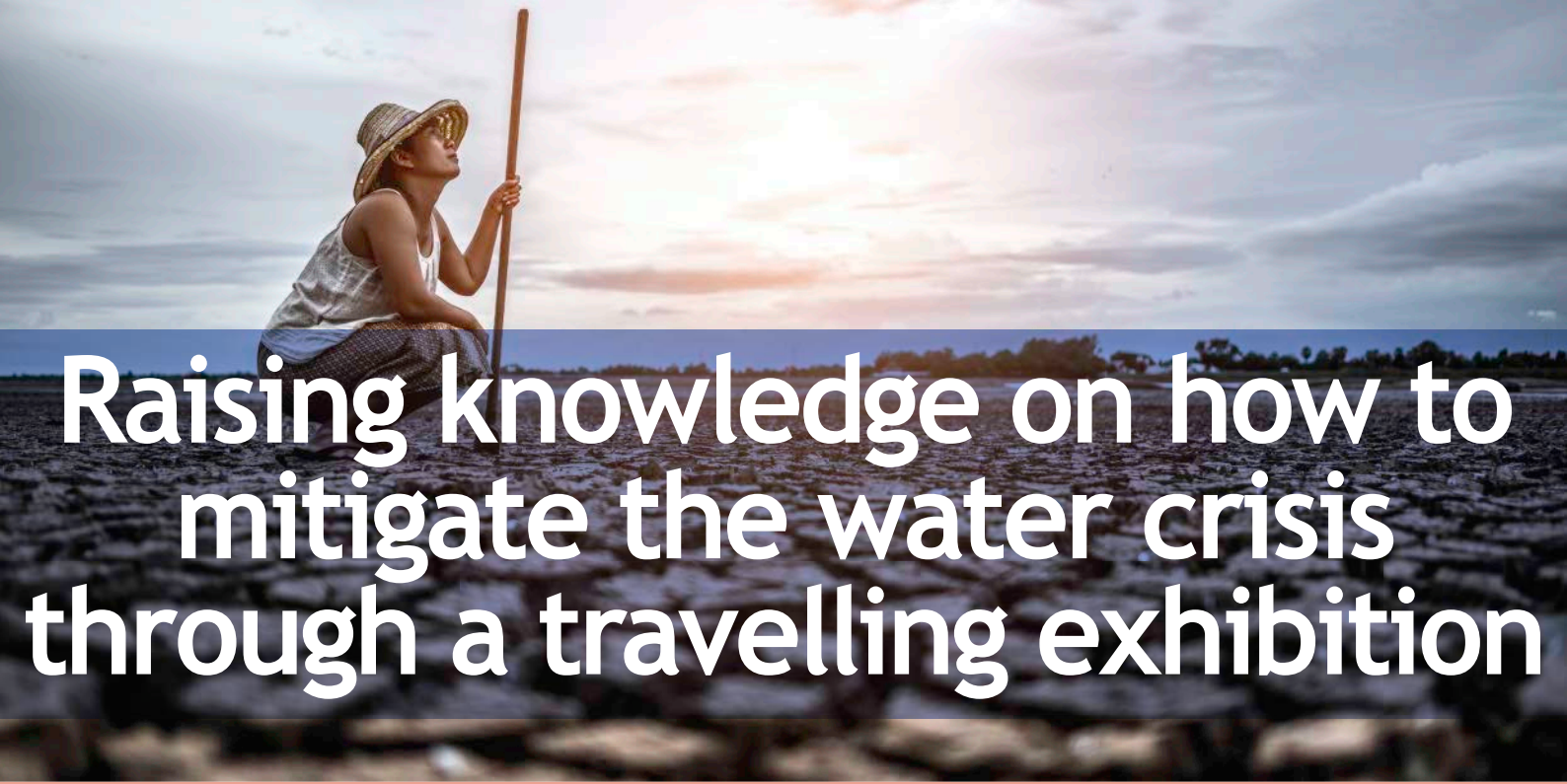
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# Priority 1

Improving young  
people's skills  
& increasing access  
to training opportunities





# Raising knowledge on how to mitigate the water crisis through a travelling exhibition

The project Medwaycap guides a diverse audience through an accessible creative tour composed of video animations, explanatory panels, and sensorial areas

*By Alessandra Fiorilla*

Discussing the Mediterranean and how to reach its full potential, for someone like me who was born and raised in Sicily --the largest island at the centre of this shared sea- is always a matter of priority. The Mediterranean has historically been home to some of the world's oldest civilisations, a hub for trade and transport, and a unique biodiversity hotspot. Today, unfortunately, it faces a multitude of common challenges, including climate change, pollution, youth unemployment, and social inequalities.

It is precisely the primary element that unites, and at the same time separates, the shores of this mare nostrum that is the focus of the project Medwaycap --the MEDiterranean pathWAY for innovation CAPitalisation towards an urban-rural integrated development of non-conventional water

resources. In fact, this project funded by the cooperation programme ENI CBC Med, aims to contribute to the mitigation of the water crisis by facilitating access and promoting good practices through the improved reuse of water treated as non-conventional water sources.

## What are unconventional water resources?

They are all those waters not normally suitable for drinking water use, such as rainwater, grey or black water, saline, or brine. The possibility of reusing them, for both domestic and agricultural use, makes it possible to avoid wasting resources that are more valuable and to save energy, increasing the resilience of urban areas in the face of major climate change and ensuring the long-term sustainability of water infrastructures.

## Medwaycap meets young people!

As an IVY volunteering at the SVIMED, the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Sustainable Development, my work so far has been aimed at setting up the vernissage of the Medwaycap travelling exhibition. This exhibition was designed to travel through some of the project partner countries, such as Tunisia and Jordan, and aims to showcase solutions, case studies and methodologies focused on the use of non-conventional water resources in urban and agricultural settings.

The exhibition was inaugurated in Syracuse in the setting of the ancient marketplace and was designed with a creative approach to be accessible to an extremely diverse audience: pupils, students, technicians, and decision-makers. During the three-day event, many high school and university professors, business accelerators, and start-ups participated, as one of the topics addressed was how to stimulate the young people and professionals of tomorrow, with a focus on the multidisciplinary solutions needed for the future.

Many young students between the ages of 14 and 18 visited the exhibition during the entire month

of October. With great enthusiasm and curiosity, they let themselves be 'guided' between ready-made prototypes, explanatory panels, video animations, and a sensorial area. The tours were designed to be occasions for collective exchange and enrichment in which we all reasoned together about causes and solutions to everyday problems. The feedback we received was positive and encouraging and there was no shortage of questions and even suggestions.

A key part of the whole exhibition was the physical creation of some of the customised scale models and every single component of the exhibition: from the panels to the tables that turn into boxes for transport, to the stools. Being a travelling exhibition, every single component is in fact demountable and designed to reach the next destination safely. All this has been possible thanks to the expert hands of young architects, carpenters, and designers of the Oku start-up who have created everything with a view to sustainability. This is to say that the youthful energies at the service of the Medwaycap project are many and varied, and each of them makes an important contribution.

### Impact

- At least 480 persons involved in 20 measures and initiatives to showcase, exchange, test and transfer water supply & demand solutions to end-users in order to improve water use efficiency and quality and use of non-conventional water resources for domestic and agricultural purposes.
- 1 'ready-to-use-package' --best practices, methodologies and tools.
- 1 interactive capitalisation platform for networking and knowledge transfer.
- 7 national alliances and Initiatives for replicability and investments in sustainable development.
- 7 inventories for business opportunities for non-conventional water solutions in the context of the circular economy.
- 7 action plans for fostering non-conventional water resources integration into the water governance system.



Students visiting the exhibition.

## Mirna Gharbi Dit Kacem

Employee at the MedYWat, the Mediterranean Youth for Water Network



Professionals and technicians.

Mirna explains that the MedYWat is a network of young water professionals from across the Mediterranean region, supported by the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI). MedYWat was launched by CMI in March 2017 during the first World Water Day regional youth workshop on ‘Youth Innovating with Wastewater for a Sustainable Mediterranean’ (Marseille, France), and it has been growing ever since.

“In a world where water resources are very unequally shared, the use of non-conventional water resources is becoming a reality. This applies to the Mediterranean basin, where 72% of water resources are located in the North, 23% in the east, and only 5% in the south. Given the example of countries of the Southern Mediterranean, more serious water shortage problems are increasing while

few naturally freshwater resources are available”, she says.

Also, Mirna adds: “The effects of climate change should be added to this factor. I think, as young people are getting more aware of the increase of water shortage in the Mediterranean countries and the serious drought episodes that are occurring, finding alternatives to sustain water resources in the region becomes one of their big concerns. Thus, I find them getting more and more interested to better understand what the potential non-conventional water technologies are and how can they be developed and implemented”.

In this context, she finds the Medwaycap travelling exhibition “a great vehicle of information to spread knowledge and help people in the Mediterranean region better understand how different promising non-conventional water resources technologies, under construction or already tested and implemented, can contribute to provide safe and sustainable water and ensure food security”.

In addition, “getting the chance to meet experts from different backgrounds and from different Mediterranean countries, coming with different perspectives, was absolutely one of the best things that happened in Medwaycap vernissage. This produced win-win outcomes that will be sustained to ensure resilient Mediterranean ecosystems”, Mirna concludes.



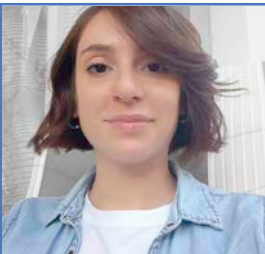
Vernissage of Medwaycap project (October 2022).



Young designers setting up the exhibition.

More information:

<https://www.enicbmed.eu/projects/medwaycap>



**Alessandra Fiorilla**

- **Age:** 31
- **Nationality:** Italian
- **Region where you are deployed:** Ragusa, Sicily (Italy)
- **Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you:** exchange, synergies, growth.





# Priority 2

Boosting employment  
for young people in  
Europe





# Supporting youth innovative ideas and turning them into businesses

The CO-Working project promotes entrepreneurship and offers training, mentoring, and coaching activities

*By Evangelia Paplomata*

## The main challenge

What are the principal problems of cross-border areas? Lack of financial support, limited access of entrepreneurs to business know-how, weak access to targeted information, lack of support services for developing competitive products or services, inadequate human development and skills, and low performance in internationalisation. In my first steps as Interreg Volunteering Youth (IVY), I had the opportunity to be hosted by the Alexander Innovation Zone and be part of a cooperation project that is eager to solve those challenges. Keep reading and you will understand how!

## The solution: the CO-Working project and the Alexander Innovation Zone

CO-Working is the acronym of the project: 'Promoting entrepreneurship by supporting promising innovative ideas through pre-incubating mechanisms'. It envisages a set of innovative actions, by creating two pre-incubating supporting mechanisms. The mechanisms aim to accelerate early-stage teams, to validate the potential of an innovative business idea under real conditions, before taking a business risk in order to overcome the so-called 'death valley'.

The project, financed by the Interreg Greece-Bulgaria programme, involves training, mentoring, coaching activities as well as boot camps. The Acceleration Programme -bootcamp- will be structured in five thematic units: Development of Lean Startup methodology; business model Canvas; development of assumption validation methodology; pitching techniques and approaches; and internal evaluation methodology.

The Alexander Innovative Zone, a lead partner of the project, is a location available for the establishment of innovative enterprises and research entities, engaged in rapidly developing innovative activities. The main pillars are

synergies among innovation actors and the contribution to the economic development of the greater region.

### The happy ending

As an outside observer but involved in the project, I feel the CO-Working project fulfilled its goal. It involved young entrepreneurs, trained and assisted them to set up a business plan, and guided them in their first business steps. Thanks to this experience, I have learned the best ways of cooperation between institutions and witnessed the resources given to new innovative entrepreneurs to implement their business plan.

## Impact and main results

### In the framework of the CO-Working project:

- 150 potential hosted entrepreneurs & teams receive support in Bootcamp Weeks.
- 300 participants are involved in Demo days and Meetups.
- 150 people with promising business ideas participate in a holistic early stage accelerate support programme and 80 of them make use of the business model Canvas, the assumption validation, and the business diagnosis tool.
- 200 local companies visit the business idea diagnosis tool
- 25 teams participate in pitching events and present their business ideas in front of an evaluation committee.
- 15 potential entrepreneurs develop their own business plan.
- 50 entrepreneurs, 10 local authorities & 10 education institutions participate in the consultations with key stakeholders.



Meeting between representatives of the Alexander Innovation Zone and CO-Working partners.

### Alessandra Stamateri, participant in a CO-Working seminar

#### Was this project beneficial for you and in which way?

The answer is positive. With my participation in the CO-Working project, I gained an important basis regarding the understanding of methodologies and practices, which are applied from the conception of a business idea until its transformation into a sustainable business. The presenters managed to impart to the participants all the necessary knowledge in any business start-up. An important part of the contents was the application of practical tools included in methodologies and the networking opportunity that was given to us. We had a really productive exchange of opinions and ideas.

#### How do you think this initiative helps the community?

It affects social health, both directly and indirectly. Directly, because it helps citizens, either as potential new entrepreneurs or those at the beginning of their business journey. How? By offering us, in a short period of time, all the necessary knowledge to draw up a strategy that will make us more resistant to risks and uncertainty. Indirectly, because we, young entrepreneurs having been adequately trained, now have the ability to distinguish opportunities in various market sectors, meet emerging needs, and contribute dynamically to the development of the economy.

#### Do you think it is important for more projects like this to be organised?

I believe they are necessary for all the aforementioned reasons. Furthermore, they encourage even more young entrepreneurs to put their business idea into practice. The coordination and synergies of all involved bodies and institutions, in respective actions, is the only way to accumulate and transmit all the necessary knowledge that turns an idea into a viable business.





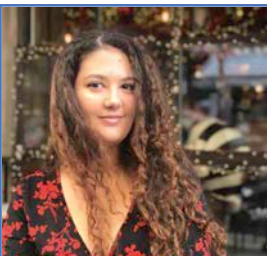
Workshop: Promotion entrepreneurship by supporting promising innovative ideas through pre-incubating mechanisms.



Region of Thessaloniki.

More information:

<https://www.thessinnozone.gr/co-working-interreg-gr/> and <https://coworking-grbg.com/>



Evangelia Paplomata

- Age: 20
- Nationality: Greek
- Region where you are deployed: Thessaloniki (Greece)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: innovation, success, essential

# Priority 3

Simplification of rules and better communication via digital tools





# Welcome the first Youth Council with a consultative role in an Interreg programme

The creation of the Alcotra Youth Council responds to the need of actively involving young people in Interreg matters

*By Doriane de Maupeou*

The Alcotra Youth Council was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2022, under the umbrella of the Interreg France-Italy Alcotra programme, after 8 months of preparation and discussions among the programme's partners and main actors. This is the first Youth Council with a consultative role in a cross-border cooperation programme. The willingness to create it arises from some recommendations expressed by youngsters in the Youth Manifesto, such as the need to involve young people in regular thematic meetings on Interreg matters and to get them to participate actively in monitoring committees. This becomes even more important in 2022, the European Year of Youth.

The idea grew up during the last programming period (2014-2020), in which many projects for young people were funded and became more

urgent when the Covid-19 pandemic changed radically young people's education, health, and insertion into society. The primary intention of this Council is to bring decision-making processes closer to young citizens and their realities. This resulted in the real involvement of youngsters from 18 to 30 living in Italian-French border regions by giving them the possibility to have their voices heard.

## **The members of the Youth Council**

Members of the Youth Council are involved in cross-border cooperation in the framework of the Alcotra programme in regions along the border between France and Italy (Haute-Savoie, Savoie, Hautes-Alpes, Alpes de Haute-Provence, Alpes-Maritimes, Province of Cuneo, Province of

Imperia, Turin metropolitan area, the autonomous region of Vallée d'Aoste). These members are 14 motivated youngsters from Italy and France representing the Alpine areas shared by both countries. And I am honoured to be one of them. We have different backgrounds and wishes, to make the Council even more essential in the decision-making process. We work closely with programme partners, sharing our ideas and suggestions on the main issues that concern this cross-border area.

I represent the Haute-Savoie department, where I come from, and the province of Turin, where I live. We are a group of students, researchers, and young workers, experts in biology, art, heritage, languages, transports, economy, policymaking, geography, and archaeology, bounded by our love for the Alps and engaged for its sustainable development. Our duties are: to participate at each Monitoring Committee, to make propositions to improve the development of our territory,

to promote / represent the Alcotra programme at the events in which the Council is invited, to follow the projects funded by the programme, to exchange with other youth councils and youth organisations, and to encounter local actors.

### How does it work in practice?

We are all living in different areas, making it difficult to see each other often, so we meet online through our dedicated digital platform once a month. On this platform, we can find all the material we need to participate in the Monitoring Committees and events in which we are implicated, the calendar with all the dates of the previous and next meetings and events, the debriefings of all meetings, all kinds of documents that we can jointly edit. We have also a WhatsApp group to facilitate communication between us and we plan to create social media accounts to share the experience with professionals and the public.



Members of the ALCOTRA Youth Council.



## Testimonial

### Marzia Danna, student in International Economy at the University of Turin and member of the ALCOTRA Youth Council



Marzia Danna is a 22 years old Italian young woman who recently graduated in International Cooperation and continued her studies with a master's in International Economy. She was born and still lives in the Italian province of Cuneo. This area has the peculiarity to be fringed by the Maritime Alps and share its border with the French department of Alpes de Haute-Provence and the department of Alpes Maritimes. During her bachelor's degree, she was at the Europe Direct office of Turin to inform herself about European opportunities for youngsters. Thanks to this meeting she could participate at the French-Italian convention 'Transnational Dialogues Italy-France on the conference about the future of Europe' in which youngsters of both countries were involved to think and

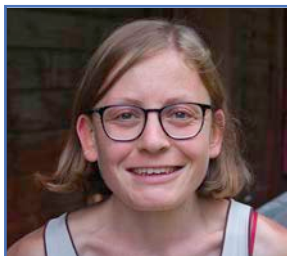
make propositions to improve the regional territorial cooperation from December 2021 to April 2022.

Her studies, adding to this her European experience, drove her to apply to the Alcotra Youth Council last May. She brings to the Council her knowledge of international cooperation, policy, history, law, and economics moreover her conviction that the Alps are not an element that divides France and Italy but on the contrary that link them more than a central government.

Marzia also wishes to improve the cooperation at the border, especially for transport and more broadly in the field of secondary education. Indeed, the Italian and French educational systems are very different, and secondary schools in rural areas have fewer exchange opportunities than the urban ones. It is still very difficult to move from one valley to another without a car, with climate change the transport service between the valleys truly needs to be enhanced. She is positive about those European experiences because she felt listened to and her opinion/propositions were truly considered.

More information:

<https://interreg-alcotra.eu/fr>



Doriane de Maupeou

- Age: 29
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are deployed: Piedmont (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: necessary, sharing, future



# Priority 4

Addressing Climate  
Change issues for a  
better future



# Montclima: Prevention and management of natural risks

France, Spain, Portugal and Andorra work together to address the natural and climatic challenges in the SUDOE mountain areas

*By Paty Nakhle*

Mountain areas in the SUDOE region (the Southwest European Area) are among the territories most affected by natural hazards which are expected to increase due to the effects of climate change (more severe droughts, higher average temperatures, and changes in the rainfall patterns). These risks do not respect administrative boundaries (for example, wildfires that cross borders in continuous forest areas) and need transnational coordination.

**Montclima aims to improve the current prevention and management approaches of natural risks closely linked to Climate Change in the SUDOE mountain area**

## How does Montclima work?

The project aims to strengthen the resilience of the SUDOE mountain territories through the prevention and management of natural risks (fires, droughts, flooding, and erosion). The approach is based on four fundamental and complementary pillars:

- Capitalisation of existing information and successful experiences.
- Elaboration of a transnational strategic framework (strategic recommendations).
- Design and implementation of 6 pilot cases in SUDOE territories.
- Transfer and dissemination of results and tools generated in the project.

One of the strengths of this project is its partnership, which brings together the relevant national and research centers, and representatives

of regional and local authorities from 4 countries: France, Spain, Portugal, and Andorra.

## Demonstrative pilot cases

And because actions speak louder than words, the novelty of Montclima lies in the six concrete action plans to address the natural and climatic challenges of the SUDOE mountain areas:

1. Use of spontaneous cover crops in vineyard cultivation to mitigate erosion risk.
2. Application of adaptive forest management in the Montnegre-Corridor Natural Park to reduce the forest's vulnerability to fire risk.
3. Implementation of silvicultural adaptive measures in a forest for protection against falling blocks in Andorra la Vella.
4. Application of nature-based measures to limit the risk of erosion and floods in a protected area in Andorra la Vella.
5. Use of LIDAR technology to monitor sediment dynamics and erosion following a major fire in the eastern French Pyrenees.
6. Implementation of a participatory and co-constructed approach to territorial resilience to natural hazards in the Valentin valley.
7. Evaluation of the erosion phenomena in a torrent after an extreme storm.

Each pilot has been complemented by the elaboration of specific action guides on how to replicate the adopted strategies on a bigger scale.

## Information accessible to everyone

Montclima has developed a web mapping tool that allows one to visualize and aggregate in a single application all the available information on the past, present, and future (potential) vulnerability of these mountain territories. In addition, the project results were transferred through 5 transnational thematic seminars and field visits.

As an IVY volunteer, I helped organise and participated in one of the important events of this project in Andorra, the last transnational seminar on strategies for torrential floods management and prevention in SUDOE mountain areas. It was structured on a series of lectures by experts in the field and field visits, with a participatory approach

to enhance the engagement of relevant stakeholders and to create a space for the exchange and transfer of tools and learned lessons.





The 5th Transnational Montclima seminar in Andorra on 20 September 2022.

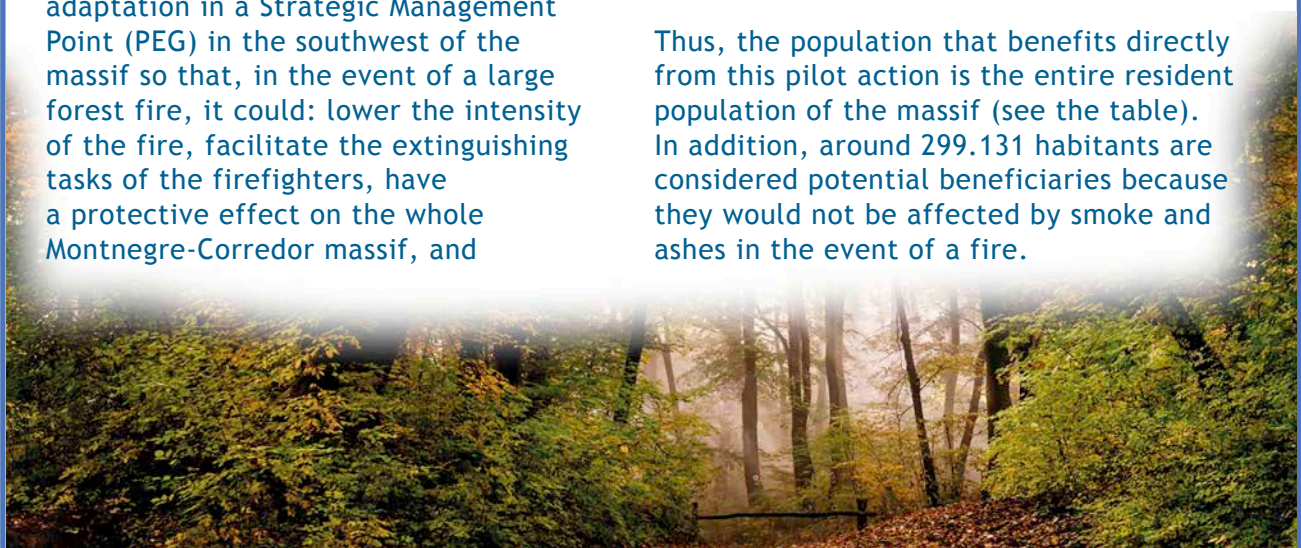
## IMPACT ON THE GROUND & TESTIMONIAL

### Diana Pascual, CREAM researcher in charge of a pilot forest management action in Holm oak forests at high risk of fire in the Catalan Coastal Mountain Range

The pilot trial consists of applying forest management for climate change adaptation in a Strategic Management Point (PEG) in the southwest of the massif so that, in the event of a large forest fire, it could: lower the intensity of the fire, facilitate the extinguishing tasks of the firefighters, have a protective effect on the whole Montnegre-Corredor massif, and

help to strengthen the forest mass to the risk of drought affectation.

Thus, the population that benefits directly from this pilot action is the entire resident population of the massif (see the table). In addition, around 299.131 habitants are considered potential beneficiaries because they would not be affected by smoke and ashes in the event of a fire.



Municipality	Beneficiary population
Arenys de Munt	8.931
Dosrius	5.481
Fogars de la Selva	920
Llavaneres	10.968
St Vicenç de Montalt	6.407
Sant Cebrià de Vallalta	3.385
Sant Iscle de Vallalta	1.332
Vallgorguina	2.854
TOTAL	40.278



The pilot trial consisted of applying forest management for climate change adaptation between February and June 2020. A monitoring network installed in July 2020 allowed recording the evolution over time of a series of indicators of Holm oak forest vulnerability to fire risks. Forest management allowed a change from moderate-high vulnerability to crown fire to moderate vulnerability one year after the intervention, and to lower vulnerability 2 years following the intervention.



Pre and post-forest management area.

**Diana explains:** “Our main objective under this pilot action is to demonstrate that forest management in SUDOE mountain forest is a key tool to reduce forest vulnerability to climate change, especially in reducing fire risk but also in increasing forest resilience to drought effects and pest attacks. We want to demonstrate, giving numbers through exhaustive monitoring of different forest

variables across time, that management can reduce in short term the vulnerability to crown fire and the decay effects of droughts in this specific Holm oak forest. Our key message is that management with criteria to reduce climate change effects can be the key to making our forests last over time, allowing the maintenance of the ecosystem services that forests provide.”

More information:

<https://www.montclima.eu/en>



**Paty Nakhle**

- Age: 27
- Nationality: Lebanese-French
- Region where you are deployed: Jaca, Spain
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you: *solidarity, sustainability, efficiency*



# Priority 5

Boosting citizens' engagement in policy-making & implementation





# The added value of cooperation: Italy and France supporting active citizenship

DAC project foresees a system that, thanks to the training spaces, will allow the territories to be made aware of European and global issues

*By Fabiana Re and Cristina Rigo*

‘Active citizenship’ is a wide term that refers to a large series of activities connected to acquiring and exercising social and civil rights. This concept can be re-shaped according to the level at which someone is acting: by signing a petition, running for city council, or group-cleaning the streets of a small city, one can be an active citizen in so many different ways.

The DAC project, financed by the cooperation programme Interreg France-Italy Alcotra, stems from the desire to optimise the skills necessary for the territory to actively contribute to the pursuit of the objectives of the Green Deal for Europe. DAC foresees a system capable of developing over the years which, thanks to the training spaces, will

allow the territories to be made aware of European and global issues and the meeting between citizens.

To sum up, DAC presents itself as a project that allows partners to work on a cross-border scale, by setting temporal objectives beyond the Alcotra programming, and by adopting a cross-border governance system serving future European policies in place.

## **DAC's objectives and outcomes**

DAC project starts exactly from the importance of being active citizens, as well as from the awareness of the impact that citizens' actions



can have at different levels. The fil rouge that interconnects the various actions of DAC is sustainable development and the European Green Deal, together with life-long education and the attainment of micro-credentials.

The outcomes of the DAC project are the creation of a cross-border coworking space at Arvier (Italy), the creation of a platform to follow some MOOCs, and the delivery of some in-person courses or seminars.

### The two key points of DAC:

- Create a territorial reference point around key competencies by actively contributing to lifelong learning.
- Stimulate, promote and support active citizenship, for instance, all those who live, work, and benefit from the territories and who have understood the importance of making their own contribution to local development and well-being.



DAC workshop.

### Learning to cooperate effectively

DAC will officially end the 31st of March 2023, and for the moment it is not yet in its 'delivering phase', meaning that the outcomes addressed to the public in the territories are still being implemented. However, the only people that so far undergone some training activities are... the partners! Project partners and technicians are not exempt from the challenges of cross-border cooperation.

The process of co-creation is complex and multileveled: by taking part in an atelier called Lego Serious Play, they engaged in a process of co-design, in order to not only create but to imagine something together, therefore making the cooperation even deeper. The logic behind cooperation and co-creation is to debunk the conviction that  $1+1$  always equals 3, and to prove that there is an added value that makes the whole greater than the sum of all its parts.

## The added value of cooperation

As it happens in many other environments in our society, to be a real leader does not only mean to show the way forward, but one has to do what it praises, and be the first to put it into practice. DAC partners really wanted to go back to the basics of

cooperation, with the objective of showing that cooperation works and works well, but it can be more efficient (and more fun) if the right methodologies and the right instruments are used.



DAC team in Brussels for a field trip at the European Commission.

## Interview

### Sara Martinengo

Project Manager of 'GAL Valli del Canavese' (a DAC partner)

**One of DAC's main focuses is training, both for citizens and local authorities. Why did you choose to include in the project also some offline training activities for the project partners?**

People working in the field of territorial development must be aware of local and global challenges; it's also important to be

constantly updated on the best available tools to effectively work as part of a team and on the most advantageous European opportunities. Thanks to the training, we'll be able to create higher value for the territories and have a greater impact. We preferred offline training because we witnessed the added value of face-to-face meetings, which lies in the mutual exchange

and in the sharing of acquired knowledge with others.

### How did you select the training topics?

We opted for multi-faceted training which would allow us to have an even greater impact on our territories. The first training we carried out was based on the Lego Serious Play methodology, designed to develop effective team working skills and to build common visions in an inclusive and collaborative manner. We will now focus on learning how to use functional tools and approaches for project management and co-design.

Next year there's a training on European funds planned, so that each partner gains more awareness of the opportunities existing at the European Union's level and is able to develop sound project proposals coherent with the territory's needs. Last, we're taking part in a training about the causes and the effects of climate change next December: we believe it's essential to be able to link the actions taken at the local level with the global challenges.

### Can you tell us something more about the Lego Serious Play workshop?

Such a constructive and positive two-day experience! During the training's first meeting we worked on our individual and professional identity and on the aspirational vision of our work team, while during the second meeting we focused on the factors which may facilitate or hinder the achievement of this vision. We also reflected on which could be our 'place in the system', namely the work field in which we could reach the most impactful results thanks to our 'super powers'.

### What is the expected impact of DAC on the project team?

DAC is expected to have a strong impact on the project partners, not only because of the planned training activities but most of all because of the synergic work we will have to do for the success of the project. It will surely strengthen our ability to cooperate!

## Impact and expected results

- Project partners involved: 5
- Duration: 15 months
- Target number of in-person courses: 7
- Target number of online courses on DAC platform: 6
- Target number of DAC platform users: 410
- Project's target group: local authorities, young students and workers, citizens willing to deepen their knowledge
- Online courses' topics: European institutions, cross-border cooperation, climate change, sustainable development of mountain and rural areas
- Creation of a cross-border coworking in order to enhance the collaboration and the contamination among professionals, students, and researchers and to build a community of practice with constant need for training and exchange



Canavese Valleys is one of the regions involved in DAC project.

More information:

<https://www.interreg-alcotra.eu/fr/dac-developing-active-citizenship>

<https://www.interreg-alcotra.eu/it/dac-developing-active-citizenship>



**Fabiana Re**

- Age: 26
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are deployed: Canavese Valleys (Italy)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: participation, future, innovation.



**Cristina Rigo**

- Age: 24
- Nationality: Italian
- Region where you are deployed: Savoie Region (France)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: growth, solutions, listening.



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