

Interreg Italia–Svizzera

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The second institution of cross-border cooperation is financial. Since the 1990s the European Union's programmes of European Territorial Cooperation have included a programme for the Italian–Swiss border. The Canton of Graubünden has taken part since 1996.¹ The current programme, Interreg VI-A Italia–Svizzera 2021–2027, covers on the Swiss side the cantons of Ticino, Valais and Graubünden and on the Italian side the Regions of Lombardy, Piedmont and Aosta Valley and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. In its message of 11 May 2022 the Ticino government stated the programme's financial framework: EUR 103 million from the European Regional Development Fund, CHF 10.74 million from the Confederation and a cantonal credit of CHF 5 million requested from the Grand Council, equivalent to about CHF 800,000 a year. Ticino acts as the coordinating canton for the Swiss participants.²

The asymmetry of the figures reflects the legal position. Switzerland is not a member of the European Union and cannot draw on the Structural Funds. Swiss partners in Interreg projects are financed by the Confederation under the New Regional Policy and by the cantons, while Italian partners receive European money. The priorities of the 2021–2027 programme are innovation and technology transfer, adaptation to climate change and resilience, sustainable and cross-border mobility, tourism and the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage.³ In the preceding period 2014–2020 the programme supported 64 cross-border projects with Ticinese participation, carried by municipalities, hospitals, universities and regional development agencies.⁴

For the financial centre, Interreg is of indirect importance. It does not finance banks or trading houses. It does finance part of the infrastructure, the research cooperation and the public services that make the region function as one labour market. Several projects in the fields of mobility and health have addressed exactly the problems that the commuting of tens of

thousands of workers creates: congestion at the border crossings, the coordination of public transport, and the shortage of nurses on the Italian side, whose staff is attracted by Swiss hospitals.

Essentials. The Insubric region is a functional region formed by Ticino, the Italian border provinces of Como, Varese and Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and, in a wider sense, the metropolitan area of Milan. Its formal institution, the Comunità di lavoro Regio Insubrica, was founded by a pact of 19 January 1995. It is a working community without legal personality, based on the cantons' limited treaty-making power (Art. 56 Cst.) and the Council of Europe's Outline Convention of 1980. Cross-border projects are financed through Interreg VI-A Italia–Svizzera 2021–2027, with EUR 103 million of European money for the Italian partners and federal and cantonal money for the Swiss partners. Decisions on taxation, labour market access and social security remain with the national governments.

1 Notes

1. Canton of Graubünden, media release of 26 October 2023 on the programme Interreg Italia–Svizzera 2021–2027, <https://www.gr.ch/IT/media/Comunicati/MMStaka/2023/Seiten/2023102601.aspx> (participation since 1996; cantonal contribution of CHF 3,206,000). ↩
2. Gran Consiglio del Cantone Ticino, report of 7 June 2022 on message no. 8149 of 11 May 2022, https://www4.ti.ch/fileadmin/POTERI/GC/allegati/rapporti/26700_8149%20R.pdf. ↩
3. Canton of Graubünden, media release of 26 October 2023 (above). Federal Act of 6 October 2006 on Regional Policy, SR 901.0, Art. 6 (financial aid for Swiss participation in cross-border programmes and projects that increase value creation in a border region or are of strategic national importance), <https://www.droit-bilingue.ch/de-it/9/90/901.0-6-9.html>. ↩
4. Report on message no. 8149 (above). ↩

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