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From the Baltic Sea to the Alps: How the EU is shaping a sustainable future through local projects

Brussels (ots) -

The European Union's cohesion policy is much more than an abstract funding instrument – it directly transforms lives at the local level. Through the project "EU4regions", multimedia and journalistic content is being created to make this transformation visible.

Over the course of 12 months, innovative solutions and cross-border collaborations supported by EU cohesion policy are being showcased. At the heart of this initiative are pioneering projects from Germany and its neighboring countries, demonstrating how EU funds can be used strategically to address local challenges and foster sustainable development.

From smart farming and clean water to digital tourism and vibrant cultural initiatives – the wide array of projects illustrates the power of cross-border cooperation. Supported by the EU funding instrument Interreg, these initiatives focus on collaboration, sustainability, and regional strength. The following projects have already been featured through EU4regions:

Regio-Plants: The future of food lies in the region

How can plant-based raw ingredients be grown, stored, and used more sustainably? That's the central question behind the "Regio-Plants" project, which has initiated close cooperation between Bavaria and Upper Austria. The Technical University of Munich, the Austrian Drug Screening Institute, and other partners are researching ways to produce regional food that is both healthier and more environmentally friendly. The project not only strengthens scientific research but also raises awareness about regional value chains.

APRIORA: Wastewater treatment for clean drinking water

Residues of pharmaceuticals in water are an increasing environmental concern. The project "APRIORA", coordinated by the University of Rostock, is developing innovative methods to analyze and assess such contaminants. Through measurements and simulations, it lays the groundwork for targeted action in wastewater treatment. The project also connects stakeholders from research, administration, and policy across the Baltic Sea region.

Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearls: Culture strengthens social cohesion

Making smaller towns and regions along the Baltic Sea more attractive – that's the goal of the "Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearls" project. By engaging the public in cultural activities, it fosters a stronger sense of community. The initiative proves that culture is more than a location factor – it also enhances resilience and quality of life, especially in structurally weak areas.

ResKuh: Smart solutions for animal welfare

In the "ResKuh" project, German and French partners are developing a digital solution to improve animal welfare in dairy farming. Sensors monitor cows' health data in real time, enabling farmers to take early action. This innovative technology stands as a model for modern, sustainable agriculture across borders.

Liveable Alpine region: Digitalisation meets sustainable tourism

How can digitalisation make tourism in the Alps more environmentally friendly? That question is at the center of another German-Austrian project. It shows how smart data processing can better manage visitor flows – protecting nature while enhancing the travel experience.

Borderless Landscape: Nature conservation knows no borders

With hedgerows, waterways, and community engagement, the "Borderless Landscape" project connects habitats across Germany and the Netherlands. The aim: more biodiversity and climate resilience – across national borders. AKWA: Early warning system for environmental hazards The Ritterbach stream in the German-Czech border area serves as a model: The "AKWA" project uses it as a natural monitoring system for environmental pollution. The

collected data is analyzed both locally and cross-border – a clear example of how scientific cooperation can drive tangible environmental protection.

MoPA: Exploring and experiencing protected areas together

The German-Polish project "MoPA" is developing a socio-economic monitoring system for protected areas. It goes beyond collecting scientific data, placing emphasis on dialogue with local communities. The goal is to harmonise conservation efforts with public engagement – supported by new educational and informational offerings.

Viva la Fauna: Protecting biodiversity – together

Another German-Polish project focuses on the reintroduction of endangered animal species. "Viva la Fauna" brings together conservation organizations, scientists, and public authorities to restore habitats and raise awareness about biodiversity. Species protection thus becomes a cross-border community effort.

Building Bridges Between Neighbours – Rediscovering the German-Czech border region

The "Building Bridges Between Neighbours" project strengthens cultural and social ties in the German-Czech border region. Through joint events and upgraded infrastructure at the border, a renewed sense of community is emerging – all supported by targeted EU funding.

United for a more sustainable Europe

All the projects presented so far make one thing clear: EU cohesion policy works – tangibly, locally, and sustainably. It brings people together, strengthens regions, and contributes to a greener, fairer, and more connected Europe. Cross-border cooperation is not an end in itself – it is key to tackle the major challenges of our time.

In the coming weeks, EU4regions will continue its project series. Upcoming features include **Citylogistic 2.0**, a German-Austrian initiative to develop a sustainable parcel delivery system for last-mile logistics in city centers – reducing emissions and easing traffic. Also in focus will be **Rhinaissance 2.0** – a German-French initiative aimed at revitalizing the Rhine's river natural habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and restoring fish migration routes.

More information

For more about "EU4regions" and the latest project features from across the regions, visit:

<https://www.presseportal.de/nr/177283>

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Funding note

The "EU4regions" project receives funding from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO).

Description of the project:

Cohesion policy has defined clear objectives for the 2021-2027 funding period: A smart Europe through innovation, a greener, low-carbon Europe, a more connected Europe, a more social Europe and a Europe that is closer to its citizens. Sustainable challenges are becoming the focus of society, particularly in Germany and its neighbouring countries. The "EU4regions" project will produce high-quality multimedia and journalistic information on cohesion policy and then disseminate it widely. Within 12 months, Interreg projects from Western and Eastern Germany and neighbouring countries/regions will be presented to highlight local challenges. The countries concerned are Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and Denmark. Our thematic focus is on sustainability, whereby we understand sustainability as a whole. Although climate issues are at the centre of attention, they are complemented by economic and social aspects. The aim is to show how EU cohesion policy affects regions and people.

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