

NEWSLETTER

INTERREG IPA ROMANIA–SERBIA PROGRAMME

New European Bauhaus

Decorative design: New European Bauhaus.

The New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable, together page 2

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an **interdisciplinary initiative** launched by the European Commission in 2020.

It expresses the European Union's ambition of creating beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive places, products and ways of living.

It is inspiring several bottom-up projects and initiatives that test and demonstrate NEB ideas and actions.



Decorative design: NEB Logo.



Decorative photo: Evaluation results.

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The New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable and together

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an interdisciplinary initiative launched in 2020 by the European Commission. It expresses the EU's ambition of creating beautiful, sustainable, and inclusive places, products and ways of living. It is inspiring a number of bottom-up projects and initiatives that test and demonstrate NEB ideas and actions.

The New European Bauhaus was launched to translate the European Green Deal into tangible change on the ground that improves our daily life, in buildings, in public spaces, but also in fashion or furniture.

Decorative photo: NEB grid.

It aims at creating a new lifestyle that matches sustainability with good design, that needs less carbon and that is inclusive and affordable for all, while respecting the diversity that we have in Europe and beyond.

This novel, innovation-based initiative filters innovation not only through the lens of sustainability, but also through those of equal access, affordability and acceptance.

The New European Bauhaus tackles the three most urgent problems in Europe today (climate change, energy dependency, and social segregation) and should be a horizontal theme for all EU-funded projects. However, despite a single project's efforts, more impact is created only by pulling together resources for creating synergies and complementarities among our actions.

Both climate change and energy independence can be tackled by making our spaces more energy efficient and using sustainable materials in their rehabilitation. These shall improve the health and living & working standards by upgrading thermal comfort and air quality. Moreover, improving indoor climate leads unequivocally to higher productivity rates and better learning abilities.

Not only that energy-efficiency upgrades and consumption of energy in a sustainable way will reduce the environmental impact and protect the health of our communities, contributing at the same time to an economic sustainable development, but also combined with renewable energy will reduce our energy dependency and the air pollution, making our societies and our citizens less vulnerable, helping to avoid greenhouse gas emissions and protect communities from the dangerous effects of climate change and pollution.

The New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable and together

Moreover, fostering a healthy and a sustainable living by improving and rehabilitating our spaces, can offer opportunities for connection and social interaction, including for people at risk of exclusion or poverty.

These common goals may be the very binding element that creates a sense of belonging, helping us to avoid spatial segregation of social groups and creating sense of togetherness, across our communities.

Investing in sustainable, energy efficient spaces, shall also boost the local economies by stimulating local innovative industries, creating sustainable jobs and long-term economy and financial benefits, while making the built environment more attractive.

One of the main challenges for the NEB initiative was to mobilize funds to support and incentivize innovative and transdisciplinary projects that embody its values and enable the Green Deal on the ground. A special focus has been put on innovation, the link between culture and technology and the funding of smaller initiatives and projects.

NEB and Western Balkans



New European Bauhaus
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Europe's climate neutrality cannot be achieved without the EU joining efforts with the Western Balkans, which are at the very heart of Europe. Just as the Green Deal sets clear objectives for the EU Member States, the Green Agenda sets these objectives for the Western Balkans, balancing the short-term needs with the long-term goals.

While the New European Bauhaus has sustainability at its core, alongside with aesthetics and inclusiveness, having the Western Balkans included in the New European Bauhaus Prize competition, recognizes once again the need of pulling together all the resources for reaching the climate neutrality objective by 2050.

Unity in diversity is what makes us Europeans, whether we live inside or outside the EU and joining efforts into making our communities lives more sustainable and beautiful will enhance our sense of belonging to the European family.

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The New European Bauhaus: beautiful, sustainable and together

NEB in the Interreg IPA Romania – Serbia Programme

In the 2021 – 2027 programming phase, we have done an inventory of all public spaces, such as old, abandoned, and industrial facilities, to see which could benefit from EU financing and be considered for regeneration, transformation and re-use. We aim to regenerate these, because they already have a negative environmental and aesthetic impact and give them back to our communities to be used for cultural/ educational purposes, where our citizens can meet and connect.



Decorative photos: inspiration from projects which applied NEB principles.

Creating stronger connections with nature, embracing sustainability and inclusion, while tackling unsustainable use of resources are cross-cutting objectives of our actions in the 2021 – 2027 programming period and the New European Bauhaus does not only give us the chance to approach these in an integrated manner, but is also giving us a voice and a platform where to present our outstanding results and contribute to the change we wish to see in our societies.

Of course, we have tried over the years to embed sustainability into our projects and we are regenerating our spaces with aesthetics principles considered. We have also tried to make our projects more inclusive and increase the feeling of belonging, but until now these were three separate elements and not all projects considered all of them. With the New European Bauhaus, all these principles are combined into a single and inseparable one.

Seeing the New European Bauhaus as an element of context in all EU funded projects can only bring more added value into our actions, whereas its impact on the ground, transforming the places through regeneration, re-purposing of the old, degraded and abandoned facilities and giving them back to the communities for educational, cultural or touristic purposes can only enrich the life of our citizens.

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The Journey towards an Accessible Europe

Introduction

Imagine a Europe where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can access and enjoy digital content, products, and services seamlessly. This vision is becoming a reality thanks to two groundbreaking pieces of legislation: the European Web Accessibility Directive and the European Accessibility Act. These directives are not only transforming the lives of individuals with disabilities but are also paving the way for enhanced cross-border cooperation and the free movement of goods and services across the continent.

The European Web Accessibility Directive: A Commitment to Digital Inclusion

In 2016, the European Union took a significant step towards inclusivity by adopting the European Web Accessibility Directive. This directive mandates that public sector websites and mobile applications be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. The goal is clear: to ensure that everyone can perceive, operate, understand, and interact with online content without barriers.

Public sector bodies, such as government agencies, hospitals, and universities, are at the forefront of this digital revolution. They are required to provide text alternatives for non-text content, ensure functionality is accessible via a keyboard, and make content adaptable to different needs. This directive is not just about compliance; it's about creating a digital environment where everyone feels included and empowered.

The European Accessibility Act: A Broader Scope for Inclusivity

Three years later, in 2019, the EU expanded its commitment to accessibility with the European Accessibility Act. This act goes beyond digital content to cover a wide range of products and services. From computers and smartphones to ATMs and e-books, the act ensures that these products and services are designed with accessibility in mind.

Imagine a world where using an ATM or reading an e-book is equally accessible to someone with a disability as it is to someone without one. The European Accessibility Act is making this vision a reality by setting harmonized standards across the EU. This means that whether you are in Romania or Sweden, you can expect the same high level of accessibility.



Decorative photos: Inclusion, accessibility (source: Canva).

The Journey towards an Accessible Europe

Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation and Projects

The impact of these directives extends beyond individual users to foster greater cross-border cooperation and projects. By standardizing accessibility requirements, the EU is creating a unified framework that enables countries to work together more effectively.

Think of a digital service designed in France that needs to be deployed in Germany. With unified standards, developers can be confident that their service will meet accessibility requirements in both countries, reducing duplication of effort and fostering innovation. Member states can share resources, technologies, and best practices, while projects financed Interreg IPA can produce a spill-over effect on this in EU's neighbourhood, making it easier to collaborate on projects that benefit everyone.

Facilitating the Mobility of Goods and Services

One of the most significant benefits of these directives is the facilitation of the free movement of accessible goods and services across the EU. Businesses no longer have to navigate a patchwork of national accessibility standards, making it easier to expand their reach across borders.

Uniform accessibility standards also build consumer confidence. When people know that products and services meet the same high standards of accessibility, regardless of where they are produced or consumed, they are more likely to engage with them. This increased participation drives economic growth and fosters a more inclusive economy.

Usability for All: A Universal Design Approach

At the heart of these directives is the principle of universal design, which aims to make products and services usable by everyone, regardless of their abilities. This approach not only benefits people with disabilities but also enhances the overall user experience for everyone.

Consider the example of closed captioning on videos. Initially designed for people with hearing impairments, closed captions also benefit those in noisy environments or those who speak different languages. Similarly, features like clear navigation and simple interfaces make digital content more intuitive and user-friendly for all users.

The push for accessibility is also driving technological advancements. The development and integration of assistive technologies, such as screen readers and voice recognition software, are becoming more prevalent. These technologies not only assist those with disabilities but also improve the overall functionality and interoperability of digital products and services.

By promoting standards that ensure compatibility with assistive technologies, the directives enhance the ease with which users can switch between devices and platforms. This interoperability is crucial as we move towards an increasingly digital future.

The Journey towards an Accessible Europe

Conclusion: A More Inclusive Europe

The European Web Accessibility Directive and the European Accessibility Act are more than just legislative measures; they are steps toward a more inclusive and accessible Europe and Interreg IPA is one of the main tools ensuring the spread over in the Western Balkans of these standards. By standardizing accessibility requirements, these directives are enhancing cross-border cooperation, facilitating the mobility of goods and services, and improving usability for all users, including those with disabilities.

As we continue to embrace these directives, it is essential for public sector bodies, businesses, and developers to integrate accessibility into their core practices. By doing so, we can ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate in and benefit from the digital age.

Together, we are building a Europe where accessibility is the norm, not the exception, within and outside the EU.

Evaluation results: 22 projects worth €30.4 million to receive funding through the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme

During the **Fifth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee** for the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme on September 5, 2024, **22 projects worth €30.4 million** were approved for funding.

These projects focus on environmental protection, emergency management, and economic and social development in the border region.



The initiatives aim to enhance health infrastructure, civil protection, and disaster management capacity in the border area. This includes acquiring advanced equipment and providing professional training for medical and emergency personnel.

Furthermore, funding will support the development of socio-medical services for vulnerable populations and innovative tourism products to showcase historical landmarks and natural attractions in the border region.

Projects in focus

Project RORS-353: Mental healthcare for the inclusive community growth



1. The EU envisions significant improvements in mental health care for children all levels:

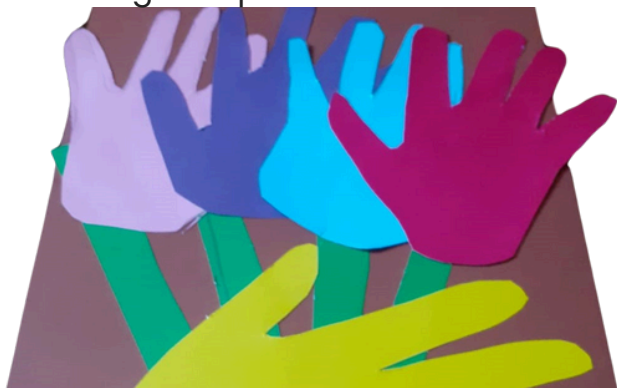
- a shift towards community-based and accessible services, addressing systemic issues of delayed diagnosis;
- an integrated support tailored to each child's needs, enhancing community awareness and early intervention practices.
- innovative approaches to mental health care, prioritizing the well-being of children and families across borders.

2. **Compassion and empathy** – recognizing vulnerabilities and the significance of providing support and care during critical development stages.

Inclusion and equity – ensuring that all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to mental health support and services.

3. The lead target group experiences enhanced mental health outcomes and improved access to support services, leading to healthier and more resilient communities.

4. Investing in mental health care aligns with the EU's commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring that every European has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and productive life.



HERE ARE THE ANSWERED QUESTIONS:

1. EU Vision – what will be the desired ultimate status? At local/national/European level.

2. What is the value of this priority to be communicated in our messages?

3. What is the benefit of this priority in the lead target group?

4. Why is the EU investing in this area/how will each European benefit?



Collage of project results.

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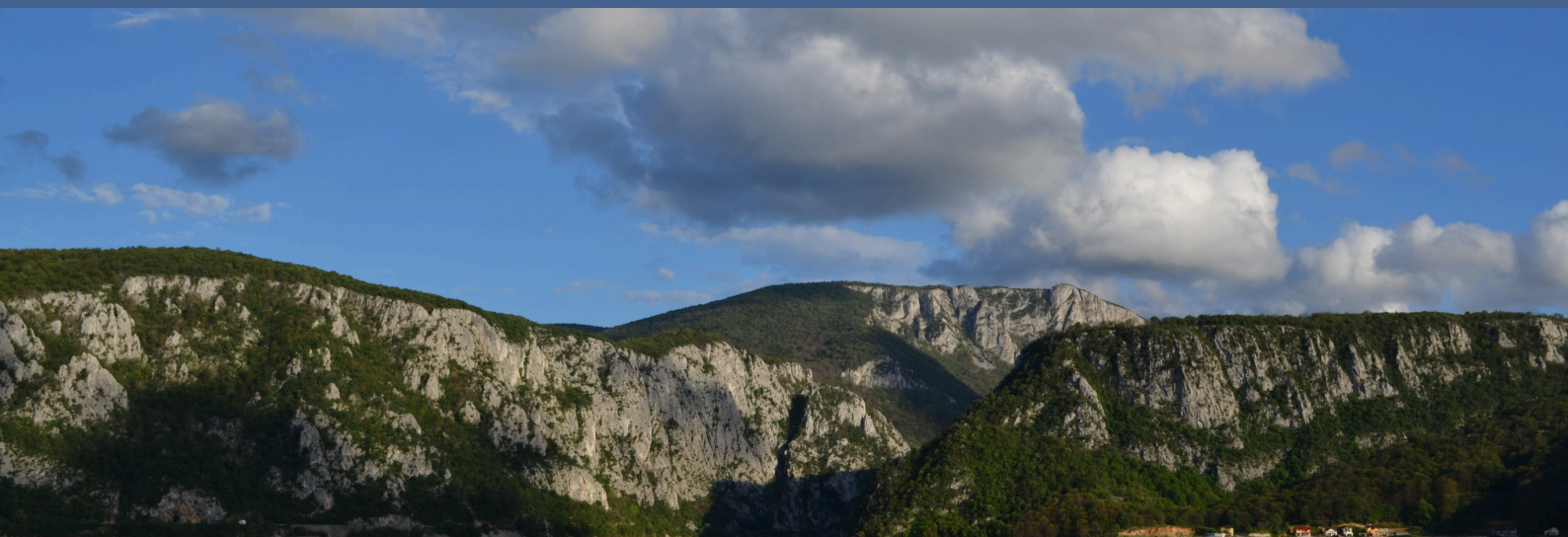


Photo of the Danube between Romania and Serbia.

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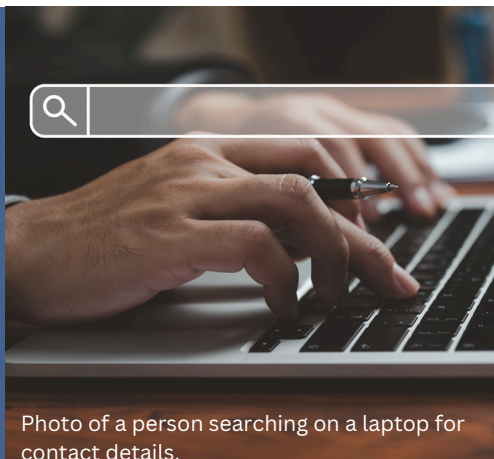


Photo of a person searching on a laptop for contact details.

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