

# NEWSLETTER

## INTERREG IPA ROMANIA–SERBIA PROGRAMME



Photo taken at the conference organized by the winners of the RegioStars Competition in Timisoara on the 21st of March 2024.

### RegioStars Winner, page 2

European Commission representatives, authorities and beneficiaries of the Interreg-IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Romania-Serbia Programme gathered on the 21st of March 2024 in Timisoara to celebrate the winning of the RegioStars Award by a Romanian-Serbian cross-border cooperation project.



Photo of the RegioStars Trophy

### Visit to MEDICARE project, page 3



Decorative photo: a laptop with a virtual lock.

### Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities, page 4

Main contributions to the 2030 Objectives from the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia perspective

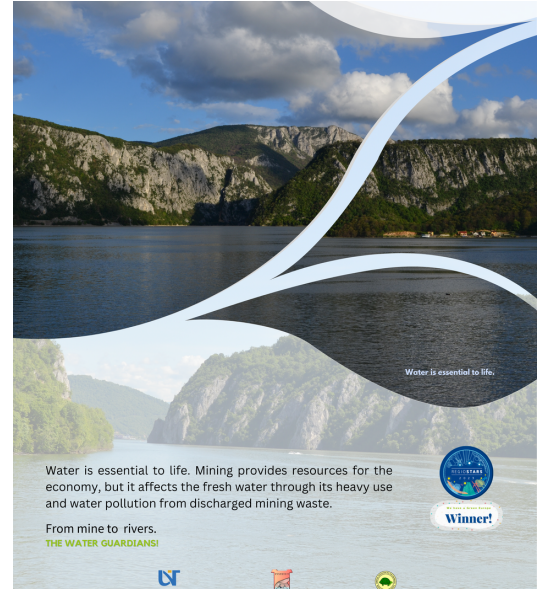
### Projects in focus, page 7

# RegioStars Winner

Romanian-Serbian Cross-Border Cooperation Project awarded by the European Commission, celebrated in Timișoara on the 21st of March 2024

With the non-reimbursable financial support of the European Union, the West University of Timișoara, the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy from Bor (Republic of Serbia), together with the Ecological Collaboration Group Nera Caraș-Severin, have utilized their expertise in research and education to provide a **solution** for the **rehabilitation** and **protection** of the **environment** in the Romanian-Serbian cross-border area.

The event marked the beginning of communication activities supported by the European Union for the **RORS-337 project**: "ROmania Serbia NETwork for assessing and disseminating the impact of copper mining activities on water quality in the cross-border area," co-funded by the European Union under the Interreg-IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Romania-Serbia Programme.



Poster exhibited at the event on the 21st of March depicting the Danube River.

## "FROM MINE TO RIVER. THE WATER GUARDIANS!"

The project participated in the RegioStars competition under the name "From Mine to River. The Water Guardians!" and won the RegioStars 2023 Award in the category "A Green Europe." 228 projects co-funded by the European Union took part in the competition.

The event was attended by Monika Hencsey, Director for Communication (Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission), H.E. Silvia Davidoiu, the Ambassador of Romania to the Republic of Serbia, Prof. Dr. Enache Cosmin, Vice-Rector of the West University of Timișoara, Sanda Šimic, Deputy Minister (Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia), Oana Cristea, Head of the Managing Authority for the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme, and Anca Lolescu, Executive Director (ROCBC Timișoara).



Photo of the Winners of the RegioStars 2023 competition on stage, holding their trophies.

**RegioStars** is a competition dedicated to the best projects funded by the European Union that demonstrate the impact and inclusion of regional development, confirming the positive actions taken by project teams to bring valuable changes within the local communities they represent, as well as to inspire other projects across Europe.

# Empowering Healthcare: Transforming Lives through MEDICARE

Romanian-Serbian Cross-Border Cooperation Project receives a visit from the European Commission on the 20th of March 2024

On the 20th of March, the MEDICARE project team received the visit of Monika Hencsey, Director of Communication and General Affairs within the General Directorate for Regional and Urban Policies of the European Commission, who verified the results of the cross-border project, as well as the benefits that its implementation brought to the communities of the two regions.

The project was implemented by two partners: the "Victor Babes" University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara, Romania, and the General Hospital "Sveti Luka" Smederevo, Republic of Serbia, with European Union funds received through the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Romania-Serbia Programme.



Photo of Alexandru Bliđișel, Monika Hencsey, Anca Lolescu, Cristian Oancea and project team standing next to each other in the medical laboratory rehabilitated with EU funds.

Hundreds of doctors and nurses from the region were trained in different specializations, and thousands of patients from Timis, Caras-Severin, and Mehedinti counties have benefited from online screening for gastric, colon, prostate, and cervical cancer. Free investigations to detect diabetes were also performed.

In Smederevo, over 100 patients have undergone arthroscopy surgeries free of charge, marking a significant milestone in the region's medical landscape. However, the project's impact goes beyond numbers; it fosters a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange among specialists. Through its extensive network, the Pius Brânzeu Centre from Timisoara serves as a hub for sharing best practices and driving innovation in surgical techniques, ultimately raising the bar for healthcare standards.

## Medical Infrastructure for the Development of Excellence Surgical Services in the Cross-Border Area (MEDICARE, project RORS-467)

- Developing the Romanian-Serbian cross-border healthcare infrastructure;
- Increasing the quality of surgery services by providing access to training courses for doctors and health specialists;
- Performing screening procedures for the population, aiming to identify pathologies in the early stages of their development.

# Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities

Main contributions to the 2030 Objectives from the Interreg IPA Romania–Serbia perspective

The **next 5 years** will bring a set of unprecedented cybersecurity **challenges** and **opportunities**, in a rapidly evolving **cybersecurity landscape**. Seizing opportunities and mitigating risks will be at the core for decision-makers.

This is the main reason why **Cybersecurity Futures 2030**, a foresight-focused research initiative that aims to inform cybersecurity strategic planning around the globe, becomes a powerful tool to tilt the digital world in a direction that is more secure, while navigating in the world of flux.



Decorative photo: Man standing in front of digitally-produced cyber security icons.

The 2030 objectives for global societies involve negotiating a fair return on investment in responsible data use, transformative investment in cybersecurity talent and enabling trust in the digital realm.

Main priorities and potential actions include global access to **cyber self-education** through partnerships with educational institutions, **fostering home-grown cyber talent**, **promoting cyber literacy in the general population** and **attracting skilled international cyber labour** through strategic partnerships and innovation branding.

## What is the contribution of the Interreg IPA Romania–Serbia Programme?

Long-lasting cooperation between Romanian and Serbian partners has resulted in strong functional ties within the programme area. Both countries are now facing not only the need to decrease the disparities between the programme area and other EU regions, but also the need to manage the ongoing transition to a more digitalised, greener and resilient society.

# Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities

Main contributions to the 2030 Objectives from the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia perspective

## HEALTH

The Programme area challenges, with an aging population, outdated health care system and lack of digitalization across all areas of economy and society, can bring additional risks related to social security with possible spill-over effects in the life of the border communities.

It is now more relevant than ever to build more resilient health and education systems, which in the long run likely will trigger permanent and structural changes in social and economic life.

Enabling real-time exchange of information between public authorities, organisations and individuals, with key data collected in a decentralised and synchronised manner, will increase the effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of public service.

With a large majority of rural and remote territories, a low distribution or old health care infrastructure and equipment, there is a need to diminish the disparities in accessibility to health care services of the population in the border area and this can be done through the process of digitalisation in health care.



Decorative photo: Doctor standing next to digitally-produced health care icons.

## EDUCATION

The programme proposes a comprehensive approach regarding the educational field, tackling actions that support investment in both infrastructure and purchase of equipment (e.g. specific equipment allowing gain of practical experience, vocational and technical skills, equipment allowing for development of technical skills and digital competences, etc.).

Special attention will be dedicated to digital education and trainings to improve the overall level of digital skills and competences and to investments in facilitating access to ICT devices, especially for young people in rural and remote areas.



Decorative photo: Youth studying.

# Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities

Main contributions to the 2030 Objectives from the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia perspective

## CULTURE AND TURISM

While there is a need to support the restarting of the tourism and culture sectors, after the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting the activities to manage the ongoing transition to a more digitalised, greener and more resilient society, add a new challenge. Thus, lack of digitalization across the touristic and culture sectors, alongside with the need for digital education and trainings to improve the overall level of digital skills and competences, add a new layer of risks and consequences, as the use of modern digital technologies is a necessity for an integrated management of these sectors.

Keeping a strong focus on resilience and competitiveness, the financed measures under this specific objective will ensure social inclusion and social innovation, as well as support for green and digital re-skilling and up-skilling, creating resilient and sustainable jobs and the employment of people with vulnerable background.

Moreover, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and the Internet of Things, can help transform public services by addressing the challenges of digital and sustainable growth.



Decorative photo: Backpacker on a mountain top looking over a mountainous view.

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Considering the programme's commitment to social sustainability and strengthening the local economy, measures that would ensure social inclusion and social innovation, as well as support for green and digital re-skilling and up-skilling (as to support the creation of resilient and sustainable jobs and the employment of people with vulnerable background), are being encouraged, in order to ensure a positive impact on the local communities.

**And don't forget!**  
In the run-up to 2030, it seems that resilience, humour and optimism are key!



Decorative photo: eco-footprint concept with blue butterfly and green moss.

# Projects in focus

Project RORS-394 **Through knowledge to business and smart development of Banat**



1. The **EU Vision** aims to foster a comprehensive and inclusive approach to enhancing employability and economic development at local, national, and European levels, particularly focusing on the youth in border areas. The desired ultimate status at all levels is to create a resilient, innovative, and inclusive European society where young people are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a modern, dynamic labour market.
2. **Lifelong learning** – this value is critical for individuals and societies to remain competitive in a global economy and adapt to technological advancements. **Empowerment and inclusion** – reflects the project's commitment to providing young people, especially those in vulnerable groups, with the skills and opportunities needed to succeed in the labour market.
3. The benefits for the lead target group are thus multifaceted, addressing immediate economic needs while also fostering personal growth, community development, and cross-border cooperation. These advantages collectively contribute to building a more **inclusive, innovative, and cohesive society**.
4. In essence, the EU's investment in projects that improve **employability** and **foster innovation among youth in border areas** serves to strengthen the Union's economic base, promote social inclusion, ensure regional stability, and advance its technological and environmental objectives. **Every European benefits from these investments through a more robust economy, cohesive society, stable region, and sustainable development pathways.**

## 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?**

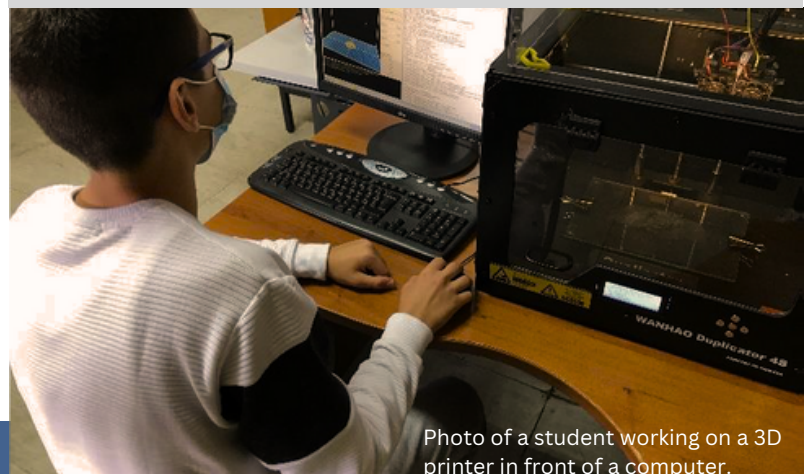


Photo of a student working on a 3D printer in front of a computer.

# INTERREG IPA ROMANIA–SERBIA PROGRAMME

The responsibility for the content of this material is that of the authors. The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and any changes are indicated.

In case of any complaints, contact [romania-serbia@mdlpa.gov.ro](mailto:romania-serbia@mdlpa.gov.ro)

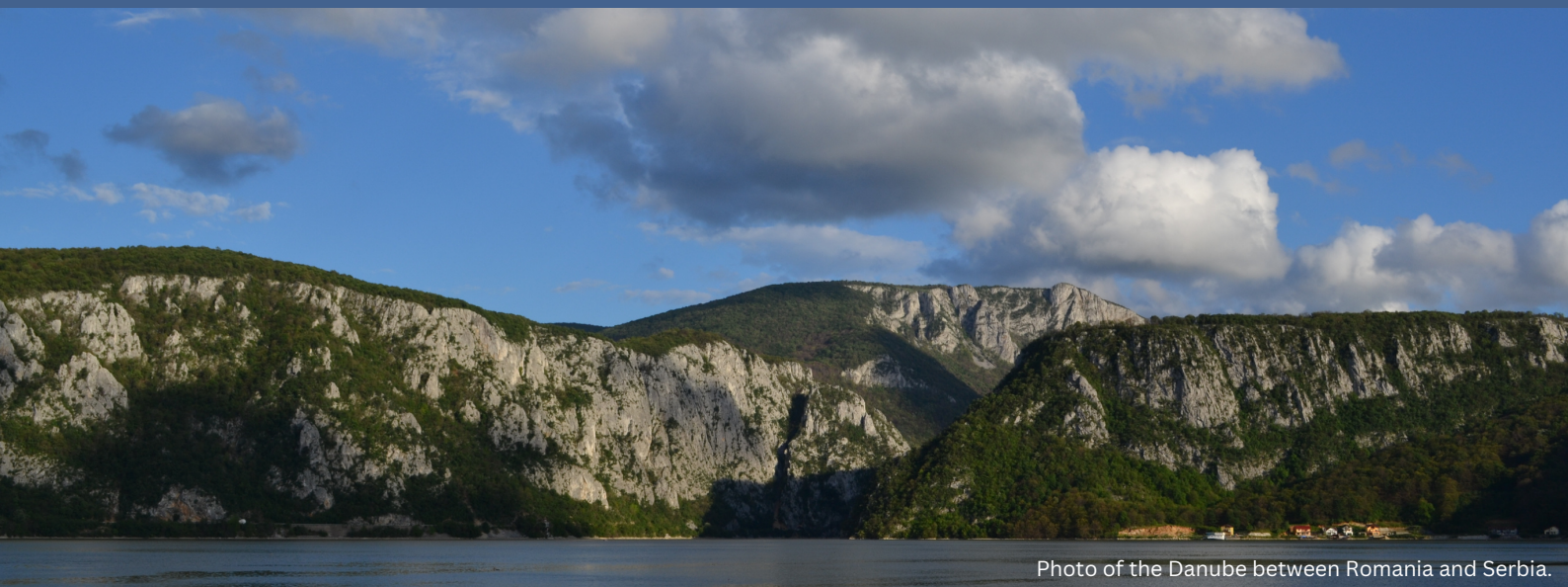


Photo of the Danube between Romania and Serbia.

**Managing Authority:** Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration  
No. 16 Libertății Boulevard, North Side, Sector 5, Bucharest, Postal Code 050706, ROMANIA  
Tel.: +40.372.111.309; Fax: +40.372.111.456  
E-mail: [romania-serbia@mdlpa.gov.ro](mailto:romania-serbia@mdlpa.gov.ro)  
[www.mdlpa.ro](http://www.mdlpa.ro)

**National Authority:** Ministry of European Integration  
Nemanjina 34, 11000 Belgrade, SERBIA  
Tel./ Fax: +381(11)3061-100/+381 (11) 3061-110  
E-mail: [office@mei.gov.rs](mailto:office@mei.gov.rs)  
[www.mei.gov.rs](http://www.mei.gov.rs)

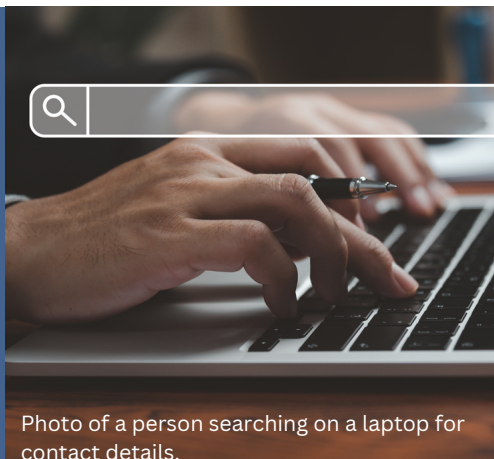


Photo of a person searching on a laptop for contact details.

**Joint Secretariat:** Regional Office for Cross-border Cooperation Timisoara  
Proclamatia de la Timisoara Street, no 5, 1st floor, 300054, Timisoara, ROMANIA  
Tel.: +40.356.426.360; Fax: +40.356.426.361  
Helpdesk service for the public: [ipacbc@brct-timisoara.ro](mailto:ipacbc@brct-timisoara.ro)

**JS Antenna:** Ministry of European Integration  
Makedonska 11 street, 23000 Zrenjanin, SERBIA  
Tel: +381(0)23515965, +381 60 315 99 00, +381656693770  
E-mail: [stana.babic@mei.gov.rs](mailto:stana.babic@mei.gov.rs), [biljana.guzina@mei.gov.rs](mailto:biljana.guzina@mei.gov.rs)