



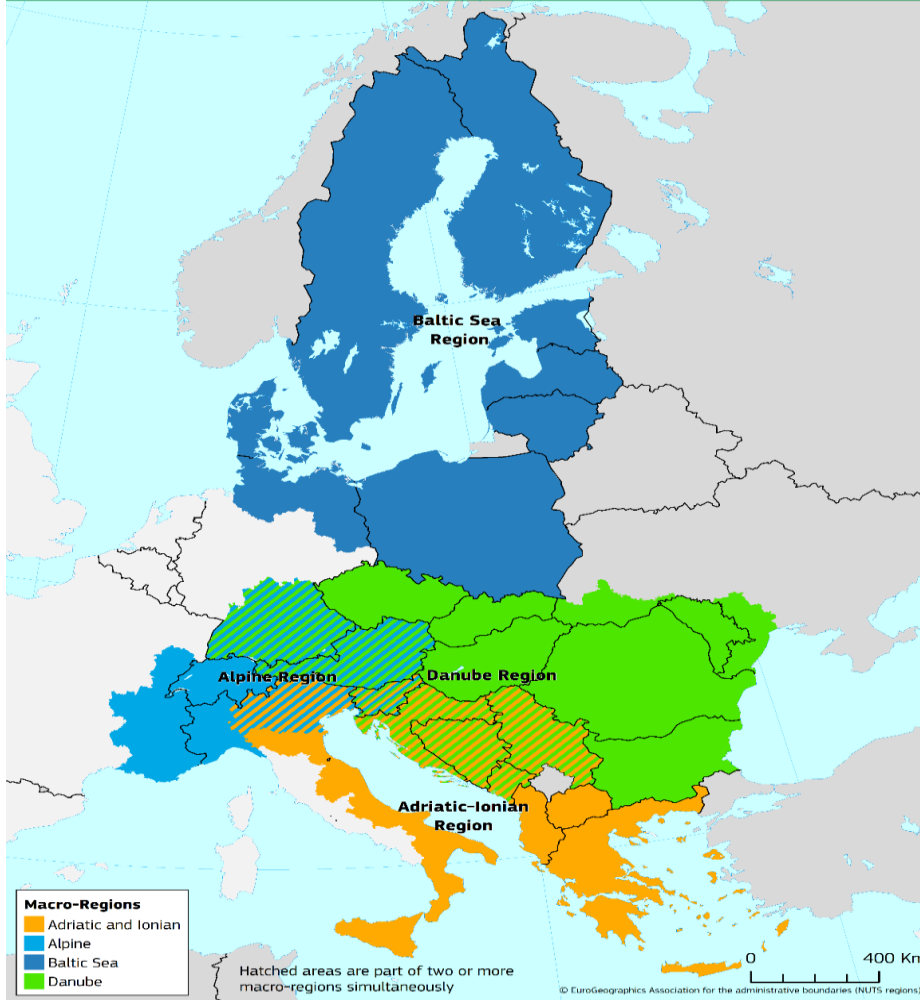
# **Tipping points shaping the policies for industry and innovation**

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Macro-Regions:  
Adriatic and Ionian, Alpine, Baltic, Danube



# Four European macro-regional strategies

Four EU macro-regional strategies (MRS), involving 19 EU countries and 9 non-EU countries:

[EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region \(EUSBSR\)](#)

[EU Strategy for the Danube Region \(EUSDR\)](#)

[EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region \(EUSAIR\)](#)

[EU Strategy for the Alpine Region \(EUSALP\)](#)

# Why the concept of macro-regional strategies (MRS)?

A bit of history:

- Before 2006: The 'Baltic Europe' intergroup' issued a Baltic Strategy report
- 16 November 2006: The European Parliament urges the Commission to come up with a proposal for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy
- 14 December 2007: The European Council invites the Commission to present an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region
- 10 June 2009: The Commission presents the EUSBSR and invites the European Council to examine and endorse the EC Communication and related Action Plan

# Which are the benefits of macro-regional strategies (MRS)?

A strategic and political process:

- With MRS it is possible to connect European priorities (even going beyond the EU) with regional ones and target them to a specific geographical context
- MRS are political platforms which can address challenges that go beyond what an individual country can do (water, biodiversity, risks, innovation...)
- MRS help to strenghten relations between participating countries, they can help to create trust

# Which are the benefits of macro-regional strategies (MRS)?

A strategic and political process:





- MRS allow to enhance ownership of key EU initiatives such as the European Green Deal and the digital transition, and helps to tailor these initiatives to the specific characteristics of a smaller region
- MRS come with a multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance (political level, administrative level, civil society, youth, other relevant stakeholders...)
- MRS come with no additional money and require participating countries to look beyond their own borders (not only to the benefit of their own citizens but also the ones of their neighbours)

# Cohesion policy in the European Green Deal



*“Cohesion Funds play a crucial role in supporting our regions and rural areas from East to West, from South to North to keep up with the transformations of our world.*

*In this transition, we must recognise and respect that we do not all start from the same point. We all share the same ambition but some may need more tailored support than others to get there.”*

-  Investing in place-based innovation and smart economic transformation
-  Deploying technological and social innovation on a large scale
-  Facilitating phase-out of unsustainable practices
-  Ensuring a just transition for all regions

# What are the main drivers of these strategies?

Which are the needs and drivers that make territories to work together?

- To address common challenges that go beyond the borders of participating countries
- To connect this to European priorities and target them to the particularities of a specific macro-region

For this to work it is necessary to have:

- Clear objectives
- The right level of ambition
- Unconditional political support

# 3rd Commission report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies

COM(2020)578 and SWD(2020)186:

- Published on 23 September 2020, at a time when the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is having severe economic, fiscal and social impacts on the European society
- Therefore...in addition to assessing the progress made towards the implementation of the MRS, the report also considers the role that MRS can play in addressing the crisis through coordinated actions in their territories



# Thematic priorities: examples of achievements

- Environment and climate change: MRS helped improve water quality through a better management of hazardous substances being released into the Baltic Sea
- Research & innovation and economic development: MRS supported knowledge capitalisation and sharing research and innovation in the Alpine Region and helped improve knowledge transfer on blue technologies in the Adriatic and Ionian region
- Connectivity: MRS helped improve the fairway conditions at several critical sections of the Danube River

# The way forward: recommendations on future developments

On the governance of MRS:

- The political level should strengthen its leadership of the MRS. The annual ministerial/political meetings that take place back-to-back with the annual fora have proven to be a valuable best practice to be considered by all MRS
- The political level should ensure strategic guidance, adequate human and financial resources and effective multi-level governance including civil society
- All MRS should be assisted by a technical support structure, which should have a stable source of financing to ensure continuity. The Interreg Transnational Cooperation programmes covering the MRS territory should play a key role

# The way forward: connecting to key European priorities

COVID-19 crisis, European Green Deal and European Digital Strategy:

- MRS can play a significant role in helping participating countries and regions to tackle the COVID-19 crisis and by implementing, in a coordinated manner, the European Green Deal (including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030) and the European Digital Strategy, which are cornerstones of Europe's growth strategy
- In that respect, a close coordination between MRS national and thematic coordinators and all relevant stakeholders across the macro-region in the areas in which the MRS have proved their added value is needed