



EU to invest €1 billion in regions along its external borders

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"Cross-border cooperation plays a key role in avoiding the creation of new dividing lines. This new funding will further contribute to a more integrated and sustainable regional development in the neighbouring border regions and to a more harmonious territorial cooperation on EU's external borders." said Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn**.

"I am very glad that the European Regional Development Fund can contribute to bringing the EU and its neighbours closer together. Cross border cooperation programmes are concrete examples of how the EU is working to help citizens address common challenges, hence creating a real sense of solidarity, while boosting the competitiveness of local economies." said Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu**.

This type of cross border cooperation is an important element of the EU policy towards its neighbours. It will prioritise projects supporting sustainable development along the EU's external borders, thus reducing differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders. For each of the programmes, the participating countries have selected up to four priorities, such as SME development, culture, environment and climate change, fight against poverty, education and research, energy, accessibility, border management.

The new package will finance projects in 30 countries: Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in the east; Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia; EU Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Hungary, Slovakia) as well as Norway and Turkey. The funding comes under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Financing agreements will be finalised between the partner countries and the EU by the end of 2016. Grants will be awarded through calls for proposals expected to be launched in the course of 2016 or early 2017.

An example:

Through the "Clean river" project between Romania and Ukraine – worth EUR 3.8 Million - ENI Cross Border Cooperation will help preserve the ecological value of the Danube River basin by enhancing cooperation in man-made disasters prevention.

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