

# Welcome to Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION



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A key philosophical question in the life of every person or organisation consists of defining who we are, why we exist, and what we intend to achieve within our lifetime.

This document encapsulates the spirit of Interreg - what we do, why and for whom. We hope that it will inspire all of us within the Interreg community, reminding us that our work is priceless and that even when times are hard, even in the face of paperwork, social conflicts or daily struggles, it is all worth it.

This is not a manual nor a detailed report of facts, data and complicated rules. This is a simple introduction into our hopes dreams and beliefs. We invite you to read it, share it, print it, bring it to life in your communications; from calls for applications to social media posts, on your website and at events.

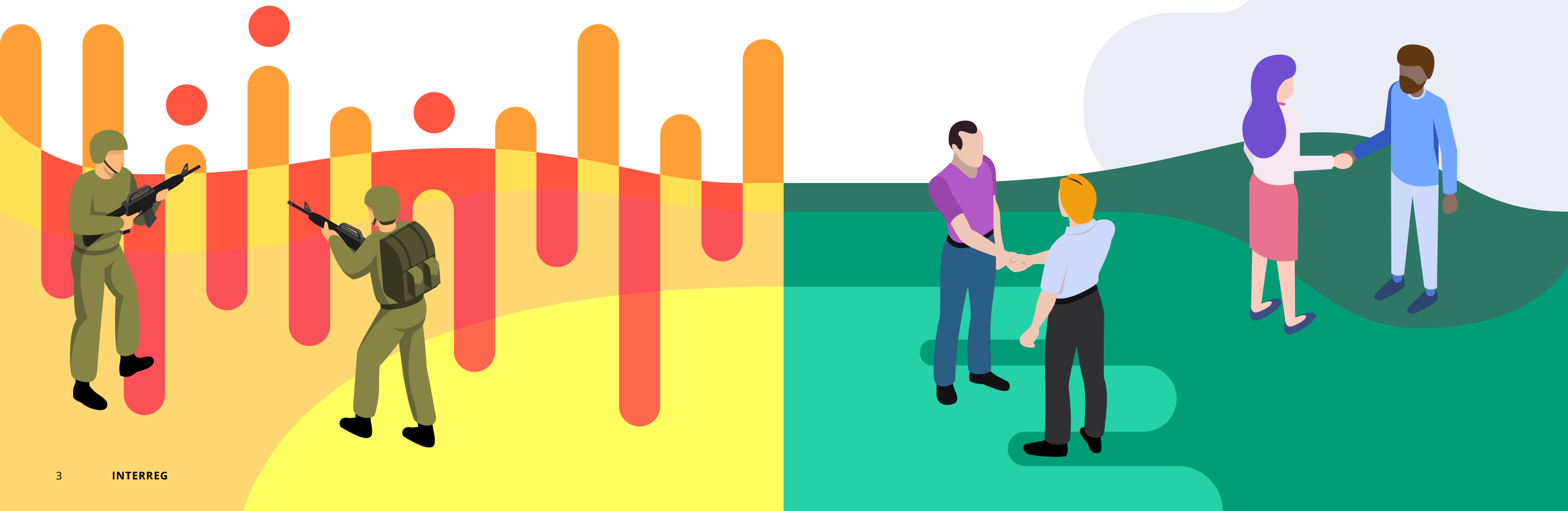
Since the dawn of time, conflicts have been a part of our lives. Borders were drawn, erased, redrawn and moved. A Prussian became an Italian, Wallonia and Flanders became one. One day it was German and the next French. One day Yugoslav and the next Croatian.

**If “money is the nerve of war”, could it become the warrant of peace?**

The creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) marked the beginning of a new era for Europe. United under a common economic interest, nations would find more gain in peace than in war and in sharing rather than taking.

“What began as a purely economic union has evolved into an organisation spanning policy areas, from climate, environment and health to external relations and security, justice and migration.” And so, in 1993, the EEC officially became the European Union.

# *From war to peace*



# The heritage of the European Union

**Today, the European Union stands for that belief that through cooperation, trade and respect we can all grow together.**

**That the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.**

If the EU made it possible for people and resources to travel freely within its boundaries, it did not erase borders nor did it pretend to eliminate cultural, religious and linguistic identities. Borders may have been made invisible, but they still impact the lives of millions of citizens.

Like a gardener carefully watering its plants, the EU Cohesion Policy is dedicated to growing the seeds for cohesion and solidarity among EU countries. Interreg is one of the initiatives implemented to bring this vision of a united Europe to life - a magnificent tree in the garden of peace.

## The 8 goals of the EU

Promote peace, its values, and the well-being of its citizens

Offer freedom, security and justice without internal borders

Sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive market economy with full employment, social progress and environmental protection

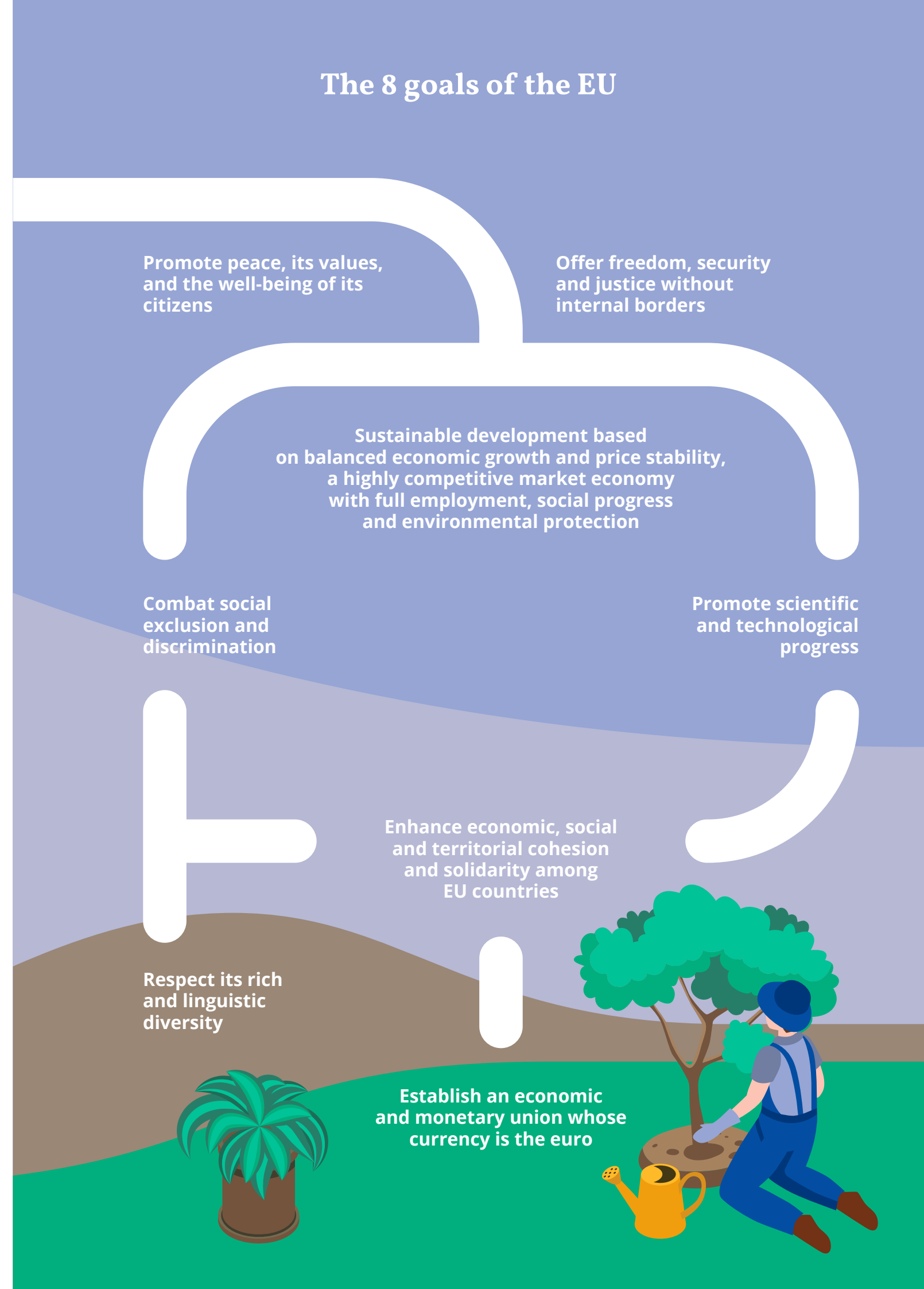
Combat social exclusion and discrimination

Promote scientific and technological progress

Enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries

Respect its rich and linguistic diversity

Establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro



# Our ecosystem

We are but one tree in the forest of all EU programmes that work tirelessly towards improving the lives of EU citizens and their neighbours.

We are part of a rich ecosystem where everything is linked, connected in an endless cycle.

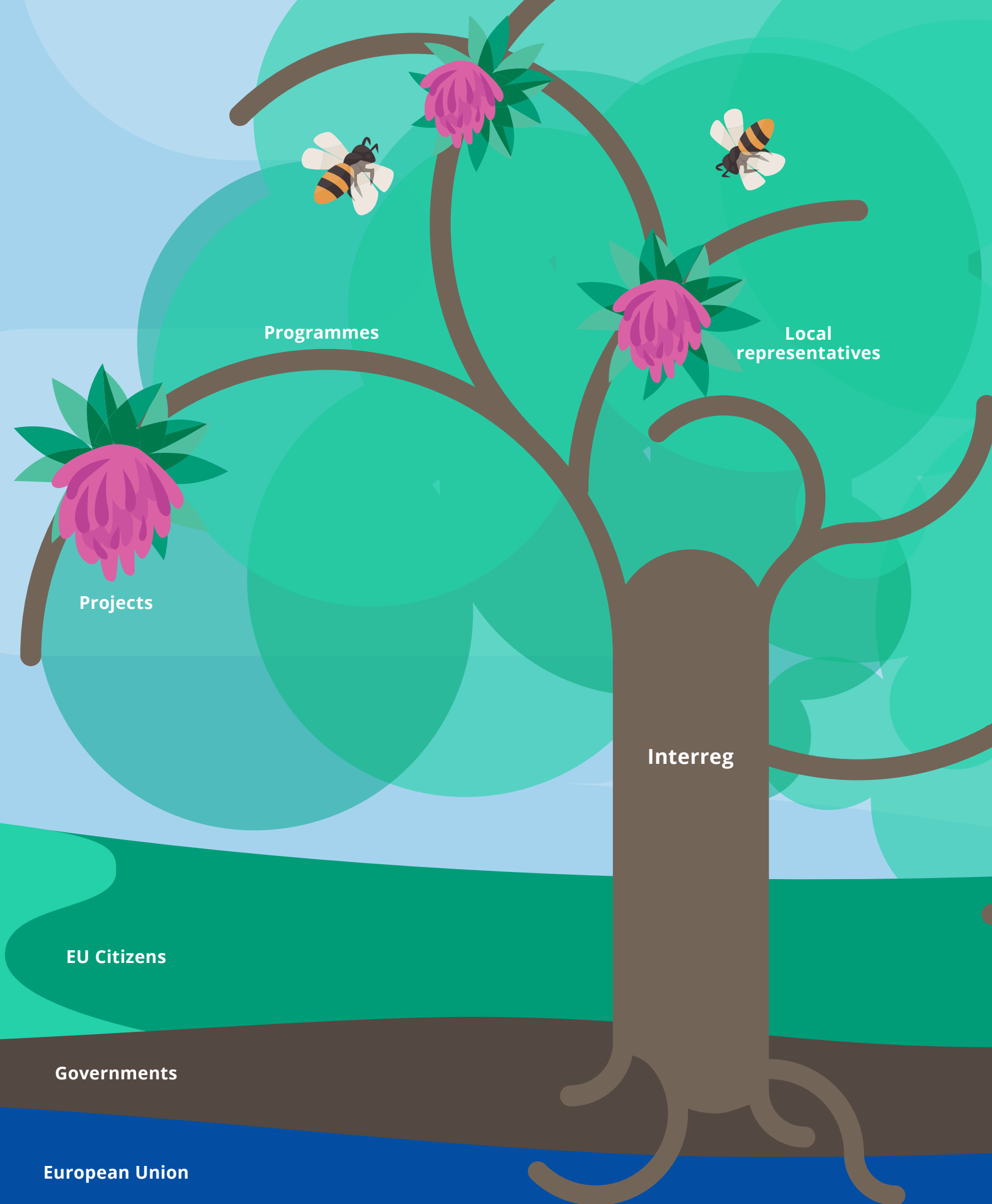
Rooted in the soil of every nation and region, the Interreg tree expands its branches into hundreds of programmes.

Each branch gives life to thousands of projects – like flowers destined to blossom – planting the seeds of a greener tomorrow.

We are helped in our mission by a myriad of local partners who – like bees carrying pollen – allow us to grow stronger and expand our reach further.



External partners



EU Citizens

Governments

European Union



# *We are a community*

This is us. The Interreg community. We bring together professionals, public officials, academics and Interreg employees. We are united by the deep belief that no border should ever prevent the exchange of resources, ideas and knowledge. We work together across and beyond borders, to find common solutions to shared problems.

We find richness in our differences and opportunity in our challenges. We believe in sharing ideas and know-how and in learning from each other rather than reinventing the wheel, in order to grow together as people, as regions, and as the Interreg community.

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# OUR VALUES: *Together is better*

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At Interreg, we value cooperation above all. Cooperation means working together as equals, regardless of borders. It means understanding that together we are greater than the sum of our parts.

We see cooperation as a means towards sustainable problem-solving; as working together to

achieve long-term benefits rather than short-sighted gains.

We value people who respect each other, regardless of differences, who include rather than exclude, and ultimately put the well being of the many before the interest of the few.





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## OUR ROLE:

# *Find and implement common solutions to shared problems*

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Environmental, technological and social matters do not stop at geopolitical frontiers. This often creates shared challenges that affect citizens on all sides.

Whenever the safety, prosperity or freedom of an EU citizen is at stake, we will be there to find and implement common solutions to shared problems, one project at a time.

Within the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy, we bring together the most capable problem-solvers and give them the tools to turn their idea into a reality.

Beyond project funding, we provide guidance, and technical and administrative **resources, skills** and **connections**.





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**OUR MISSION:**  
*Creating a culture  
of cooperation  
across borders*

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We are on a mission to bring to life the vision of the EU – to ensure peace and prosperity for all its citizens – by creating a culture of cooperation across and beyond borders, in the EU and among its neighbours.

Project after project, we lay the foundations for collaborative

thinking, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving to become the norm. We strive to support and to empower others to take action, in the hope of establishing a deeply-rooted culture of cooperation. We are creating the basis for a European Union, where – one day – Interreg might no longer be needed.





OUR VISION:

*A European Union where people naturally cooperate across borders*



We envision a European Union in which all people are naturally working together regardless of borders, to find long-term solutions, helping each other grow and prosper.

Although our responsibility is towards EU citizens, it is a dream for everyone within the Interreg community to inspire people around the world to cooperate, overcoming differences to build together a world where borders become ever more “invisible”.

*Improving life in the EU through cooperation across and beyond borders, one project at a time.*



Interreg



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INTERact



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