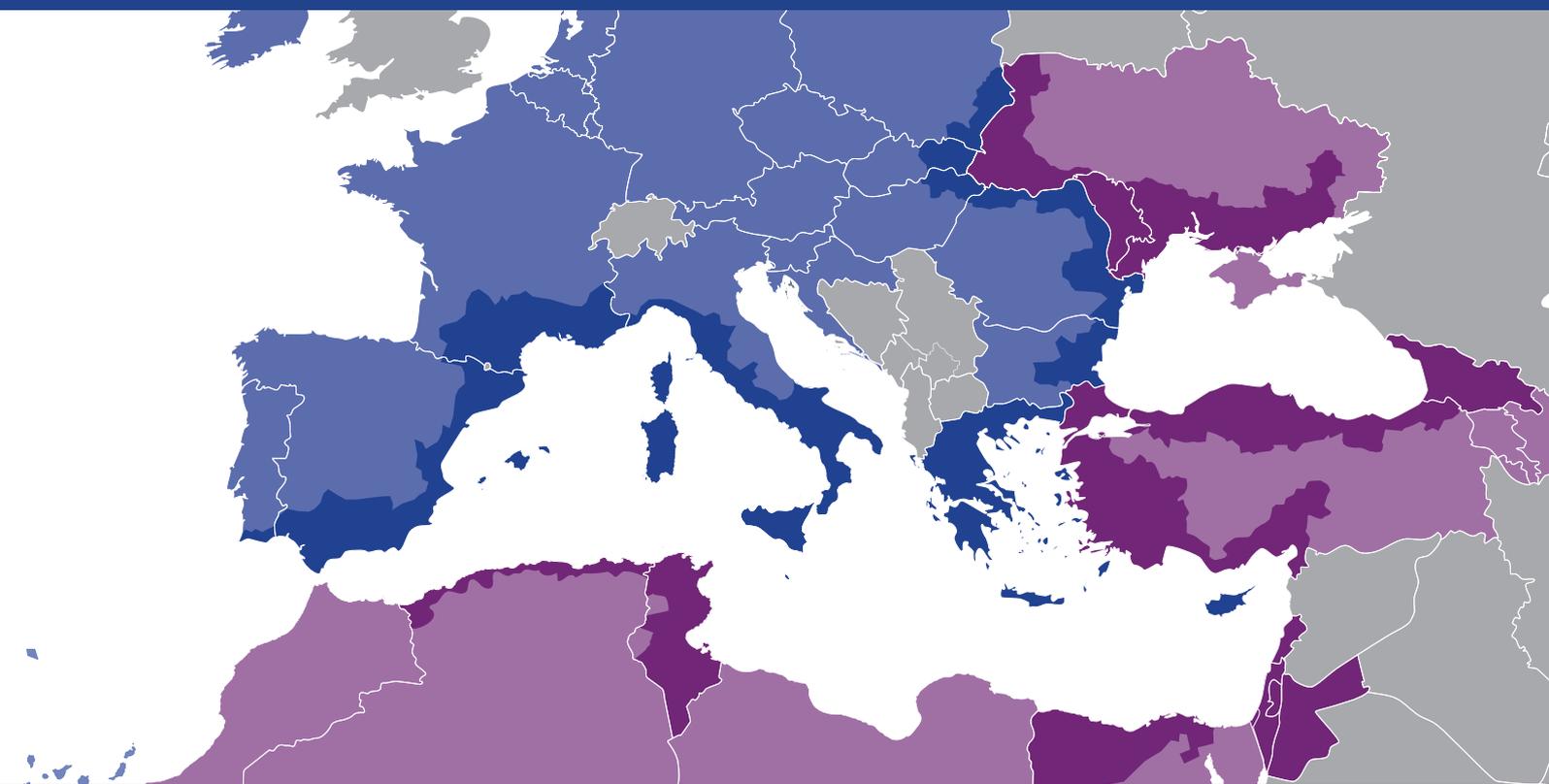


Interreg NEXT programmes

Selecting the policy / specific objectives: from
the joint paper to the programme documents

February 2023



Funded by the
European Union



Technical Support to the Imple-
mentation and Management of ENI
CBC programmes, implemented
by a consortium led by Particip

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The selection of the policy (PO) and specific objectives (SO) addressed by the strategies of Interreg NEXT programmes was the result of a multi-level process.

As a first step, the joint paper on the strategic programming 2021-2027, prepared by the European Commission and the European External Action Service, was publicly presented during the ENI CBC annual conference held in Brussels on 28 and 29 January 2020.

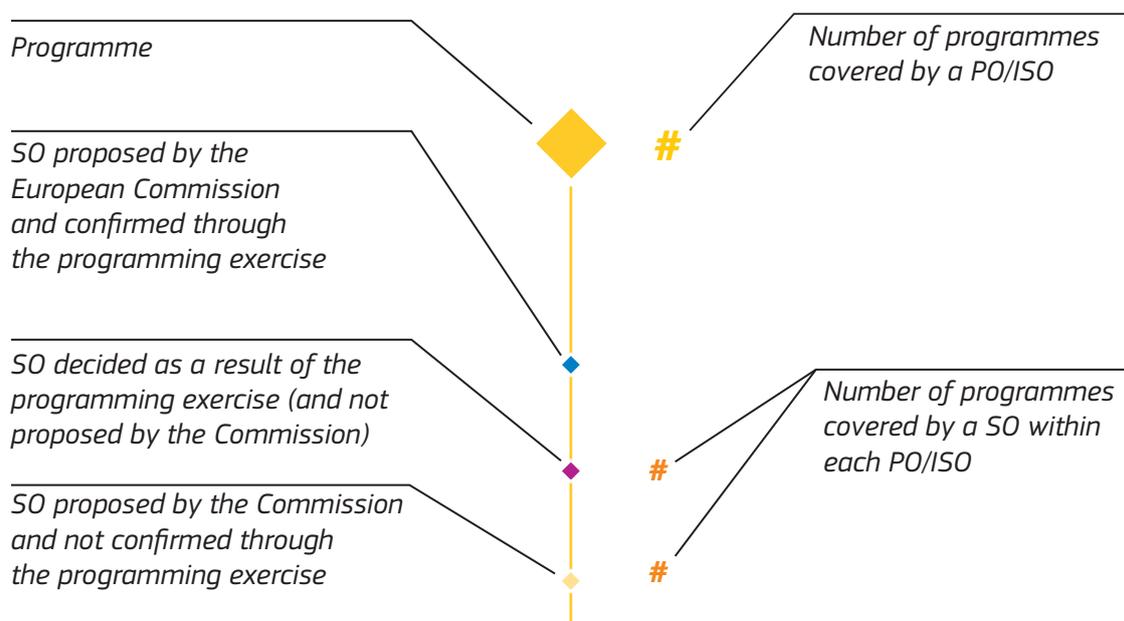
It was followed by the individual programming exercises; these processes involved a multitude of stakeholders and resulted in the decisions on the strategic choices in each programme.

As a final step of the process, the European Commission adopted in August 2022 the Multi-annual strategy document, which included the overall EU allocations for the Interreg NEXT programmes. The document took into account the comments received from stakeholders during the programming process, setting out the final shape of the priority areas for support, their specific objectives, expected results and performance indicators.

This paper aims at providing a full picture of the strategic choices made by seven Interreg NEXT programmes: Poland-Ukraine, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, Romania-Republic of Moldova, Romania-Ukraine, Black Sea Basin, Mediterranean Sea Basin, Italy-Tunisia.*

The analysis provides the overview of the final POs, Interreg specific objectives (ISOs) and SOs, and up to which extent the choices were a continuation of what proposed by the joint paper or a different choice by the programmes themselves.

The figure below provides a full picture on the relevance for the future NEXT programmes of the different POs, ISOs and their SOs.



* Following the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission has suspended the cooperation with Russia and Belarus, thus no further work in the preparation of the Interreg NEXT programmes with these countries has finalised.

The POs and ISOs chosen match with the strategic orientations of the Commission to a large extent: the programmes both confirmed the relevance of the Commission orientations, as well as introduced their own priorities in the programme documents.

The seven programmes aim to focus on the following POs:

Policy objectives



3

PO 1 A smarter Europe and its neighbourhood



7

PO 2 A greener low-carbon Europe and its neighbourhood



0

PO 3 A more connected Europe with its neighbourhood



6

PO 4 A more social Europe and its neighbourhood



0

PO 5 Europe and its neighbourhood closer to their citizens



Interreg-specific objectives



5

ISO 1 A better cooperation governance for Europe and its neighbourhood

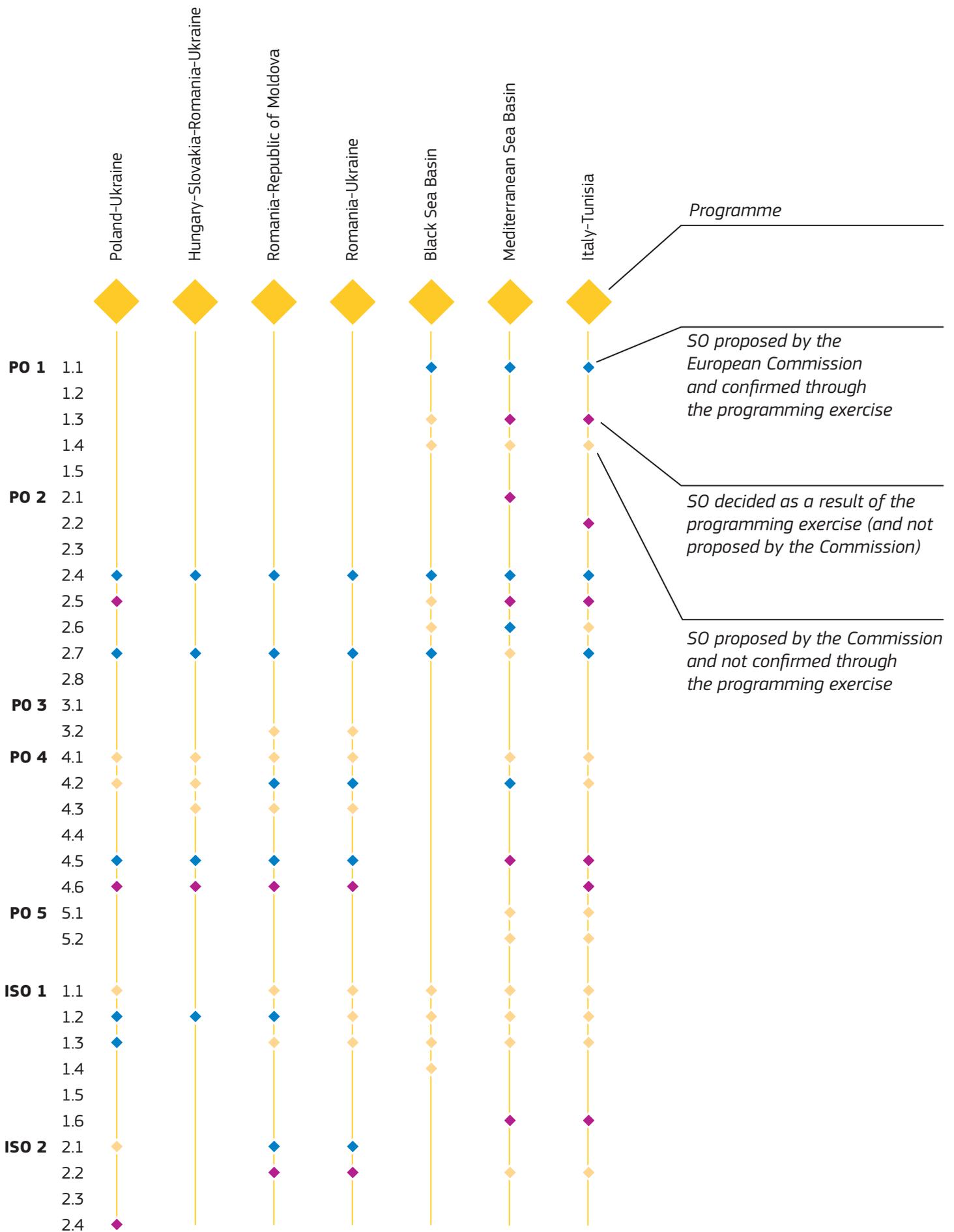


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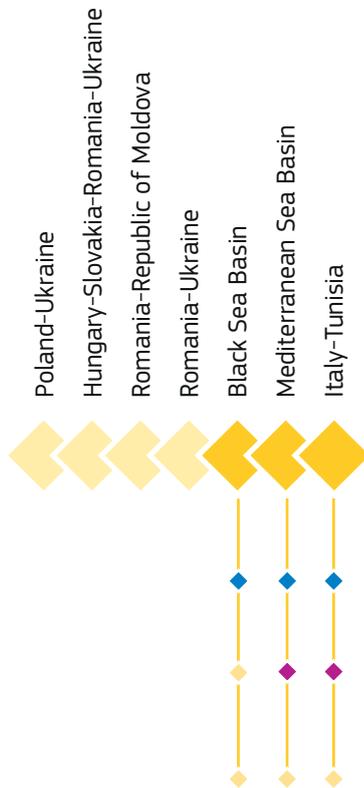
ISO 2 A safer and more secure Europe and its neighbourhood



In some cases, the Commission also proposed orientations towards PO3 and PO5; however, the programmes decided to narrow down the thematic scope to seek further concentration.



Policy objectives

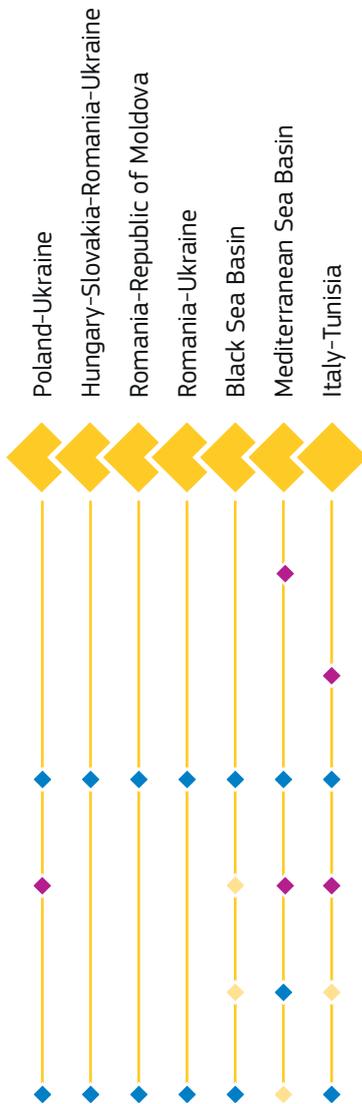
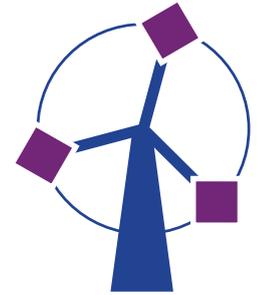


3 PO 1 A smarter Europe and its neighbourhood

- 3 SO 1.1 Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
- 2 SO 1.3 Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs
- SO 1.4 developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship

Among the seven programmes, three have chosen PO1. All three are concerned by the need to invest on innovation and research (SO 1.1 – Black Sea Basin, Mediterranean Sea Basin and Italy-Tunisia). This strategic orientation was proposed by the Commission to all three programmes and was confirmed through the programming exercise. Two programmes (Mediterranean Sea Basin and Italy-Tunisia) additionally aim to boost SMEs’ competitiveness (SO 1.3). This thematic direction was a result of the programming exercise.

Policy objectives



7 PO 2 A greener low-carbon Europe and its neighbourhood

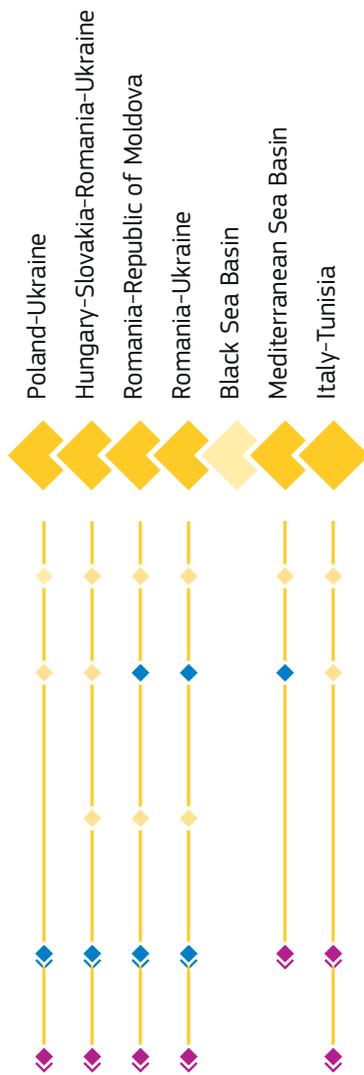
- 1 SO 2.1 Promoting energy efficiency measures
- 1 SO 2.2 Promoting renewable energy
- 7 SO 2.4 Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience
- 3 SO 2.5 Promoting sustainable water management
- 1 SO 2.6 Promoting the transition to a circular economy
- 6 SO 2.7 Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution

All seven programmes have put an emphasis on the climate change adaptation (SO 2.4) and six of them also have prioritized the need to enhance biodiversity (SO 2.7). This strategic orientation was proposed by the Commission to all programmes and was confirmed through the programming exercise.

Three programmes consider investments in water management as key (SO 2.5 – Poland-Ukraine, Mediterranean Sea Basin, Italy-Tunisia). Mediterranean Sea Basin also highlighted the need to invest in energy efficiency (SO 2.1), whereas Italy-Tunisia to promote renewable energy (SO 2.2). These thematic directions were a result of the programming exercise by both programmes. Mediterranean Sea Basin also considers the transition to a circular economy (SO 2.6) as one of their priorities, as confirmed through the programming exercise.

According to the requirements for thematic concentration, and in order to address the socioeconomic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance green transitions through cooperation, all Interreg NEXT programmes have to invest at least 60% of the EU funds in a maximum of three POs, one of which has to be PO2.

Policy objectives



6 PO 4 A more social Europe and its neighbourhood

SO 4.1 Enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment

3 SO 4.2 Improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and life-long learning through developing infrastructure

SO 4.3 Promoting the socio economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs

6 SO 4.5 Ensuring equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care

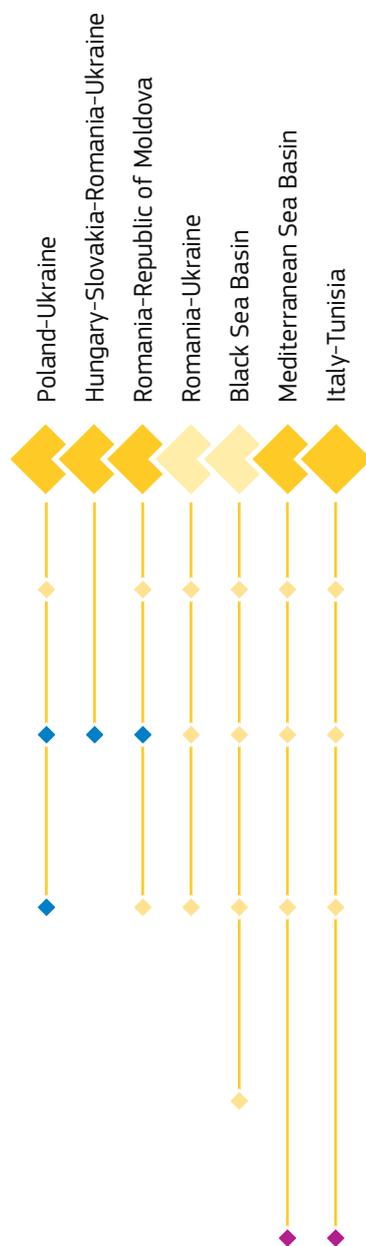
5 SO 4.6 Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism

Six programmes consider that ensuring equal access to the health care (SO 4.5) is a priority for their area. In four cases (Poland-Ukraine, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, Romania-Republic of Moldova, Romania-Ukraine) this direction was proposed by the Commission and was confirmed through the programming exercise. In the case of Mediterranean Sea Basin and Italy-Tunisia, these thematic choices were a result of the programming exercise.

Five programmes have prioritized the role of culture and sustainable tourism (SO 4.6) and chosen this topic through the programming exercise*. Three programmes (Romania-Republic of Moldova, Romania-Ukraine, Mediterranean Sea Basin) consider the equal access to the education (SO 4.2) as a priority, as also proposed by the Commission.

* Specific objective “Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation” was introduced after the release of the joint paper.

Interreg-specific objectives



5 ISO 1 A better cooperation governance for Europe and its neighbourhood

ISO 1.1 Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders

3 ISO 1.2 Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions.

1 ISO 1.3 Building up mutual trust, in particular, by encouraging people-to-people actions, by enhancing sustainable democracy and by supporting civil society actors and their role in reforming processes and democratic transitions.

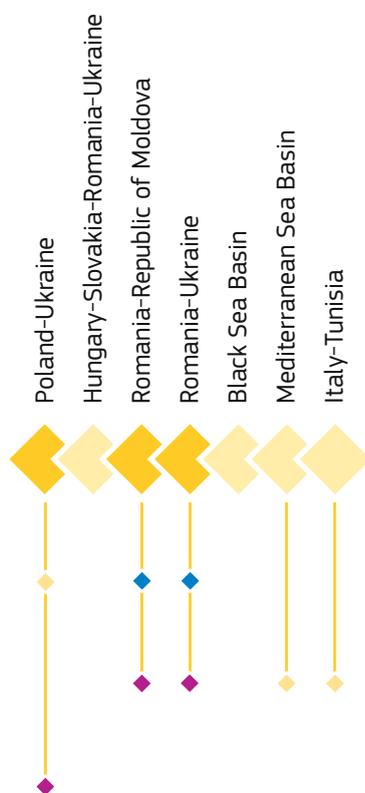
ISO 1.4 enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies

2 ISO 1.6 Other actions to support better cooperation governance

Three programmes (Poland-Ukraine, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, Romania-Republic of Moldova) consider promoting legal and administrative cooperation, as well as cooperation between citizens and institutions (ISO 1.2) as key for their territories. In addition, Poland-Ukraine also aims to invest in people-to-people actions (ISO 1.3). All of these directions were proposed by the Commission and confirmed through the programming exercise.

In the case of Mediterranean Sea Basin and Italy-Tunisia, they aim to support actions to enhance better cooperation governance (ISO 1.6) according to the result of the programming exercise.

Interreg-specific objectives



3 ISO 2 A safer and more secure Europe and its neighbourhood

- 2 ISO 2.1 Border management infrastructure
- 2 ISO 2.2 Mobility and migration management
- 1 ISO 2.4 Other actions to contribute to a safer and more secure Europe

Border management infrastructure (ISO 2.1) is a key theme for Romania-Republic of Moldova and Romania-Ukraine, an orientation proposed by the Commission and confirmed by the programmes as well. For both of these programmes the decision to invest in the mobility and migration management (ISO 2.2) was an outcome of the programming exercise.

Poland-Ukraine gives priority to other actions to contribute to a safer Europe and its neighbourhood regions (ISO 2.4) as part of their strategy, as confirmed by the programming exercise.