



# GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS FOR YOUTH MIGRATION

The Interreg Alpine Space project **OUT4INGOV** developed and tested three practical governance tools to help Alpine regions better address youth migration, mobility, return migration, and the broader impacts of young people leaving, staying, returning, or remaining connected to their home communities.

**Youth Consultative Body**

**Cooperation Network**

**Youth Migration Observatory**

**| Maribor, Slovenia**

**| Cembra Valley, Italy**

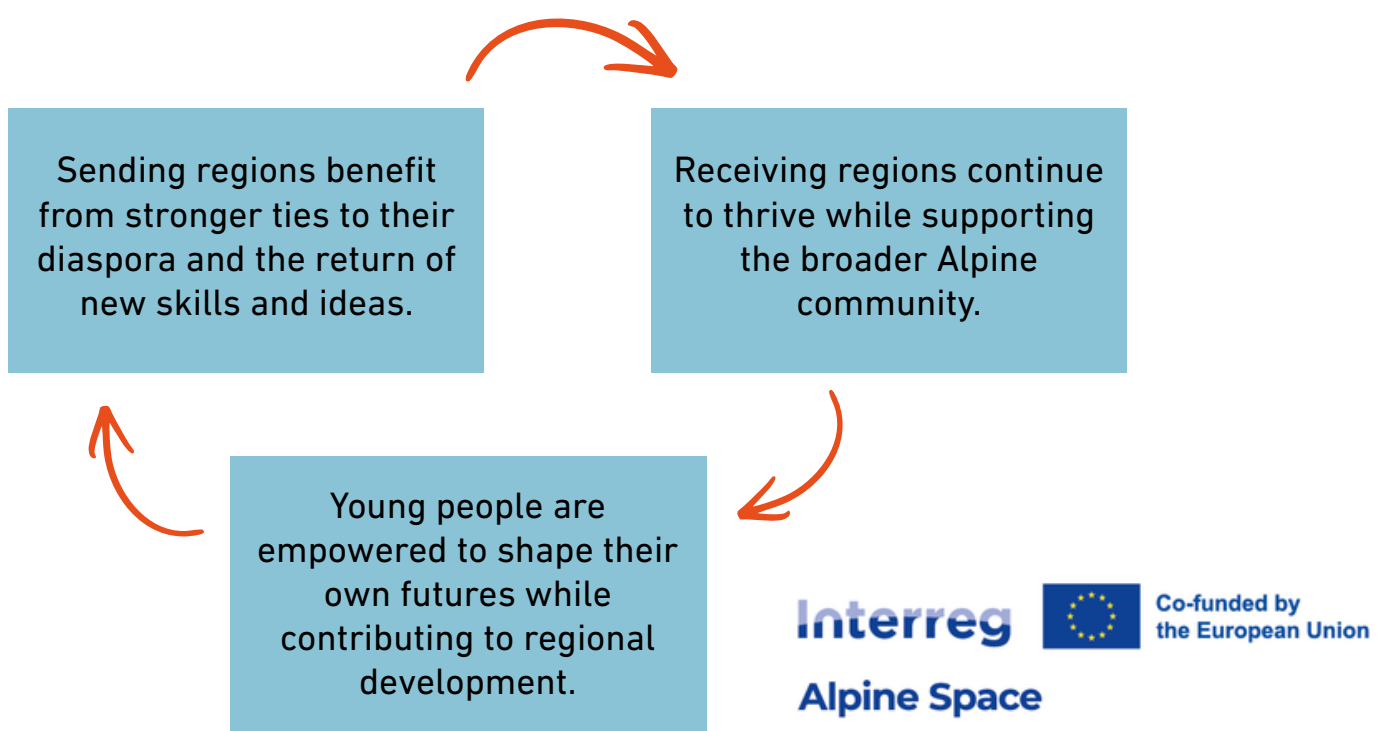
**| Vesoul, France**

THREE TESTED  
SOLUTIONS

## Why youth migration governance matters

When young people leave, local communities may lose skills, creativity, civic energy and future leadership. At the same time, mobility can bring knowledge, experience and new connections, especially when young people remain linked to their home territory or return later with new competences.

OUT4INGOV seeks to address these challenges by fostering innovative, inclusive, and sustainable approaches to managing youth migration. The goal is to create a win-win-win scenario:



**Interreg**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**Alpine Space**

OUT4INGOV

# YOUTH CONSULTATIVE BODY | MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

A Youth Consultative Body (YCB) is a structured participatory mechanism that brings young people into dialogue with local institutions.

A YCB enables young people to define priorities, discuss challenges, co-create proposals and present them to decision-makers. It is a repeated **process** that helps young people understand how **local governance** works and how their ideas can become realistic proposals.

The pilot brought together young people aged 18–29, including students, newcomers, returnees, NEET youth and young people with migrant or intercultural backgrounds; the Municipality of Maribor, youth-sector organisations, civil-society actors, research actors and local observers.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The YCB works through regular **meetings** and **co-creation sessions**. In Maribor, the process moved through **three main phases**:

1. identifying youth realities and priorities
2. understanding governance pathways and advocacy
3. developing concrete youth proposals for institutional dialogue

## WHAT WAS TESTED?

The Maribor pilot tested whether a structured youth body can become a **bridge between young people and local authorities**. The pilot included:

- recruitment of a diverse group of youth members
- stakeholder onboarding
- regular YCB meetings
- priority mapping
- advocacy and governance learning
- participatory budgeting work
- dialogue with municipal officials
- discussion with the Mayor's Cabinet
- study visit to Slovenska filantropija
- observer accompaniment and peer review among project partners

## MAIN OUTCOMES

The YCB strengthened youth capacity to understand decision-making systems and advocate for their ideas in the areas of participation, integration, wellbeing, mobility, housing, inclusion. It showed how youth priorities can be translated into municipal language, responsibilities and planning cycles.

## REPLICATION BY OTHER TERRITORIES

A Youth Consultative Body is useful when a municipality or region wants to:

- involve young people in policy development;
- improve youth participation;
- create regular dialogue between youth and decision-makers;
- make youth proposals more realistic and actionable;
- strengthen trust between young people and institutions.

# COOPERATION NETWORK | CEMBRA VALLEY, ITALY

A cooperation network is a flexible structure that connects young people who live in a territory with young people who have moved away, live abroad or have international mobility experience.

The aim is not to stop mobility, but to keep relationships active. The cooperation network helps transform **migration** into a **resource** for the territory by encouraging exchange, mentoring, storytelling, peer support and cooperation. It is an informal, visible, and recognizable tool, capable of listening, providing feedback, advising, and making proposals.

The pilot involved local young people, young people living outside the valley or abroad, municipalities, local stakeholders, NGO's, small enterprise, associations and project partners.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Cooperation Network works as an “**ultra-territorial**” network. This includes residents as well as people connected to the territory, even if they live elsewhere.

The pilot used both digital and in-person formats, including: online workshops; digital communication channels; peer exchange; public events; podcast-style activities; meetings with local actors; seminars on mobility, return, work, training and entrepreneurship.

The **mayors** of the areas where the network has developed have the opportunity to consult the youth network on certain defined topics of interest, such as post-school guidance for young people in the valley, or the organization of events and workshops in the area.

In this initial phase, the network will be activated through the **community worker**.

## WHAT WAS TESTED?

The Cembra Valley pilot tested whether a **network of local and mobile youth** can become a **useful resource for local development**. The cooperation group was tested as:

- a place for sharing mobility experiences
- a sounding board for local stakeholders
- a channel for advice, feedback and ideas for the territory and the municipalities
- a way to connect with young people outside the territory and create spillover effects

## MAIN OUTCOMES

The pilot showed that young people who moved away can still contribute to local development if there is a structure that keeps them connected. The network helped create new links between local youth, young people who have moved away, live abroad or have international mobility experience and local institutions.

## REPLICATION BY OTHER TERRITORIES

A Cooperation Network is useful when a territory wants to:

- maintain links with young people who moved away;
- engaging young people, both living locally and abroad, in local development;
- support return migration or circular migration;
- create mentoring and peer-learning opportunities;
- use youth mobility as a source of knowledge and connection.

# YOUTH MIGRATION OBSERVATORY | VESOUL FRANCE

A Youth Migration Observatory is a governance tool that **collects, analyses and shares evidence on youth mobility and migration.**

An observatory can combine statistical data, interviews, stakeholder knowledge and policy analysis. It helps local and regional institutions make **better decisions based on data**, research and lived experience.

The pilot involved public institutions, local and regional stakeholders, researchers, youth-support services and young people.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The observatory works by building a **knowledge base on youth migration**. It helps answer questions such as:

- Who is leaving, staying, arriving or returning?
- Why do young people move?
- What barriers do they face?
- Which opportunities could encourage them to stay connected?
- What kind of services, policies or cooperation structures are needed?

## WHAT WAS TESTED?

The Vesoul pilot tested a structured approach to monitoring youth migration activities included:

- stakeholder mapping
- review of existing data sources
- statistical and documentary analysis
- qualitative interviews with young people
- expert input from researchers
- identify a list of indicators relevant to the observatory's core objectives
- discussion on long-term governance and sustainability of the observatory

## MAIN OUTCOMES

The pilot showed that youth migration governance needs a stronger evidence base. Local decision-makers often work with fragmented information. An observatory can bring this information together and make it more useful for policy.

## REPLICATION BY OTHER TERRITORIES

A Youth Migration Observatory is useful when a territory wants to:

- better understand youth migration trends;
- collect and organise relevant data for the given purpose;
- connect research with local policy;
- support evidence-based decision-making;
- monitor the long-term effects of youth policies.

# 6 STEPS FOR USING THESE GOVERNANCE TOOLS

1

## Define the local challenge

The starting point should involve clarifying the primary youth migration issues within the territory. **What problem do you want to address?**

E.g.: Weak youth participation? Loss of connection with young people who moved away? Lack of data on youth mobility? Limited cooperation between institutions?

*The choice of tool should respond to the real local challenge.*

2

## Map stakeholders & youth groups

**Identify the actors who should be involved.**

E.g.: young people; municipalities; youth organisations; schools and universities; NGOs; employment services; research institutions; migrant and integration organisations; regional development agencies; informal youth groups.

*Stakeholder mapping should also include underrepresented youth groups.*

4

## Co-design the process with young people

Young people should not only be invited after decisions are already made. They should help define the topics, methods and expected results.

**Co-design** builds trust and ownership while grounding the tool in youth realities.

3

## Choose the right mechanism

Choose the mechanism that best fits the problem:

**Youth Consultative Body** when young people need a stronger voice in local decision-making;

**Cooperation Network** when the territory wants to stay connected with young people who moved away, have spillover effects and circulation of skills;

**Youth Migration Observatory** when decision-makers need better evidence and data.

*In some territories, the tools can be combined.*

5

## Test, monitor and peer-review

The tool should be tested in practice and refined based on lessons learned.

**Peer review provides valuable feedback** and helps identify elements that can be transferred to other territories.

6

## Political anchoring

For lasting impact beyond the project, **connect the tool** from the outset to **existing structures** such as municipal departments, youth offices, regional strategies, networks, data systems and decision-making processes.

*Sustainability requires clear responsibilities, feedback loops and institutional commitment.*

# MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION NEEDS STRUCTURE

Young people are more likely to participate meaningfully when the process has clear objectives, understandable methods and visible links to decision-making.

## INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED EARLY

Decision-makers should not only appear at final events. Their involvement during the process helps young people understand what is feasible and helps institutions better understand youth realities.

## FEEDBACK LOOPS ARE ESSENTIAL

Young people need to know what happens with their proposals. Even when a proposal cannot be implemented, institutions should explain why and what alternative steps are possible.

## MOBILITY CAN BECOME A RESOURCE

Young people who move away are not necessarily lost to their territory. With the right network, they can remain connected and contribute skills, ideas and contacts.

## DATA MUST BE COMBINED WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Statistics help describe migration trends, but interviews and youth stories explain the reasons behind them. Good governance needs both.

## TRANSFERABILITY DOES NOT MEAN COPYING

Each tool must be adapted to the local context. What matters is not to copy the exact pilot model, but to transfer the logic: participation, connection, evidence and institutional learning.

**OUT4INGOV shows how Alpine territories can address youth migration through innovative governance. By combining participation, cooperation and evidence, local and regional authorities can engage young people as partners and build more inclusive futures.**



Interreg



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Alpine Space

OUT4INGOV

 [www.alpine-space.eu/project/out4ingov/](http://www.alpine-space.eu/project/out4ingov/)

The OUT4INGOV project is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg Alpine Space programme.