

PR FESR SICILIA 21-27



**EUROPEAN
WEEK** of
Regions & Cities

Strong Regions, Strong Europe

INFORMATION SHEET

Delivering STEP:
*the role of Regions in advancing
Europe's Strategic Technologies*

Tuesday 13 October 2026

Brussels

Office of the Presidency of the Sicilian Region | 12 Rue Belliard

IN SICILIA, UNO STEP OLTRE.

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Side event #EURegionsWeek Close to you

Delivering STEP: *the role of Regions in advancing Europe's Strategic Technologies*

Brussels Office of the Presidency of the Sicilian Region

12, Rue Belliard - 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium

13 October 2026 / 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

ABSTRACT

The *Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)* is one of the European Union's key instruments for **strengthening industrial competitiveness, strategic autonomy and economic resilience**, by promoting investment in technologies considered strategic for Europe's future.

The side event "*Delivering STEP: the role of Regions in advancing Europe's Strategic Technologies*", organised by the **Presidency of the Sicilian Region** at its Brussels Office, will provide an opportunity for discussion between the **European Commission, the Italian Government and regional authorities** on the implementation of STEP within the framework of Cohesion Policy.

In line with the *EURegionsWeek* motto, "**Strong Regions, Strong Europe**", the event will explore how Regions can make use of **Cohesion Policy funding** to support investment in the strategic technologies identified by the STEP Regulation, fostering innovation, business competitiveness and the reduction of the European Union's strategic dependencies.

The initiative will examine the **European strategic framework, national coordination and the experiences of the Algarve Region, the Sicilian Region and the Campania Region**, with a focus on the approaches adopted to integrate STEP into the review and implementation of their respective **2021-2027 ERDF Regional Programmes**.

Through **dialogue across different levels of government**, the event will provide a **multilevel perspective on the implementation of the platform**, highlighting its opportunities, challenges and prospects both for the current 2021-2027 programming period and in view of the future post-2027 Cohesion Policy.

CONTEXT

In recent years, **European industrial policy has taken on an increasingly central role in strengthening the EU's competitiveness**, also in response to profound geopolitical, technological and economic transformations.

It is in this context that the *Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)* was launched, with the aim of supporting the development and production of strategic technologies through greater integration among

the European Union's various financial instruments and, in particular, through **Cohesion Policy**, helping to **bridge the gap with major global powers such as the United States and China**.

Regions are called upon to play a key role in the implementation of STEP, by identifying investment priorities, supporting innovation ecosystems and helping businesses develop strategic technologies, thereby contributing to strengthening Europe's competitiveness.

The Algarve, Sicily and Campania represent three significant examples of how European Regions are translating STEP priorities into concrete action. The **Sicilian Region and the Campania Region** are among the first Italian regional administrations to have integrated STEP into the revision of their respective **2021-2027 ERDF Regional Programmes**, while the **Algarve Region** offers a complementary perspective from the Portuguese context. By allocating dedicated financial resources, the three Regions are working to **support investment in strategic technologies, strengthen the competitiveness of their respective regional production systems and promote high-value-added innovation**, in line with their respective regional priorities and implementation frameworks.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE SIDE EVENT

The side event is structured around **three main objectives**:

1. Understanding how STEP works

Exploring:

- the Platform's strategic objectives
- the European regulatory framework
- the link between STEP and Cohesion Policy
- the opportunities available to Regions.

2. Sharing implementation experiences

Examining:

- the role of the European Commission
- national coordination mechanisms
- the experiences of the Algarve Region, the Sicilian Region and the Campania Region in integrating STEP into their ERDF Regional Programmes.

3. Strengthening implementation capacity

Identifying:

- key success factors
- administrative challenges
- replicable implementation models
- future perspectives for the post-2027 programming period.

SPEAKERS

The initiative is based on a **multilevel and multi-stakeholder approach**, involving:

Irati Icardo Isasa | Policy Officer, STEP Task Force (DG BUDG), European Commission

STEP and the European Commission's strategic priorities

Federica Busillo | Director General, Office for European Cohesion Policies - DPCOE, Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Italy

Implementing STEP within Italy's Cohesion Policy

ALGARVE REGION | **Aquiles Marreiros**, Executive Member of the Managing Committee, Algarve 2030 Regional Programme - Algarve Region (Portugal)

CAMPANIA REGION | **Fiorella Ciullo**, Head of the Managing Authority Sector for the ERDF Regional Programme, STEP Platform coordinator - Campania Region

SICILIAN REGION | **Dario Cartabellotta**, Director General, Regional Department for Productive Activities, STEP Implementation coordinator - Sicilian Region

Regional Authorities and STEP: from strategic priorities to action

Q&A SESSION

Questions and discussion with representatives of the European institutions, regional authorities, businesses, and other stakeholders on:

- attracting investment
- regional competitiveness
- the future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2027.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The initiative aims to:

- provide a deeper understanding of the **strategic objectives of the STEP Platform** and its links with Cohesion Policy
- present the **national framework for coordinating STEP implementation**
- showcase the **experiences of the Algarve Region, the Sicilian Region and the Campania Region** in integrating STEP into their ERDF Regional Programmes
- promote dialogue among European, national, and regional institutions on the **opportunities offered by the STEP Platform**
- highlight the role of Regions in implementing the European Union's new industrial policy.