



EUROPEAN UNION

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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

// How can the EU Cohesion Policy foster better governance and cooperation at metropolitan level? Insights from the ESPON METRO project

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ESPON METRO in a Nuthsell

The role and future perspectives of Cohesion Policy in the planning of metropolitan areas
(October 2020 – October 2021)

- Three Policy Questions (answered on the basis of 9 in-depth case studies):

PQ1 | What role do metropolitan areas play in the development, management and implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy?

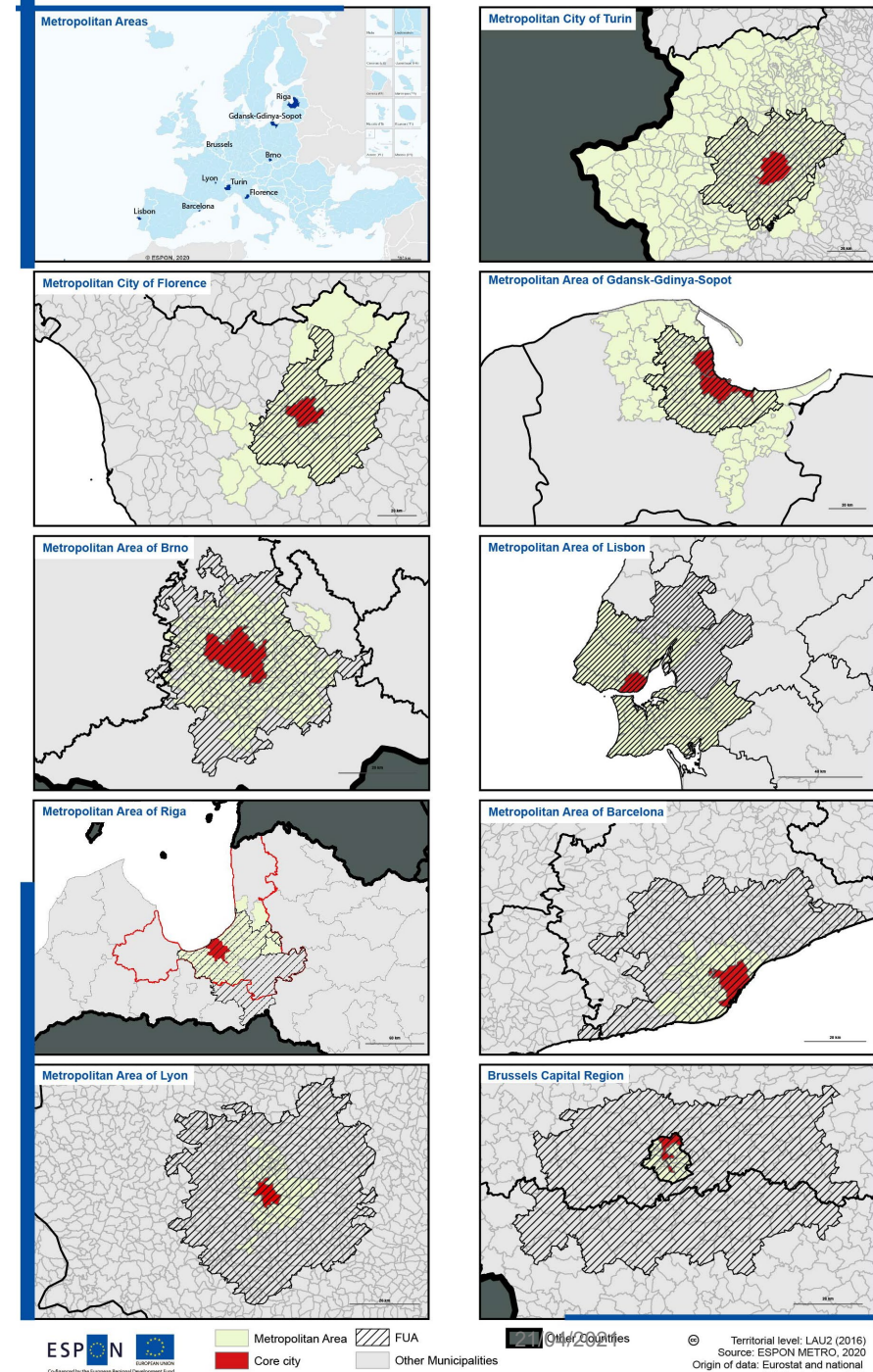
PQ2 | What is the added value of the EU Cohesion Policy in the planning and implementation of metropolitan policies?

PQ3 | What role does the EU Cohesion Policy play in consolidating metropolitan governance and cooperation?

Interim insights

EU metropolitan areas presents multiple levels of heterogeneity

- In relation to the territorial, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the European FUAs (EU-OECD methodology)
- In relation to the institutionalization of metropolitan cooperation
- In relation to the fit between the territorial phenomena and the institutions that are deputed to deal with them
- In relation to models of governance, spatial development instruments, budget, engagement with public/private actors etc.



How can the EU Cohesion Policy contribute to foster better governance and cooperation dynamics at metropolitan level?

Interim insights & recommendations

- The EU cohesion policy contributed to trigger virtuous institutional experimentations, and provided **momentum to metropolisation** in various countries where a metropolitan administrative level does not exist. This momentum **should be capitalised** upon.
- At the EU (and national) level **a decoupling of the metropolitan and the urban dimension** would favour a recognition of the role that metropolitan areas can play in addressing functional dynamics of supralocal nature, and in fostering the coordination of the action of local authorities.
- **ESIF logics and mechanisms should be further simplified**, so that metropolitan institutions can integrate them within territorial strategies and use them to enhance intermunicipal coordination (ITIs but also CLLD are good examples).
- **ITIs** have been often used to entrust metropolitan areas of the management of the EU cohesion policy, showing interesting potential. Their **adoption by countries and regions should be further incentivised and/or regulated**.

How can the EU Cohesion Policy contribute to foster better governance and cooperation dynamics at metropolitan level

Interim insights & recommendations

- Metropolitan authorities should **use the EU cohesion policy as a leverage** to further stimulate intermunicipal cooperation, overcoming the particularistic interests of basic territorial units towards the elaboration of joint visions and priorities.
- To do so, it is crucial for metropolitan institutions to **define an overarching development agenda, aligned to the EU programming** periods, to position metropolitan goals and actions within national and regional development perspectives (and now with those substantiating National Recovery Plans).
- Metropolitan actors should also think and **act also beyond the institutional boundaries**, to find ways to bypass existing administrative constrains (e.g. act at FUA level or through variable geographies).
- Overall, to further involve metropolitan areas in the EUCP programming will **introduce new priorities and ideas to complement those put forward by countries and regions**. In a time of systemic transformation accelerated by the pandemic, this is of uttermost importance.



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// Thank you!

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