

Thursday 17 June 2021 at 11.00-12.00 CET

ESPON Workshop

Cohesion Policy, backbone of Europe? The role of metropolitan areas

Notes for concluding remarks

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In line with the interesting reflections that have already been shared by the other colleagues and speakers during this session, my conclusion is mainly a political consideration.

The work we have developed during the IMAGINE Project demonstrated that in an area of great relevance for Europe, such as the region between Milano and Bologna, there are ongoing processes and new dynamics between territories and functions that need to be governed. Nonetheless, we should admit that the actual institutional setup is not in condition to govern the type of dynamics that we have seen in action, for example for functions like mobility, logistics, environmental issues, in front of which we currently have very limited means of government and regulation on a metropolitan and regional scale.

Today, more than ever, we see that these emerging needs challenge institutions to redefine their own forms of governance as well as the nature of their governance. Both territorial and functional institutions are, in fact, increasingly called to play a key role in building new processes of governance and policy planning. As it has been highlighted during the project, the organic connection between local and global levels requires a new government capacity of the territory to reorganize itself. It is obvious that this requires a new “political” compromise with its functions.

As a matter of fact, the ESPON IMAGINE project involved local governments and stakeholders of the main economic and territorial functions in a discussion on the development of a regional imaginary and an integrated territorial strategy between Milan and Bologna in the framework of the existing practices and regulations. In a future perspective, our work should contribute to foster the development of strategic networks and programs at the European level able to govern the transformation of urban and regional scenarios both within the Milan-Bologna corridor as well as by acting as an example for other corridors and European urban regions.

For this reason, we should stress the fact that these problems require new government techniques and advocate changes in the institutional setup because the actual institutions have not the power which is necessary to govern them.

I am convinced that with this project the stakeholders involved and ESPON have posed an extremely important problem: which Europe do we want to build? I think it must be the Europe of cities and urban regions.

Therefore, a manifesto from urban and metropolitan regions and their main actors asking for new glocal and transcalar forms of governance at the Eu level, should be extremely important.



Piero Bassetti is currently president of Globus et Locus, an association of institutions whose objective is to analyse the major aspects of glocalization, and president of the Giannino Bassetti Foundation. He was the first president of the Lombardy Region and Member of Italian Parliament. Former president of the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, and of the Union of Italian Chambers of Commerce, he was also president of the Association of Chambers of Commerce Abroad (CCIE). He is the Editor-in-chief of “Glocalism. Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation”.