

TARGETED ANALYSIS //

METRO

The role and future perspectives of Cohesion
Policy in the planning of Metropolitan Areas and
Cities

Annex VIII // Metropolitan City of Florence case study

This Targeted Analysis is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States, the United Kingdom and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinions of members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

Authors

Valeria Lingua, Giuseppe De Luca, Carlo Pisano, Raffaella Fucile, University of Florence (Italy)

Advisory group

Stakeholders: Francesca Cattaneo, Claudia Fassero, Mario Lupo, Irene Mortari, Valeria Sparano, Metropolitan City of Turin (IT) | Clémentine Dubois, Odile Huiban, Lyon Metropolitan Area (FR) | Agata Blacharska, Joanna Bogdziewicz-Wrblewska, Aleksandra Fijałkowska, Joanna Jaworska-Soral, Metropolitan Area of Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot (PL) | Filipe Ferreira, Lisbon Metropolitan Area (PT) | Alfredo Corbalan, Sandrine De Meyer, perspetive.brussels (BE) | Katrīna Sudare, Jānis Ušča, Riga City Council (LV) | Soňa Raszková, Brno City Municipality (CZ) | Alessandra Barbieri, Manuela Taverniti, Municipality of Florence (IT) | Xavier Estruch Bosch, Xavier Tiana Casablanca, Carlota Roses, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (ES) | Dorthe Nielsen, Pietro Reviglio, EUROCITIES | Guillaume Berret, Metropolis.

ESPON EGTC: Senior Project Expert: Piera Petruzzi, Financial Expert: Stefania Rigillo

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ISBN: 978-2-919795-65-9

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Published in December 2021

Graphic design by BGRAPHIC, Denmark

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Abbreviations

ANCI	National Association of Italian Municipalities
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community led local development
CMFi	Metropolitan City of Florence
EC	European Commission
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
EU	European Union
FUA	Functional Urban Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IB	Intermediate Body
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
ITP	Integrated Territorial Project
LAG	Local Action Group
MA	Managing Authorities
MC	Metropolitan City
MSP	Metropolitan Strategic Plan
NOP	National Operational Programme
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
PIT	Regional Territorial and Landscape Plan
PSM	Metropolitan Strategic Plan
PTCP	Provincial Territorial Plan
PTM	Metropolitan Territorial Plan
RDP	Rural Development Plan
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
SUMP	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
SNAI	National Strategy for Inner Areas

Foreword by Dario Nardella

All over the world, cities are protagonists in the economic and social recovery, just as they have been protagonists of the health emergency in its most acute phases. It is here that, in terms of population density, the incidence of economic activities on national GDP, the presence of infrastructures serving the entire national territory, an important part of the response to the challenges that await us is played.

The 14 Italian Metropolitan Cities, established in 2014 within the framework of the “Delrio law”, in charge to adopt two territorial governance instruments as the Metropolitan Strategic Plan and the Metropolitan Territorial Plan, must play a strategic role in achieving the objectives set out in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. They represent an urban system of 1,264 municipalities of different sizes, for a population of over 22 million people, and in which half of the national added value is produced.

As city leaders, we can implement ambitious policies to make the recovery and the European Green Deal a reality for all citizens, but we need to work closely with both the EU and national governments. In Europe, the metropolitan areas were not properly involved in the design of the national recovery plans. In order to ensure the recovery is green and just, greater cooperation between national and local governments is needed, for a real and concrete multi-level governance. By ensuring cities have a meaningful role to play in this critical time, and by utilising their knowledge and expertise, building back better will be possible. There is a clear window of opportunity now to make use of the EU's post-Covid-19 recovery plan, which set aside 37% of the available €673 billion for funding targeted towards green investments. This can open the door to a recovery that is better targeted at the level of people, focusing on green and digital transition and on social, economic and employment recovery.

The ESPON METRO project analysis and pilot experience as the Multi-fund National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020 (PON METRO), which implements one part of the initiatives conceived in the framework of European Urban Agenda for cohesion policies with the aim of strengthening the role of the cities and their metro territories, is expected to bring added value to metropolitan area reflection process within EU policy making and to provide hard evidence regarding metropolitan level relevance. The positive impact of metro capital city leading programme as PON Metro, ingesting more than one milliard euro from React-Eu funds, leads to a significant challenge not only in terms of the amount of resources available and time for carrying out the interventions, but also in terms of quality and opportunities in affecting the transformation of urban contexts in the near future. Be part of ESPON METRO project as municipality and metropolitan city of Florence has been an opportunity to learn, share, improve knowledge and awareness and capitalise the experiences of cities even thank to the support of the scientific teams and of the staff and stakeholder and we hope the role of metropolitan areas is now clear and undisputed, even thanks to the targeted analysis.



Dario Nardella,
Mayor of the Municipality of Florence and of the Metropolitan City of Florence

1 Introduction

The Metropolitan City of Florence (CMFi) is a NUTS3 institution in the Tuscany Region. This institution has been defined by “Delrio law” (Law 56/2014) and started its institutional activity on January 1, 2015. The area replaces the former Province of Florence and is now the new administrative level of planning.

According to law 56/2014, the President of metropolitan cities is the mayor of the main city, therefore for the Metropolitan City of Florence is the mayor of the City of Florence, and the council is elected among the mayors and city councilors of the municipalities. Capital city is the Municipality of Florence and in total the metropolitan territory is composed of 41 municipalities and in total just exceed a million inhabitants. The metropolitan institution works in a very fragmented environment, where the power and competences are distributed among different (public and private) bodies. Furthermore, several other metropolitan cooperation activities exist, that concerns portions of the metropolitan city territory: 1 Local Action Groups; 1 Unions of Mountain Municipalities; 3 Unions of Municipalities.

The Metropolitan City covers an area of 3514 sq km, with a population density of 288.4 inhabitants / sq. km; it is mainly hilly (68.7%), with large mountainous areas (26.8%) and only 4.5% of the plain, crossed by the Arno and its tributaries of the rivers.

The socio-economic gravitational area extends to the neighboring provinces of Prato and Pistoia and on the Pisa-Florence axis. Conversely, the institution includes municipalities from the northeast to the southwest whose territories and settlements have strong historical roots and a perceived feeling of being “other” than part of the metropolitan city.

As for the size of the metropolitan territory, on the one hand, the non-correspondence between the administrative boundaries of the metropolitan city and the functional and socio-economic dynamics that mark the territorial context is evident and has been underlined by spatial planning literature in the last years (De Luca 2016; De Luca et al. 2020). On the other hand, the links with the Florence-Prato -Pistoia axis and up to the coast (Pisa-Livorno), the Florence-Pisa airport system and the proximity to Bologna make the metropolitan city of Florence play the role of a pole of regional and national interest.

The Metropolitan City of Florence ranks among the top Italian urban economies in relation to three major areas: the presence of cultural centers and higher education structures (Culture, Knowledge, Multinational), craftsmanship and local productions (Fashion, Retail, Smart) and the landscape and environmental sustainability.

The Italian Metropolitan cities still perform all the functions of the previous Province authorities. Moreover, according to Law 56/2014, metropolitan cities have additional functions, such as strategic, spatial and mobility planning, organization of coordinated systems for the management of public services, mobility and transport, promotion and coordination of digitalization and economic and social development.

Despite the high level of institutionalization and competences of the Metropolitan city, which is formally acknowledged as an entity also enjoying a supranational relevance when it comes to access EU funds, it presently does not have relevant role and competences in the elaboration of key policy and programming documents of the EU cohesion policy and in their management and implementation, while the Region and the national level are the main actors.

In this case study report, the potential and actual role of the Metropolitan City of Florence in the implementation of the cohesion policy, and the impact of the cohesion policy on metropolitan development and governance are presented. After a territorial and socioeconomic contextualization of the area, the metropolitan governance and cooperation activities are presented. Then, the cohesion policy institutional architecture and policy instruments are presented, and the role of the metropolitan actors in the planning and implementation of the cohesion policy is examined, as well as its coordination with metropolitan governance. The cohesion policy impact on metropolitan development and governance is then presented, analyzing the coherence and synergies of its instruments and goals with metropolitan ones, the funding magnitude and the related impact. Issues related to the response to the COVID-19 emergency are presented in each of the three core sections of the report. Finally, the last section of the report summarizes the main challenges and recommendations.

2 Case study area contextualisation

The Metropolitan City of Florence (CMFi) was firstly created by the reform of local authorities (Law 142/1990), then established by Law 56/2014 and is now operative since January 1, 2015. Its capital city is the Municipality of Florence and in total the metropolitan territory is composed of 41 municipalities and just exceed a million inhabitants, equal to 27% of the entire population of the Tuscany Region.

The City of Florence has 378,839 inhabitants (38% of the metropolitan population), a population density higher than the municipalities of its belt (3,701 inhabitants on square kilometers) and a rather high level of urbanization (56% of the territory is destined for settlements and infrastructures). The demographic indicators define a small metropolitan system, with a strong presence of elderly population and low demographic growth.

The metropolitan city covers an area of 3,514 sq km, with a population density of 288.4 inhabitants / sq. km; it is mainly hilly (68.7%), with large mountainous areas (26.8%) and only 4.5% of the plain, crossed by the Arno and its tributaries of the rivers. The MCF involves some territories with a strict identity, such as the Chianti Shire in the South-East, the Mugello mountains in the northeast (Union of 8 municipalities), and an already-in-place union of 11 municipalities in Elsa Valley (South-West), headed by the municipality of Empoli.

The Functional Urban Area comprises 25 municipalities with a population of 806124; it covers an area of 1852 which is smaller than the institutional boundary.

Table 2.1
Main territorial indicators

Theme	Indicator	FUA			CMFi
		Core	Suburb	Total	
Institutional	Number of municipalities	1	24	25	41
	Area (km²)	102,3	1749,7	1852,0	3,514
Demography	Population (2019)	378839	427285	806124	995517
	Population (2010)	354300	404001	758301	998098
Population by age groups (2018)	0-14	45881	56687	102568	122985
	15-24	32050	39019	71069	90986
	25-44	93078	97692	190770	224511
	45-64	111578	126860	238438	301853
	65+	98361	106467	204828	255182
	tot	380948	426725	807673	995 517
	Population density	3701,8	244,209	435,272	283,3
	Activity rate	53	-	53	68.6
	Economically active population, total	165358	-	379116	481 915
	Persons employed	154105	-	357161	442 241
	Persons unemployed, total	11253	-	21955	39 674
	- Unemployment rate	7	-	5,79	6,2
	Total employment/jobs (work place based)	168693	-	311438	-

Theme	Indicator	FUA		CMFi
	- Employment (jobs) in agriculture, fishery (NACE Rev. 2, A)		-	487
	- Employment (jobs) in mining, manufacturing, energy (NACE Rev. 2, B-E)	14809	-	69169
	- Employment (jobs) in construction (NACE Rev. 2, F)		-	19149
	- Employment (jobs) in trade, transport, hotels, restaurants (NACE Rev. 2, G to I)	66284	-	111110
	- Employment (jobs) in information and communication (NACE Rev. 2, J)	7755	-	10371
	- Employment (jobs) in financial and insurance activities (NACE Rev. 2, K)	8680	-	11499
	- Employment (jobs) in real estate activities (NACE Rev. 2, L)	4032	-	6570
	-			

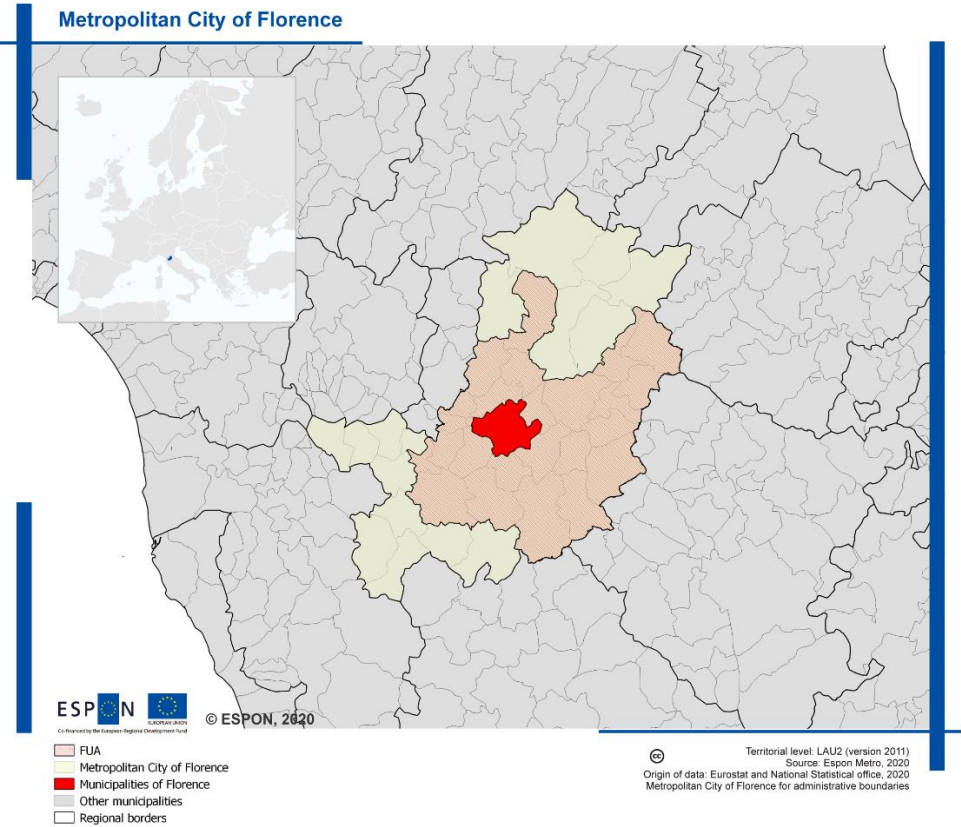
In the case of the Florentine metropolitan area, the subdivision of the FUAs within the provincial boundaries is also limiting. As highlighted in the Buralassi et al. (2015) by comparing the boundaries of the FUAs of Central Tuscany with the settlement methods identified by the Urban Morphological Zones (UMZ), there is a presence of settlements across the borders. This is particularly evident in the case of Florence and Prato (985,000 inhabitants). The existence of close "horizontal" and non-hierarchical interchange relationships can also be found in commuting matrices.

The socio-economic gravitational area extends to the neighboring provinces of Prato and Pistoia on the Pisa-Florence axis, and has been the focus of previous regional planning instruments and economic programming strategies. The City of Florence is the major pole of the metropolitan area and is the area that produces the greatest wealth in the region. As highlighted by Agnoletti (2015), a strong difference emerges between the productive and economic capacity of the central metropolitan area and the rest of the territory of the former province.

Since its institution in 2015, the lack of correspondence between the administrative boundaries and the socio-economic gravitational area defined by socio-economic dynamics and home-to-work displacements has been evident to administrators, citizens and regional scientists (De Luca, 2016).

The case of the metropolitan city of Florence could summing up all the problems of Italian metropolitan cities: its functional axis is perpendicular to the institutional one. On the one hand, the institutional boundary is unable to seize on the socio-economic and functional trends that clearly emerge in the densely-populated settlements seamlessly joining the three cited cities of Firenze, Prato and Pistoia. The socio-economic gravitational area extends to the neighbouring provinces of Prato and Pistoia on the Pisa-Florence axis, involving the municipalities of Firenze, Fiesole, Bagno a Ripoli, Impruneta, Scandicci, Lastra a Signa, Signa, Campi Bisenzio, Sesto Fiorentino (within the metropolitan city), the municipalities of Prato, Vaiano, Montemurlo, Poggio a Caiano e Carmignano (province of Prato) and Pistoia, Montale, Montemurlo, Agliana, Quarrata e Serravalle, Pistoiese (Province of Pistoia). This urban macro-system has been the focus of previous regional planning instruments and economic programming strategies, as the Regional Plan (De Luca et al., 2020). On the other hand, the institution includes municipalities from the northeast to the southwest whose territories and settlements have strong historical features and the inhabitants are strictly concerned with their roots and have a perceived feeling of being "other" than inhabitants of a metropolitan city.

Map 2.1
Metropolitan City of Florence



Source: authors' own elaboration

Map 2.2

Urbanised land

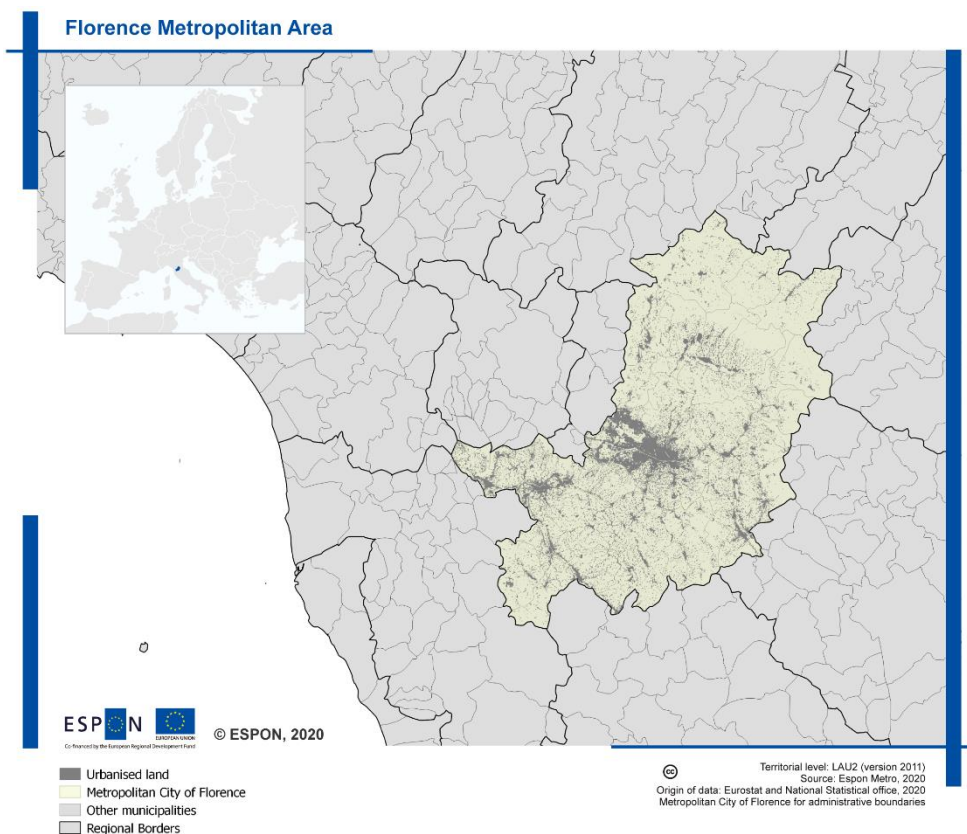
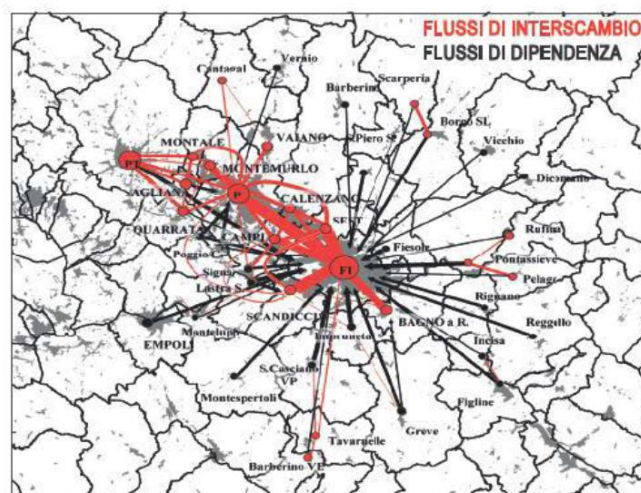


Figure 2.1
Interconnection and flow in Urban Morphological Zones Florence-Prato-Pistoia



Source: IRPET elaboration: Agnoletti C., Iommi S., Lattarulo P. (2015), *Rapporto sul territorio. Configurazioni urbane e territori negli spazi europei*. Irpet, Firenze, pp. 88.

3 Metropolitan governance structure and cooperation activities

3.1 Institutional framework

The establishment of metropolitan cities has been under discussion since the post-war period in Italy.

The first studies on the metropolitan phenomenon began in the early 1960s. The processes of urban gravitation, the formation of city-regions (Toschi, 1962; Archibugi, 1966) and the formation of metropolitan areas were investigated (Aquirone, 1962).

These phenomena, together with widespread conurbation processes in the Italian settlement system, characterized by the presence of many small municipalities, were investigated by Cafiero and Busca (1970) for Svimez (Associazione per lo Sviluppo dell'Industria nel Mezzogiorno, private non-profit association created to promote the study of the economic conditions of Southern Italy). This research work represents the first attempt to delimit metropolitan areas on the basis of census data of 1951 and 1961, identifying 32 metropolitan structures defined as: "system of interrelated functions, even discontinuously distributed in space" (Cafiero, Busca, 1970, p.5).

In the second half of the 1960s, the discussion led to a strategic document by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Programming called Progetto '80 (MBPE, 1969). The document, drawn up between 1969 and 1971, was commissioned as a preliminary report that accompanied the 1971-1975 National Economic Program and was a ten-year projection of Italian territorial development.

Progetto 80 raised the question of metropolitan areas in the political debate and is recognized as: "[...] the only national attempt at spatial planning that identified cities and metropolitan areas as the backbones of economic and social development of the republican Italy" (De Luca, Moccia, 2017, p. 6). The document, however, never brought about direct political action and remained a mere indication of strategy without operativity (Renzoni, 2012).

Over time, the phenomena of metropolisation have affected the entire European context, producing significant changes for local governments. As highlighted by Brenner (2004), political rescaling processes are underway defined as: "a search for a new institutional fix characterized by the proliferation of political strategies intended to manage the disruptive supranational, national, regional and local consequences of geoeconomic restructuring" (Brenner, 2004, p. 174).

These phenomena are interpreted as processes of: "[...] reterritorialization of state institutions and rescaling of political relations on the basis of socio-economic determinants" (Tortorella, Allulli, 2014, p. 9). The processes of metropolisation have led to implications on the governance system and repercussions on the administrative practices of local government, such as having induced the national legislator to adapt the regulatory apparatus in order to manage territorial dynamics in a more functional and effective way.

In Italy, a first proposal to identify the metropolitan level of government is put forward with the bill of the Council of Ministers of 8 July 1982, within a broader reform of local autonomies. This bill recognized as metropolitan areas the conurbations with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants, aggregated around a municipality of 400,000 inhabitants; these areas had to be characterized by urban centres with economic and social relations. However, the first real political action to establish metropolitan cities in Italy as an institutional body occurred with Law 142/1990 on local self-government. This law revised the organization of local autonomies by introducing the institutes of metropolitan cities and metropolitan areas, that included the capital municipalities and the settlements in close integration relationships regarding economic activities, essential services for social life, as well as cultural relations and territorial characteristics. The metropolitan city was recognized as having provincial functions, as well as functions normally entrusted to municipalities when they have a primary supra-municipal character or must, for reasons of economy and efficiency, be carried out in a coordinated form in the metropolitan area. The task of recognizing the boundaries of the metropolitan areas was given to the Regions, but none of them succeeded in institutionalizing them.

It was necessary to wait until the constitutional changes that followed the amendment of the 5th Title of the Constitution in 2001 when, for the first time, the metropolitan city was constitutionally recognized as an autonomous institution constituting the Italian Republic.

In point of fact, metropolitan cities were only established in 2014 within the framework of the “Delrio law” (Law 56/2014). This law sought to transform all Italian provinces into second level institutions and to reduce their jurisdiction, while provinces that incorporated major regional capital cities were abolished and replaced with “metropolitan cities” (actually 14 and among them, Florence and Turin) in charge to adopt two territorial governance instruments: the Metropolitan Strategic Plan and the Metropolitan Territorial Plan.

According to the 2014 “Delrio” law, the metropolitan city is defined as a large area institution with the aim of: managing the strategic development of the metropolitan area, promoting and managing the services, infrastructures and communication networks of interest to the metropolitan city in an integrated way, and taking care of institutional relations pertaining to its own level, including those with the cities and metropolitan areas of Europe.

The Metropolitan Cities have inherited the powers and functions of the Provinces, which they have de jure supplanted.

Currently the Metropolitan City has the following fundamental functions:

- adoption and annual updating of a strategic plan for the metropolitan area (lasting three years), conceived as a guideline for both the metropolitan city and the municipalities and unions of municipalities;
- general territorial planning, including mobility infrastructures and service networks under the competence of the metropolitan city;
- organization of coordinated systems for the management of public services for the municipalities of the Metropolitan City (preparing tender documents, acting as contracting authority, monitoring of service contracts, organizing competitions and selection procedures);
- mobility and transport, also ensuring the compatibility and consistency of municipal land use planning within the provisions of the metropolitan city;
- promotion and coordination of economic and social development, also ensuring support for innovative economic and research activities that are consistent with the vocation of the metropolitan city as outlined in the strategic plan;
- promotion and coordination of digitalization in the metropolitan area.

The fundamental functions of the provinces are also attributed to the metropolitan city:

- territorial, environmental and landscape planning, for the aspects of competence;
- planning of transport services in the provincial area, authorization and control of private transport, in line with regional planning, as well as construction and management of provincial roads and regulation of the road traffic inherent to them;
- provincial planning of the school network, in compliance with regional planning;
- collection and processing of data, technical-administrative assistance to local authorities;
- management of high school buildings;
- control of discriminatory phenomena in the employment field and promotion of equal opportunities in the metropolitan territory.

This new institutional dimension also required the creation of an architecture of strategic and administrative government tasked with predicting and implementing the development and competitiveness of the territory as it pertains to the metropolitan city.

According to Law 56/2014, the metropolitan governance has a formal structure headed by the President of the metropolitan city (also called “metropolitan mayor” assisted by a legislative body, the metropolitan council (consiglio metropolitano), and by a non-legislative assembly, the metropolitan conference (conferenza metropolitana).

The metropolitan council is the chief legislative body of the metropolitan city. It adopts a Statute and proposes laws and amendments to the metropolitan conference, and approves programs, regulations and rules submitted to it by the metropolitan mayor such as the budget. The council consists of mayors and city councilors of each municipality in the metropolitan city, elected from amongst themselves using partially open list proportional representation.

The metropolitan conference adopts or rejects laws and amendments approved by the metropolitan council. It is the ultimate approving body of the city's budget. Actions in the conference require votes of at least two-

thirds of communes in the metropolitan city and the majority of the overall resident population. The conference is composed of all mayors of the communes within the metropolitan city, in the frame of regional policies.

Under law 56/2014, the President of the metropolitan city is the Mayor of the capital city. The President acts as executive and administrative officer of the metropolitan city and represents, convenes and chairs meetings of the metropolitan council, supervises city offices, supervises the functioning of city services, and prepares the metropolitan city's budget.

In order to link the metropolitan government to the local dimension, the statutes recognize homogeneous areas in which to decline metropolitan development strategies. These are locally defined by each metropolitan city, considering particular aggregation parameters: administrative limits of the Unions of municipalities, management of supra-local services, delimitation of hydrographic basins, consolidated local identities.

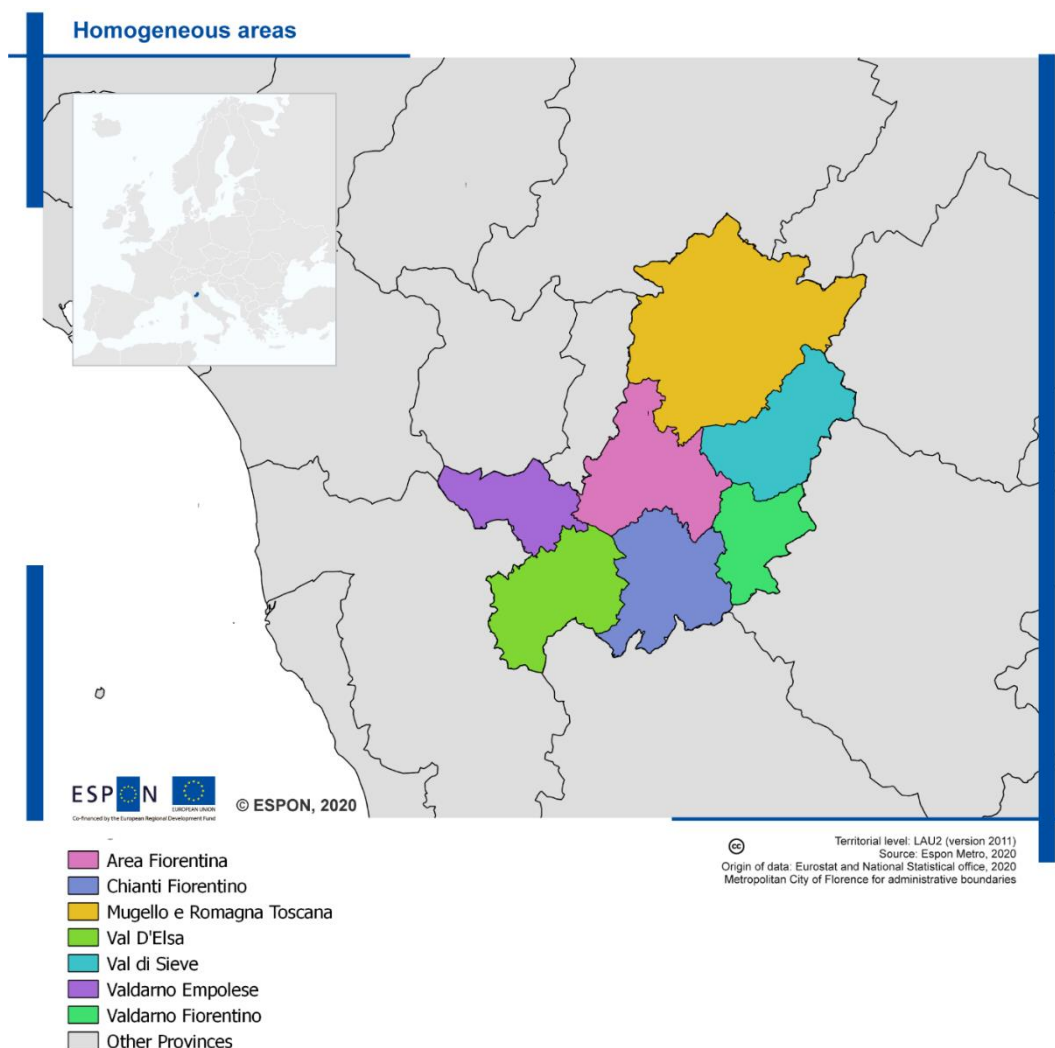
However, the division into homogeneous zones has not been defined by all the Metropolitan Cities and some have adopted specific forms of interaction with the intermediate levels. For example, in the Metropolitan City of Bologna no homogeneous areas are identified but the role played by these is delegated to the Unions of Municipalities. The Unions are represented by a "Presidency Office", made up of the metropolitan mayor and the presidents of the unions, which has the purpose of linking policies, strategies, projects between the metropolitan city and the unions.

With the introduction of the Metropolitan Cities as institutional entities, a differentiation between Italian territorial systems is recognized, affirming peculiarities and strengths to those of greater entity on the basis of the demographic component. However, the delimitation of metropolitan cities on the borders of the former provinces has affected a clear territorial demarcation. In some cases, Metropolitan perimeters do not identify real metropolises - on a morphological, economic and social level - and have led to the construction of large-area local entities that govern territories with very different characteristics and which often do not feel to be "part" of the metropolitan system. In smaller municipalities, the fear of losing space of autonomy in the management of some functions or services can lead to the rise of "parochialisms" that oppose the integration and implementation processes of a large area: "the same smaller municipalities falling within the metropolitan area have often seen with distrust the possible centralization in the chief town of the powers of the entire metropolitan area" (The European House Ambrosetti, 2016, p. 13).

The mismatch between institutional boundaries and metropolitan (functional) areas is also recognized by the ministerial dossiers on the subject, highlighting how: "[...] the province does not appear in any of the cities affected by the reform an adequate territorial area, nor from the point of view of the conurbation "Narrow" (with respect to which it appears almost everywhere too large) or with respect to the "wide" one of the so-called "functional urban region" (which, conversely, has almost everywhere a wider dimension and often in fact also transregional)" (Presidency of Council of Ministers, 2017, p. 10).

Metropolitan cities, in fact, are constructed in this way: "[...] with similar municipalities and territories that become" metropolitan by law "and not due to the structure and services present and which retain their administrative and managerial prerogatives [...] in territorial areas that are often narrower than the reference context of metropolitan visions" (De Luca, Moccia, 2017, p. 5). By choosing to conform the metropolitan institutional territory to the provincial one, the economic and social relations built in tandem with the expansion of the city-regions are often lost. These situations of relational and territorial contiguity require a supra-local government, which still does not correspond to the perimeters of the current metropolitan cities.

In consideration of the territorial differences, the Metropolitan City of Florence in the drafting of the PTM has identified 7 "homogeneous zones" defined by functionality and territorial criteria, following a complex analytical process that has taken into consideration a plurality of different existing structures and borders. These areas do not comply with the OECD typology of Functional Urban Areas (Map 3.1).

Map 3.1**Homogeneous zones of the Metropolitan City of Florence**

Source: authors' own elaboration

3.1.1 Other forms of cooperation

The metropolitan area, understood in the broader sense of the institutional boundaries, presents multiple forms of cooperation.

In the Metropolitan City there are four Unions of Municipalities:

- Union of Municipalities of the Empolese Valdelsa district (Capraia and Limite - Castelfiorentino - Cerreto Guidi - Certaldo - Empoli - Fucecchio - Gambassi Terme - Montaione - Montelupo Fiorentino - Montespertoli - Vinci)
- Union of Municipalities of Florentine Chianti (Barberino Tavarnelle - Greve in Chianti - San Casciano Val di Pesa)
- Mountain Union of Municipalities of Mugello (Barberino di Mugello - Borgo San Lorenzo - Dicomano - Firenzuola - Marradi - Palazzuolo sul Senio - Scarperia and San Piero - Vicchio)
- Union of Municipalities of Valdarno and Valdisieve (Londa - Pelago - Pontassieve - Reggello - Rufina - San Godenzo)

The Mountain Union of Municipalities of Mugello and the Union of Municipalities of Valdarno and Valdisieve in the past were part of the same Mountain Community. This was created in 1982 and unified the entire Valdisieve area with the so-called Romagna Toscana. The single mountain community lasted until 1999, then two mountain communities were created which became Unions of Municipalities.

In the metropolitan area, in the Province of Prato and Pistoia, there are two Unions of Municipalities:

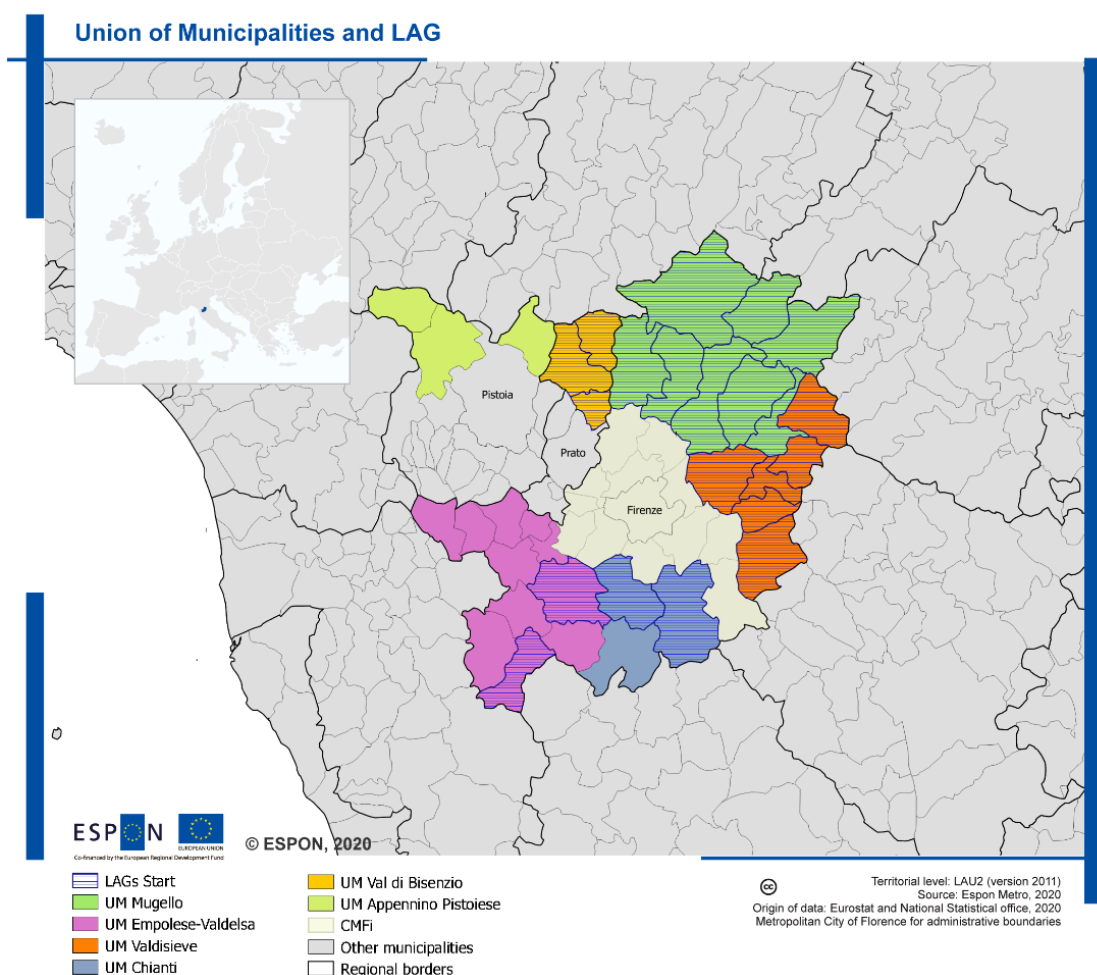
- Union of Municipalities of the Val di Bisenzio (Cantagallo - Vaiano - Vernio)
- Union of Mountain Municipalities Apennine Pistoiese (Abetone Cutigliano - Sambuca Pistoiese - San Marcello Piteglio)

The Unions of the municipalities of Mugello, Valdarno and Valdisieve, Val di Bisenzio cooperate within the Inner Areas Strategy.

A Lag-Local Action Group (GAL START) is also active in the area, which includes a very large area between the Metropolitan City of Florence and the Province of Prato.

The territory of the GAL Start embraces all the municipalities of Mugello and Val di Sieve, 5 municipalities of the Florentine Chianti and 3 municipalities of the Val di Bisenzio in the Province of Prato: Borgo San Lorenzo, Barberino di Mugello, Scarperia and San Piero, Firenzuola, Marradi, Palazzuolo sul Senio, Vicchio, Vaglia, Dicomano, San Godenzo, Londa, Rufina, Pontassieve (mountain part), Pelago, Reggello, Cantagallo, Vaiano (mountain part), Vernio, Barberino Tavarnelle (partially), Greve in Chianti, San Casciano in Val di Pesa (partially), Montespertoli, Gambassi Terme.

Map 3.2 Union of Municipality and LAGs



Source: authors' own elaboration

Challenges and critical elements

- As far as territorial governance is concerned, since 2016 the Metropolitan City is a second-level body whose representatives are elected by local administrators (no longer by citizenship); therefore, they are not independent from the municipalities and can directly or indirectly represent their interests. It should be noted that the methods of election of these representatives bring to light tangible territorial disparities. The election of mayors and municipal councillors in office as metropolitan councillors (Consigliere Metropolitano) requires each elector to cast a weighted vote on the basis of an index determined in relation to the overall population of the demographic bracket of the municipality of which he is Mayor or Councillor. This affects the representation of smaller towns, bringing to light territorial disparities. This inequality highlights how the perimeter of metropolitan cities is a problematic element that has an effective impact on its operational structure. The Metropolitan City should be the expression of an urban dimension on a supra-local scale but in practice it is made up of multiple small realities.
- On the other hand, looking at the central territories, it seems that the possibility and opportunity to define the governance of closely integrated territories and bearers of ample potential for economic development in a unitary way has been lost. The definition of the perimeter of functional metropolitan cities remains an open question.
- Some metropolitan actors highlight the correspondence between the mayor of the capital municipality and the metropolitan mayor as a critical element, as this leads to a centralization of power in the capital center and a "feeling" of greater peripherality for the smaller municipalities.

3.2 Evolution of metropolitan cooperation

The Metropolitan City of Florence presents a paradigmatic case in the Italian context for the difference between the real metropolis of economic-functional relations and the institutional metropolis represented by multiple territories, even iconic ones such as the Chianti region, which often do not feel to be part of the metropolitan city.

The real metropolis imagined and represented over the years, which has influenced and influences the local political debate, is in fact ignored at an institutional level. Thus two "orthogonal" metropolises coexist: the functional one and the institutional one. The former is today the center of economic development in Tuscany, producing about half of the region's GDP and playing a strategic role in the national development system. The institutional metropolis rests on historical relations with the territories that have their roots in the city-countryside relations (*città-contando* relations).

The real and historical metropolis has extended, since the nineteenth century, along the axis of the cities of Florence-Prato-Pistoia; naturally confined within an intermontane basin designed over the centuries first by the Roman centuriation and the sharecropping economy (the so called *mezzadria*), then by service networks and economic and productive activities. In 1975 the site has been defined by Giacomo Becattini, one of the major Italian economists, theorist of the industrial districts, as "urbanized countryside", i.e. a historically urban place, dotted since the Middle Ages by a dense network of cities and densely populated. This area has grown up over the years as: "a complex economic-territorial system with a large mesh, regulated not by explicit public policies coordinated at the supra-municipal level, but by the strength of that mix of public and private investments forced to coexist in a single large metropolitan basin: the plain, today interprovincial" (De Luca, 2017, p. 209).

It is at the end of the nineteenth century that the process of growth and modernization of the city of Florence leads to the first outlining of a relationship, which will often be conflictual, between the capital town and the peripheral municipalities (on the first belt) which were considered as expansion areas of the city. The widening of the municipal border, which was first bound to the city walls, and the construction of the mobility infrastructures network to and from Florence dates to this period. This contributed both to strengthening the processes of gravitation towards the capital city, and to urban growth.

After the Second World War, social and economic changes led to strong urbanization processes, with the consequent urbanization of the lowland areas, and a constant demographic growth until the 1980s. Then phenomena of deurbanization follow, with a wider diffusion of the population within increasingly vast conurbated areas.

Thus, a widespread city of the “Piana” is being formed along the ample plain of the Arno valley, where over time the large recreational and cultural facilities have moved, such as the scientific and technological center of Sesto Fiorentino. It is a widespread city that grows without demographic correlation and without urban plans: on a system centered on the three poles of Florence-Prato-Pistoia, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises is grafted onto the territory through forms of private subdivision, following the infrastructural of the road axes and the punctual ones of the railway stations. Thus, over time, the plain becomes an area: “[...] universally and uniquely interpreted as a building area, a preferential place in which the modern city could take shape and identity” (Secchi, 1988, p. 17).

Although from a political point of view there is a lack of understanding of the large area dimension, during the 1950s the first socio-economic analyzes of the Florentine metropolitan area were developed. At the same time there are the first attempts at the elaboration of inter-municipal plans.

The first recognition of the Plain as a unitary system is given by the geographer Aldo Sestini's definition of “conurbation of the plain” (1958). The conurbation included the urban centers of ten municipalities of the Florentine plain; centers hit by urbanization processes that tended to weld them together. Instead, the architect Adriano Montemagni for the studies of the new local plan (PRG) of Florence in 1963 will read the entire basin that goes from Florence to Pistoia as a “homogeneous area”. This interpretation was criticized at the time, but it was reiterated a few years later, in 1966, by the French geographer Charrier who identified in the Florence-Pistoia basin a real metropolitan area consisting of the three major municipalities and eighteen suburban municipalities. During the 1960s, other authors, including Cafiero and Busca (1970) in the aforementioned report for Svimez, recognized the plain area as an Italian metropolitan system based on census data from 1961. During the 1970s, even urban planners like Astengo they proposed to read the basin of the plain in a unified manner.

Later, also in the Preliminary Report to the National Economic Program 1971-75, the aforementioned Progetto 80, the area of the Piana was recognized as one of the nine large urban systems existing at national level in its peculiar characterization of predominantly linear metropolitan system. However, the economic and territorial projections developed in recent years will remain pure speculation. Despite these awards, local politics was not interested in placing itself in a metropolitan and large area perspective, as evidenced by the failed inter-municipal plan attempts, also due to the excessive political and economic weight of Florence compared to the other urban centers of the plain.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s, the attempts to develop an inter-municipal plan for the Piana Fiorentina will be varied and in vain. At first linked to the drafting of the local plan of the city of Florence and later on the initiative of the Region.

In the 1980s, the Tuscany region began drafting a Structural Scheme of the Metropolitan Area. In 1983 the Conference for the coordination of inter-municipal planning interventions in the Florence-Prato-Pistoia area was activated, this will lead to the development and approval, in 1990, of the *Structural Scheme for the Florence-Prato-Pistoia Metropolitan Area*.

This Scheme was to be a platform for structuring a dialogue between different players in the area by defining obligations and competences within a metropolitan dimension. However, even this tool will not find full application since it will “collide” with the birth of new territorial plans for provincial coordination (*Piani Territoriali di Coordinamento Provinciale- PTCP*), as recognized by art. 15 of law 142/90. In fact, following the new law, the provinces of Florence and Pistoia, first, and Prato, then, will draw up the provincial plans questioning the unitary metropolitan vision and the delicate institutional balances achieved (De Luca, 2017). However, from the supra-provincial level, the region will continue to read the Florence-Prato-Pistoia basin in a unified manner within its plans.

In addition to the provincial plans, the law on local self-government 142/1990 introduces the metropolitan city body into the national system. Thus, Florence was recognized as a metropolitan city, as the capital, and the definition of its extension had to be agreed between the region, province and municipalities. So in the aftermath of the approval of law 142/1990 the question of the metropolitan area, which seemed to have reached a possible “management” with the elaboration of the structural scheme and the proposals for the formation of permanent discussion tables, returns to settle on the border theme.

In the 90s the issue was much debated by the local political class; in 1996 the Metropolitan Conference of the Florentine area CO.Met was also born, wanted by the province of Florence and supported by the Region, the Mugello Mountain Community and twenty-nine municipalities. The Conference should have structured a path to define the metropolitan area in relation to the Florentine area, a limitation much criticized above all by economic actors who perceived the ineffectiveness of a metropolitan area disconnected from the territories of the economy which should therefore have included at least the municipality of Prato. From the point of view of the "minor" municipalities of the Florentine plain, in those years, there was also an attempt to define a Union of Municipalities to give life to the "*Città della Piana*" (City of the Plain). This should have been a reality of about 100,000 inhabitants, consistent enough to be placed equally in Prato and Florence, however it will remain only a hypothesis.

The unsuccessful planning attempts, although they failed to impress a large area territorial project in real urban practices, certainly contributed to structuring a metropolitan imaginary, felt above all by the capital city of Florence. In fact, the chief town also pursued during the 2000s the project of building a metropolitan city together with the first-belt neighboring municipalities, the so-called "Greater Florence". In the meanwhile, the drafting of a strategic plan for the *Firenze 2010* metropolitan area was launched by ten municipalities and promoted by the public-private association Firenze 2010 (established in 2003) which later became Firenze Futura (in 2007). This association was created as a political response to the territorial solicitations of the mayor of Florence and is structured as a place for meeting and confrontation between the social actors of the metropolitan area. The association promotes the implementation of the strategic plan and the planning of a large area; however, it does not have a real operational structure to implement the provisions of the planning. More than the feasibility and implementation of the strategic proposals, the positive element of the plan formation process is related to the communication of the idea of the city / metropolitan area, in fact, forums and conferences have been promoted to present the Florence plan and case studies of European metropolitan cities. The strategic vision of the Florentine metropolitan area is also promoted within the Urbact II JOINING FORCES - Metropolitan governance & competitiveness of European Cities project, in which the municipality of Florence participates from 2008 to 2010.

It should be noted that at the same time as the drafting process of "metro city" strategic plan, other entities, such as the Tuscany Region, have promoted discussion tables on the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area. In fact, after the recognition by the Region of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area, in 2005 the steering document "*Una politica d'area vasta metropolitana per la Toscana centrale*" (A vast metropolitan area policy for central Tuscany) was signed by the Regional Council and the Provinces, with the aim to agree on policies and projects for a large area. Subsequently, in 2007, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the Tuscany Region, the Provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia, the Empolese-Valdelsa district and the mayors of the capital municipalities for the drafting and implementation of a *Patto per lo sviluppo locale di area vasta* (Pact for local development of vast area). This pact had a negotiating and voluntaristic character: it was intended to serve for the coordination and integration of projects and programs between public and private entities. In the idea of the region, through this pact, permanent discussion tables were structured (about the environment; infrastructure and mobility; economy, research and innovation; welfare and culture) open to economic and social actors, as well as institutional ones. These became control booths to make projects operational and verify the implementation of the interventions, mainly financed by regional funds.

In summary, it is possible to recognize two periods of planning and programming of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area: the one that goes from the 50s to the 70s and the one that goes from the 80s to the 2000s. These experiences also mark different cooperation phase in the metropolitan area.

In the first period, inter-municipal planning was promoted by the municipal level, by the municipality of Florence, and was made explicit through the design of the territory, made visible in the cartographic representations. The plans of the period sought in some way to govern and structure the expansion of an increasingly widespread and indefinite city. The plans also discounted a very Florence-centric vision that was locally opposed by other local realities: "The Florentine administration, in presenting the inter-municipal plan to the municipalities, immediately encounters institutional difficulties linked to an idea of territorial development essentially centered on Florence, which uses the other municipalities as basins of expansion of the city" (De Luca, 2017, p. 215).

At the same time the plans presented a more limited extension to the territorial scope of the plain between Florence and Prato (not including the Pistoia area).

In the second period, the creation of the regional body leads to the recognition of the vast metropolitan area extended over all three provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia; in this period the approach to planning also changes and becomes negotiation opening up to economic and social actors.

The analyzes and planning attempts of the metropolitan area have produced a rich imagery of possible representations, leaving the question of borders unresolved.

The establishment of the Metropolitan City of Florence, as defined by the Delrio law of 7 April 2014, takes place after a debate lasting more than half a century and was resolved with the transformation of the province into a metropolitan city

The misalignment between the real city and the institutional city is also reflected in the misalignment with the economic forces that act and shape the metropolitan area (Lingua, De Luca, 2015). In the Dossier on Metropolitan Cities it is recognized that: "If therefore there is one of the new metropolitan Authorities which, in the light of existing studies, should address the issue of the most correct perimeter of existing urban phenomena and to be governed with more ambition, this is precisely Florence "(Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2017, p. 16).

In the Statute of the Metropolitan City of Florence (approved on 16.12.2014) the question of opening the borders towards other municipal realities is dealt with Article 21 paragraph 2, envisaging the possibility of agreements with municipalities and other entities:

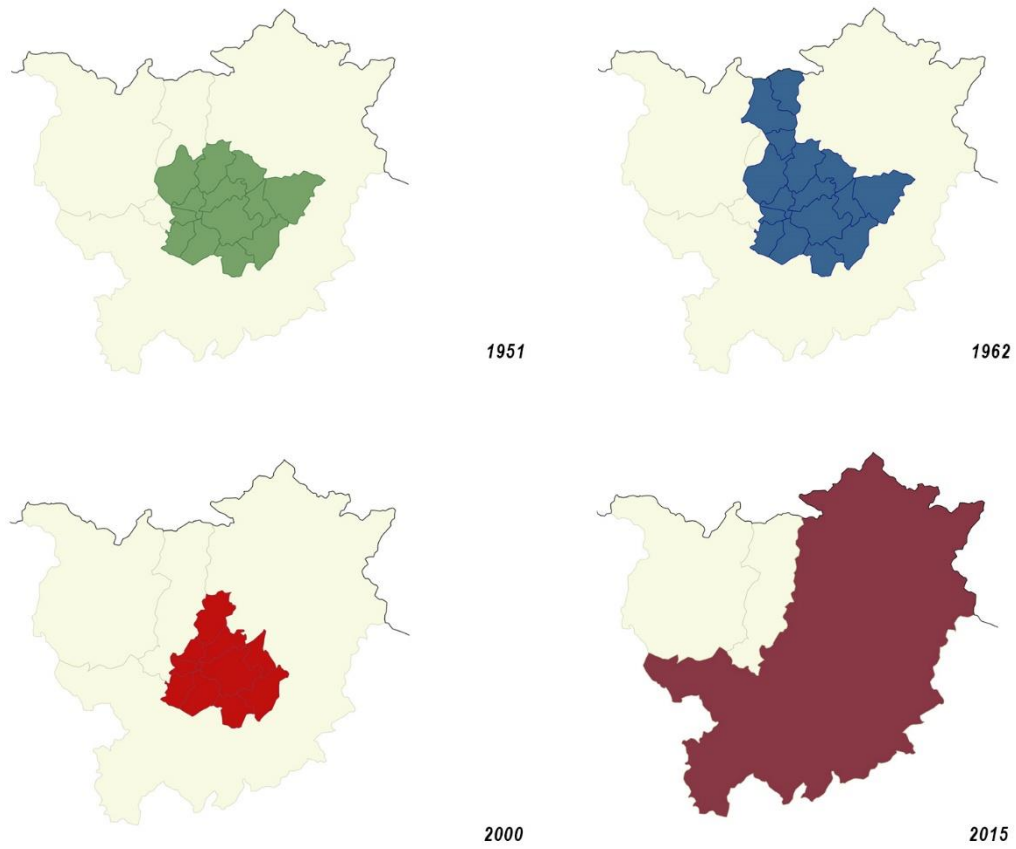
"The Metropolitan City can stipulate agreements and conventions with municipalities, individuals or associates, or other territorial entities outside its territory in order to achieve an integrated management of public services of common interest, or to promote forms of coordination between the respective activities, also providing, where the nature of the service or provision allow it, the mutual use of offices, or forms of delegation aimed at maximizing the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of the services ".

The issue of borders is also central to the *Documento di Indirizzo per l'avvio del procedimento relativo al Piano Strategico Metropolitano di Firenze* (Guidance Document for the initiation of the procedure relating to the Metropolitan Strategic Plan , December 2015), in fact, one of the paragraphs " *Il Confine della Pianificazione Strategica* " (The Border of Strategic Planning) focuses on the question: "The social, economic and cultural phenomena object of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan have a territorial dimension that is often not confined to the perimeter of the CM [...] The Metropolitan Strategic Plan is the generative environment and the reference ecosystem of a meta-strategic platform between the Region and the Metropolitan City, which finds its natural reference context in a *Masterplan of Central Tuscany*, capable of interpreting development lines and defining integrated projects for territories interested in common development prospects, regardless of the administrative boundaries of the Metropolitan City".

The possible configurations of the Metropolitan City were also explored in the participatory process that fueled the construction of the Strategic Plan. Four different possible configurations emerged from the vision of citizens and stakeholders, sign that the border issue is open and "blurred", highlighting the possibility and willingness to activate cooperations (voluntary and linked to projects) also with entities and actors outside metropolitan borders.

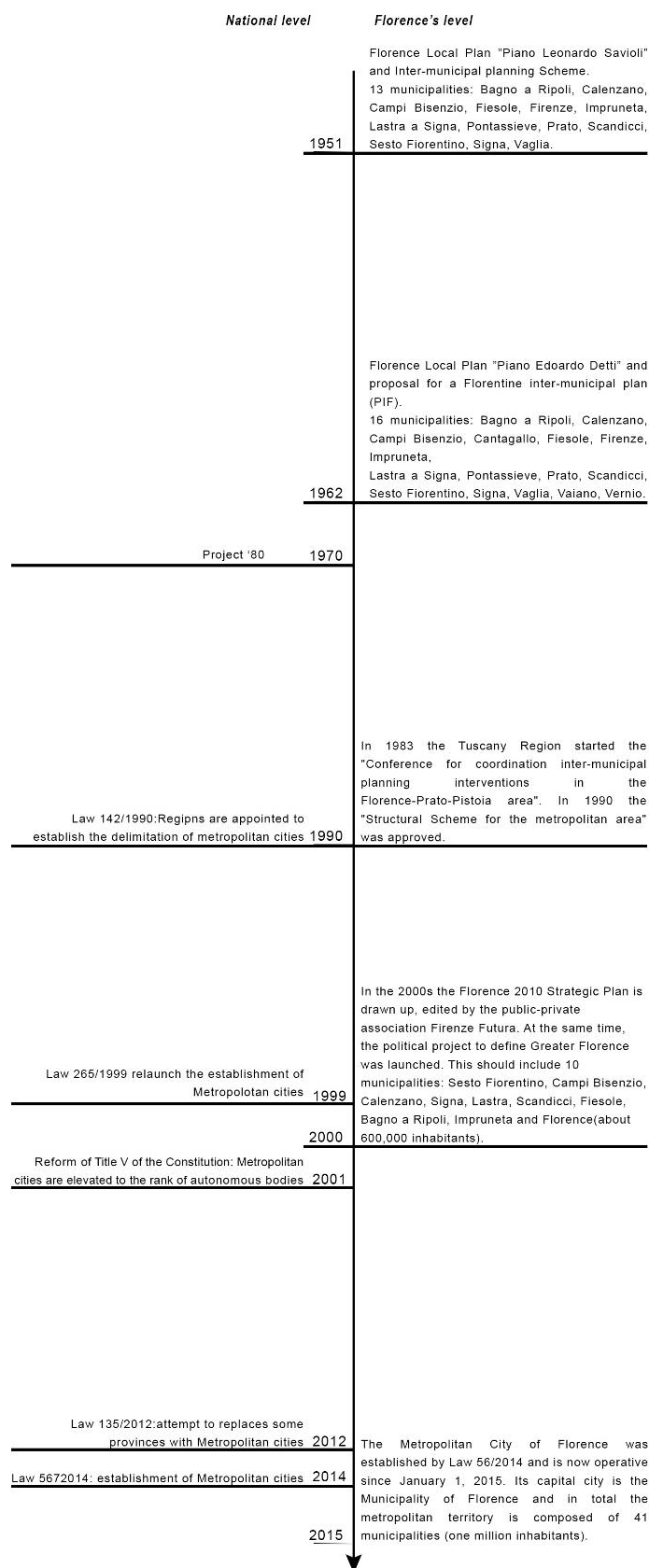
Figure 3.1

Evolution of metropolitan cooperation in the Metropolitan City



Source: authors' own elaboration

Figure 3.2
Timeline of metropolitan cooperation

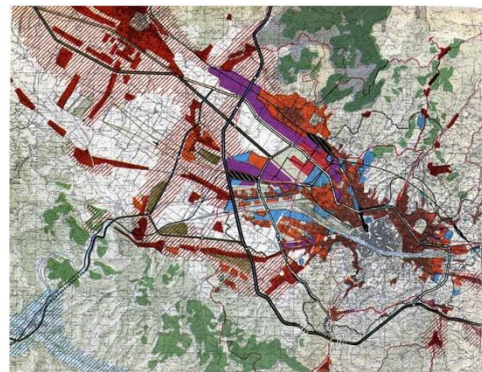


Source: authors' own elaboration

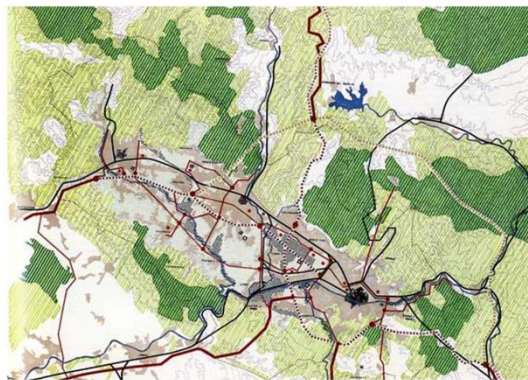
Figure 3.3
Evolution of metropolitan planning



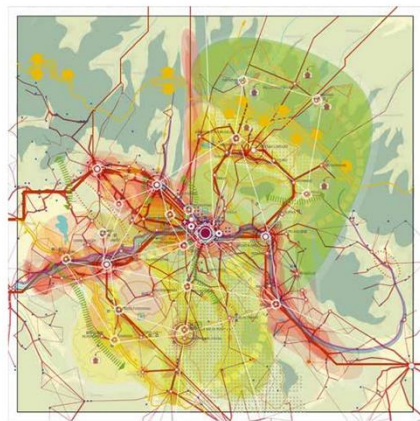
Florence Local Plan "Piano Leonardo Savioli" and Intermunicipal planning scheme, 1951



Florence Local Plan "Piano Edoardo detti" and Florence intermunicipal (PIF), 1962



Structural Scheme for Metropolitan Area, 1990



Metropolitan Strategic Plan: "Metropolitan Renaissance", 2011

Source: authors' own elaboration

Challenges and critical elements

- The metropolitan city of Florence presents a strong divergence between the territorial and institutional dimensions, and this is strongly felt by the actors interviewed. The great theme of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area is a *'historical paradigm of planning for the Tuscany region'* that has not yet been resolved. In the territories further away from the central metropolitan area, there are Unions of Municipalities that have a strong local identity and are rather cohesive (especially the Mugello and Empolese ones). Some territories, which correspond to inner areas (Mugello, Valdisieve), suffer from peripherality and marginality (*"they feel like second-class citizens"*) not only with respect to the Metropolitan City but to the whole Region. However, they recognize territorial potential not yet expressed, for example *"being a middle ground compared to the MC of Bologna"*

3.3 Metropolitan development goals

The Metropolitan City of Florence has expressed its idea of future development in the Metropolitan Strategic Plan 2030 through the construction of “Metropolitan Renaissance” Mission, that can be achieved through three Visions: “Universal Accessibility”, “Widespread Opportunities”, “Lands of Wellness”.

The emission and the three vision become operational through strategies, actions and pilot project that provide for improving the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the metropolitan area, defining a strong and shared strategic vision to give an effective response to contemporary socio-economic and environmental challenges.

In addition to the vision expressed by the plan, the Metropolitan City is currently proceeding with the construction of the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDGs programming tool provided by UN, and included in the National and Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development, aimed at achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the related 169 Targets in the reference area. This tool is intended in a complementary and integrated manner to the strategic plan.

In agreement with the Ministry of Ecological Transition, the Metropolitan City has undertaken a participatory process aimed to define its own Metropolitan Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The Agenda 2030 is intended to steer current and future strategic choices towards suitable sustainable development. Within this process, local governance is intended to play an important role in the definition of a sustainable development planning process capable of reflecting the actual needs and specific opportunities of the territory and giving everyone the opportunity to fully express their potential.

The Metropolitan agenda will be built through a participatory process that is currently underway, involving all metropolitan areas and in particular the younger citizens (under 30).

Recently, May 2021, the Metropolitan City in agreement with the Municipality of Florence and the Chamber of Commerce defined the “Pact for Work and Development” to outline shared objectives and projects for the metropolitan development in the post-covid phase.

3.3.1 Coherence with national and regional goals

The construction of the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda will place the implementation of the metropolitan strategic plan within a multilevel strategic and programmatic framework at a global, European, national and regional level.

At the national level, Law 56/14, letter b, paragraph 44, article 1, assigns to the Metropolitan Cities the fundamental function of general territorial planning, including communication structures, service networks and infrastructures belonging to the competence of the metropolitan community, also setting constraints and objectives to the activity and exercise of the functions of the municipalities included in the metropolitan territory. In assigning to the CMs also the functions pertaining to the Provinces, the legislator has left to the CMs the functions of planning coordination (letter a, paragraph 85 of the same Law).

Another regulatory reference at national level is Article 20 of Legislative Decree No 267/2000, the Consolidated Law on Local Authorities, which assigns the provinces the task of determining the general guidelines for land use planning, with particular reference to:

- Different destinations of the territory in relation to the prevailing vocation of its parts. (In this regard, it should be noted that Law 56/14 provides that the vocation of the metropolitan city is to be outlined in the Metropolitan Strategic Plan. See letter e, paragraph 44, art. 1)
- Broad location of major infrastructures and lines of communication
- Lines of action for water, hydrogeological and hydraulic-forestry development and in general for soil consolidation and water regulation
- Areas where it is appropriate to establish parks or nature reserves

The metropolitan territorial planning needs the adaptation to the superordinate planning of regional level.

The planning document of Tuscany Region is the Territorial Address Plan (PIT); in its current drafting, the plan has taken on the significance of a Landscape Plan: with the Regional Council Resolution no. 37 of 27/03/2015, the Tuscany region approved the Territorial Address Plan with the value of a Landscape Plan (PIT-PPR). In art. 20 paragraph 3 of the PIT states that “The tools of territorial and urban planning, the

planning acts of the managing bodies of protected natural areas, the sector plans and programs that can be qualified as acts of territorial governance pursuant to regional legislation, to be adopted after the date of publication in the BURT of the resolution approving this Plan, they comply with the statutory regulations of the plan, pursuing its objectives, applying the guidelines for policies and directives and respecting the prescriptions and prescriptions of use".

In consideration of the planning chain and the prevalence of the regional planning document, the metropolitan planning is obliged to comply with the PIT-PPR.

Furthermore, the relations between the Region and the Metropolitan City are governed by the regional law 22/2015 which defines the instrument of the "Region-Metropolitan City Conference". The Conference is intended as a place within which to stipulate shared agreements and projects for the implementation of the regional development program and for strengthening the competitiveness of the metropolitan area.

3.3.2 Coherence with municipal goals

To compare the local development goals with the metropolitan development goals, a comparative analysis was developed between the local strategies (Structural Plans) and the metropolitan strategies derived from the PTCP (Provincial Territorial plan), PSM (Strategic Metropolitan Plan) and PUMS (Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan)¹.

Regarding the analysis of the Structural Plans, two aspects should be emphasized:

- First, metropolitan municipalities (and in general those of the Tuscan region) are going through a period of transition and radical renewal of their urban planning tools (both the structural and operational ones) dictated by the adaptation to the new regional law on the government of the territory (Lr 65/2014);
- secondly, structural planning is increasingly carried out using collaboration and grouping between multiple administrations for the definition of inter-municipal structural plans, incentivized by regional funds.

With regard to shared analysis between local strategies and metropolitan strategies derived from the PTCP, PSM and PUMS, the correlation of the data resulting from the comparison allows us to certify a high level of alignment. In a general framework of strong transcalar synergy between the municipal and the metropolitan level, however, some elements of misalignment, some lack of strategic convergence between the plans, can be highlighted.

First, the lack of relevance with the strategies of the PUMS, to sustainable mobility, is evident in almost all the structural plans, but it should be noted that the SUMP was adopted in September 2019 and some municipalities, such as Certaldo, have developed tools own.

As far as the relationship between PS and PTCP is concerned, the lack of affinity mainly concerns areas or issues of a broad nature that the provincial instrument is not required to deal with: social, socio-economic and tourism issues.

As regards the relationship between PS and PSM, the unmatched strategies fall into specific categories and are linked to territorial technological infrastructures.

Finally, the relationship between the different plans on the metropolitan city at different levels, some strategies that are not reflected in both the PTCP and the PSM concern: i) strongly localization strategies (for example specific categories and linked to territorial technological infrastructures such as the sewer network or power lines); ii) strategies that address specific issues (for example recycling and separate collection of waste).

The in-depth analysis conducted on the correspondence between PS and the vision of the PSM showed that the vision that intercepts the major number of strategies is the third, "lands of well-being", which concerns

¹ Research report prepared by DidaLab Regional Design: Towards the PTM of the Metropolitan City of Florence: the passage from the Strategic Plan to the Territorial Plan (Art. 91 Lr 65/2014; L. 56/2014).

environmental and landscape issues. The vision related to the “100% reuse” strategy of the PSM follows, while the first vision concerning “universal accessibility”, deepening the issues related to governance, social inclusion, mobility and smart governance, intercepts a lower number of synergies with municipal strategic planning.

Concerning the spatial location of the strategies, a mismatch and dissonance between the projects of the neighboring municipalities is evident. From the cartographic comparison and through the re-elaboration of the collected material, some discrepancies are immediately readable, with respect to the projects located on the institutional boundaries of bordering municipalities:

- The development of urban settlements or industrial platforms is often located close to the municipal boundaries, with an approach that does not include a spatial dialogue with the neighboring territories.
- The mobility infrastructures do not result in continuity from municipality to municipality, especially cycle paths: in some cases, the cycle path project of a municipality does not converge in the same point of the neighboring municipality. This does not happen for the capital city of Florence and the neighboring municipalities.
- Some plans identify and represent supra-municipal level strategies, crossing the administrative boundary and thus highlighting the propensity to connect and link their strategic addresses with those of neighboring municipalities; however, the same attention and vision (both in content and in representations) does not correspond to this intent in the structural plans of the neighboring municipalities.

However, the dissonances present must not be read directly as critical or conflict, as they are then made explicit in the operational or Land use plan. With respect to the alignment between municipal and metropolitan development goals, a convergence of visions and the need for metropolitan coordination can be detected.

Figure 3.4
Coordination mechanism between the metropolitan development goals and the framework of national, regional and municipals goals



Figure 3.2 Arco, Avventura Urbana (2020) 2030 Metropolitan Agenda for Sustainable Development, presentation for Metropolitan Conference 29 October 2020 - Metropolitan City of Florence

Challenges and critical elements

- At the metropolitan level, the development of strategic plans (MSP, PUMS) that define strategies and actions comparable with those of the European community has facilitated the project effects and the possibility of defining projects "*easily expendable in community planning*".
-

3.4 Metropolitan development and planning instruments

In October 2015 the Metropolitan City of Florence started to define its strategic plan, as per Law 56/2014, by establishing a Scientific Committee composed of stakeholders from different fields: Florence University (UNIFI), Research and Innovation Foundation (FRI), Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze (banking foundation), Regional Institute for Economic Planning of Tuscany (IRPET), and the Chamber of Commerce.

The first step involved conducting spatial analyses and regional studies to define strategic projects to be implemented by the Metropolitan City. In the meantime, a participatory process was launched under the slogan "Together for the plan" which revealed the complexity of the activity for the stakeholders in defining the metropolitan area and its problems.

The process of defining current scenarios and trends has led to the synergistic and integrated consideration of two different design scales (macro and micro), with their projects and practices (stories).

The 'macro-stories' concerned institutional public projects, as well as in house and private projects covering public supra-local services: from public transport to metropolitan agricultural parks, the metropolitan city's position in global world economics and the promotion of startups through incubation and acceleration processes.

Whereas, the 'micro-stories' emerged within the participatory process through the storytelling of current and evolving projects and practices involving small parts of the metropolitan territory and community: from active solidarity networks in some town districts in Florentine municipalities to forms of co-housing and co-living in diverse parts of the countryside, from the "milk streets" in the Mugello area to the enhancement of ancient grain supply chains in the Empoli area.

Both macro and micro stories were represented together in the frame of "metropolitan rhythms": this metaphorical spatial device is adopted to return the complexity of territories and to visually translate the relationship among micro and macro stories into a diagrammatic language, defining a series of concise scenarios which form the basis for the three strategic visions of the plan (Universal accessibility, Widespread opportunities, Lands of wellbeing) to bring about a new 'Metropolitan Renaissance' (Lingua, 2018).

From a methodological perspective, metropolitan rhythms are the final result of a proactive reading of the territory intended to join variable geometries coming from both the "contradiction" of the institutional reform and functional and socio-economic trends. To avoid the mismatch between the institutional boundaries of the metropolitan city, coinciding with the former province of Florence, and the functional urban area historically developed along the subregional basin of the provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia, a 100x100 km square area has been used as the ground to define both current trends and future scenarios. This frame covers the entire area defined both by the institutional and functional metropolitan areas. Within this square, rhythms find spatiality through figurative language with a strong symbolic connotation obtained through operations of compositional selection and abstract synthesis of geo-localized elements (De Luca, 2017; De Luca et al., 2020).

With the Strategic Plan 2030, the Metropolitan City of Florence proposes a path of change to improve the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the metropolitan area: a Metropolitan Renaissance. The term evokes a change of era, of intellectual, economic and social rebirth supported by ideals of civil ethics, pragmatism, exaltation of active life, which historically had the city of Florence as its "cradle". If today the need for a rebirth is evident compared to the current contingency, this cannot only be referred to the main urban nucleus and the municipalities of the nearest area, but to the entire territorial system. Starting from the artistic and cultural heritage, from the manufacturing of quality, from the productions of excellence, which make this territory a condensation of knowledge stratified over time, the Strategic Plan 2030 assumes the Renaissance as a

moment of strong cultural transformation, a new story and a new narration extended to the entire metropolitan territory: a vast territory, rich in complementary and cohesive resources.

The Metropolitan Renaissance is expressed through three strategic visions: I) UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY, as an indispensable condition for participation in social life and for the usability of spaces and services; II) WIDESPREAD OPPORTUNITIES with the activation of multiple and varied resources / opportunities present throughout the metropolitan area; and finally, a conception of the metropolitan territory that enhances the rural territory as an integrated whole of III) LANDS OF WELLNESS, in terms of quality of life and eco-systemic balance. The three strategic visions interpret the collective image of the cities and the current territory and define the desirable direction towards which to strive to pursue the Metropolitan Renaissance. The shared objectives that emerged during the participatory process and the researches - as well as with a careful reading of the territory, its spaces and the social context - define three parallel horizons, capable of intercepting the opportunities offered by the territory, systematizing policies and present and future projects. The strategies of the PSM are described below according to the three visions:

- Vision 1 - UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY:
 - 1.1 Multimodal mobility
 - 1.2 Sentient city
 - 1.3 Cooperative governance
 - 1.4 Inclusive community
- Vision 2 - WIDESPREAD OPPORTUNITIES:
 - 2.1 Innovative manufacturing
 - 2.2 Enterprising training
 - 2.3 Reuse 100%
 - 2.4 Integrated attractiveness
- Vision 3- LANDS OF WELLNESS:
 - 3.1 Usable landscape
 - 3.2 Networked supply chains
 - 3.3 Safe environment

This methodological approach is the basis for the definition of the Metropolitan Territorial Plan (PTM).

The strategic component of the PTM retraces the articulation into three visions of the PSM, defining in greater detail those strategies capable of touching the ground and being territorialized. Their cartographic transposition is the basis of a "coalescence" process through which strategies of the Municipal and Intercommunal Structural Plans and the territorialization of the visions of the PSM, together with the provisions of the Urban Plan for Sustainable Mobility - PUMS are summarized in the PTM as Metropolitan Platforms. These platforms are places where public and private ambitions and interests, as well as local and regional objectives, join and overlap, highlighting the opportunity for an intermediate level, which is the metropolitan one.

The metropolitan territorial plan is conceived as a process of building coordinated, integrated and dynamic visions and governance actions. To this end, the drafting work has intensively re-interpreted the mandatory requirements and reformulated the levels of prescriptiveness of the PTM by configuring a flexible, agile and intelligent "framework plan", through a propulsive and complementary planning approach with respect to the policies of transformation and governance of territories adopted by the Municipalities. The Metropolitan Territorial Plan is based on the PSM, marrying its radically innovative approach, while recognizing the territorial dimension, defined by the subdivision of rhythms, and the strategic component of the vision - universal accessibility, widespread opportunities, lands of well-being - as a fundamental starting point to be declined in an operational key; defining in greater detail those strategies capable of "touching the ground" and being territorialized, therefore also returned through a cartography. The PTM is characterized by the definition and selection of some "Metropolitan Platforms": systems of territorial sectors of metropolitan interest which, due to their position, functionality and resources already activated, can determine strong relationships and express significant potential in a proactive framework aimed at improving the quality of places and to the strengthening of synergistic relationships between metropolitan municipalities.

The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan- SUMP (PUMS-Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile) is the strategic document that aims to guide city mobility policies for the next 10 years. It is a tool introduced at EU level

with the aim of "developing a new concept of plan capable of addressing the challenges and problems associated with transport in urban areas in a more sustainable and integrated way".

The Decree of 4 August 2017 of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport adopted the guidelines for the preparation of the SUMP and established in particular that metropolitan cities proceed with the definition of SUMP, in order to access state funding for infrastructures for new interventions for rapid mass transit, such as metropolitan rail systems, metro and trams.

The SUMP focuses on people and the satisfaction of their mobility needs, following a transparent and participatory approach that provides for the active involvement of citizens and other stakeholders from the very beginning of its definition process.

With the SUMP we move from an approach focused on urban traffic management to a broader approach aimed at encouraging sustainable mobility, considering the travel needs of people and the entire transport offer.

The characteristics that make an Urban Mobility Plan sustainable include the creation of an urban transport system that pursues at least the following mandatory minimum objectives:

- effectiveness and efficiency of the mobility system
- energy and environmental sustainability
- road mobility safety
- socio-economic sustainability.

Alongside these minimum objectives, the guidelines list a series of specific objectives of each urban reality, which each institution can choose for its PUMS, based on its characteristics, and then monitor their achievement according to the indicators provided:

- improve the attractiveness of collective transport, shared transport and cycle and pedestrian transport
- improve the economic performance of LPT
- reduce road congestion, reduce irregular parking, promote the introduction of low-impact polluting vehicles,
- make urban logistics more efficient, improve the energy and environmental performance of the passenger and freight vehicle fleet,
- ensure accessibility for people with reduced mobility, low-income people, elderly people,
- improve the safety of vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists,
- increase modal choice alternatives for citizens.

The drafting process of the SUMP of the Metropolitan City of Florence reached its adoption in September 2019 and following the ministerial directives it proposes multiple strategies aimed at encouraging a sustainable mobility system suitable for the Florentine metropolitan dimension.

Table 3.1
Main instruments at national, regional to the local level

Name	Tipology	Scope	Law	Resp. body - development	Resp. body - implementation	Financial coverage	Time frame	Bind-ing/non binding
Strategic Plan for the Metropolitan City of Florence	strategic plan	Coordination of strategies and actions within the metropolitan city	L. 56/14 Regional Law. 65/14	Metropolitan City of Florence	Metropolitan City of Florence and involved public	Budget of the metropolitan city and of the involved stakeholders	2030	Non binding

Name	Tipology	Scope	Law	Resp. body - development	Resp. body - implementation	Financial coverage	Time frame	Binding/non binding
Territorial Metropolitan Plan	Spatial plan	Coordination of metropolitan territorial projects	L. 56/14 Regional Law. 65/14	Metropolitan City of Florence	and private actors Metropolitan City of Florence	Budget of the metropolitan city	2030	Binding
Metropolitan Plan for Sustainable Mobility - PUMS	Mobility Plan	Coordination of metropolitan mobility policies		Metropolitan City of Florence	Metropolitan City of Florence	Budget of the metropolitan city and of the involved stakeholders	2030	Binding
General Urban Traffic Plan (PGTU)	Mobility Plan	Coordination of urban mobility policies		Municipality of Florence	Municipality of Florence	Budget of the Municipality of Florence		Binding
National operational programme "Metropolitan cities 2014/2020" (NOP METRO)	multi-fund program	Coordination sustainable urban development with a metropolitan perspective	EU Cohesion policy	National Agency for Territorial Cohesion is (Managing and Certifying Authority)	Municipality of Florence (intermediate body for local management)	ERDF and ESF Funds + national co-financing	2014/2020 (+ 3 years)	Binding
DUP- Documento Unico di Programmazione (Programming Document)	financial program	Coordination of municipal policies	TUEL	Municipality of Florence	Municipality of Florence	Budget of the Municipality of Florence	2020-2022 (triennial programming)	Binding
Sustainable Energy Action Plan (PAES)	Sectoral plan	Coordination of environmental and sustainable municipal policies	Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy	Municipality of Florence	Municipality of Florence	Budget of the Municipality of Florence	2011-2020	Non binding

Source: authors' own elaboration

3.4.1 Instruments in the framework of other cooperation initiatives

Within the metropolitan city of Florence, all the existing Union of Municipalities have drawn up or are preparing Intermunicipal Structural Plans.

In recent years, the Tuscany Region has promoted and financed inter-municipal structural planning. This has opened an innovative phase in the drafting of plans, bringing a greater awareness for local administrators on the effectiveness that supra-local planning assumes in addressing strategic issues by framing territorial policies.

Other forms of cooperation are linked to LAGs. In addition, some river contracts are underway (Elsa River), these projects are promoted and financed by the Region.

Table 3.2
Other instruments: Intermunicipal Structural Plans

Instrument	Level	Type	Type (2)	Type (3)
Piano Strutturale Intercomunale Mugello	intermunicipal	Spatial plan	Statutory and mandatory	binding for public authorities
Piano Strutturale Intercomunale Valdarno e Valdisieve	intermunicipal	Spatial plan	Statutory and mandatory	binding for public authorities
Piano strutturale intercomunale delle Città e territori delle due rive – (Empoli, Capraia e Limite, Cerreto Guidi, Montelupo Fiorentino e Vinci)	intermunicipal	Spatial plan	Statutory and mandatory	binding for public authorities

Source: authors' own elaboration

3.4.2 Instrument and initiatives related to COVID-19

The impacts of the pandemic within the metropolitan city of Florence have been very differentiated among the core urban area and the less urbanized ones. Within the lockdown a need for a greener lifestyle has emerged, and the less populated areas as the Mugello mountains and the Chianti shire have been identified as healthier places to live in and to visit. Inner touristic flows have been concentrated on these places during the summer.

In the metropolitan contest, the City of Florence was one of the cities most affected by the crisis. It has faced a deficit of 200 million euro, in addition to losses in the range of 6 billion euro in exports and a billion euro in tourism at metropolitan level.

The health emergency is followed by a social, economic and labor emergency: the City of Florence handed out 7,000 food vouchers to the impoverished in the early days of the epidemic and received 3,500 applications for rent subsidies, more than triple the usual amount.

On tourism, the crisis change the challenge to manage the over-tourism towards a smart destination, underlining how fragile the tourism model developed over the years actually is in terms of the city's economy, especially in the city center. A new pact of coexistence between the tourism world and the city is now a stronger need envisaged, through policies based on new tourism management models and aimed at create a smart destination. The need to bringing citizens back to the centre was envisaged before the pandemic

and there is, even stronger, today and even though the conditions behind this action have completely changed the aim is still the same. Not only incentives to be back to the center, but actions and programmes to guarantee and maintain the historical activities and shops that made Florence great reinforcing the city economy and its cultural attitude even thank to sustainable tourism model.

While the City of Florence as urban authority of the Programme will continue its agenda in the implementation of the NOP Metro, a new open document for a post-pandemic strategy has been launched: 'Rinascere Firenze (Florence Renaissance)'. This citizen-based model has been introduced to collect ideas through the active citizenship of Florence, residents, city users and stakeholders. Within the proposal defined by Municipality to start the discussion, the gradual reactivation of Florence's socio-economic structure concerns nine priorities: Polycentric City; A New Historic Centre; Green Spaces; Green Mobility; Economic Development; Culture; Families and Children; Welfare, Work and Homes; An Intelligent City.

The challenge is to consider this moment as an opportunity to bring back better, to devise and create a new model of social and economic development for the city, based on the management and use of public and private spaces and services, which holds together its more traditional vocations of culture, art, tourism, industry and manufacturing with renewed functions as a smart and resilient city, whereby artisan workshops, biotechnology, modern enterprises, infrastructure connecting and supporting businesses, research and professional training centers, smart destination and high technology can co-exist and fuel one another.

Challenges and critical elements

- With respect to metropolitan planning tools, the strategic plan was felt as "city capital centric" by the others municipalities. Subsequently, with the updating of the Strategic Plan, and the drafting of the Territorial Plan, the planning office of the metropolitan city engaged with the construction of strategies and actions that appear closer to the different territorial contexts (place-based approach). The Unions of Municipalities recognize a "*constructive*" and "*collaborative*" relationship with the Metropolitan City, aimed at "*sharing the development strategies*". At the metropolitan level, the development of strategic plans (PSM, PUMS) that define strategies and actions comparable with those of the European community, has facilitated the possibility of defining projects "*easily expendable in community planning*".
-

3.5 Metropolitan financing and budgeting

Today, Italian Metropolitan Cities can count on the taxation inherited from the former provinces, such as the tax on third-party liability insurances, the so-called environmental tax, the solid waste tax, the provincial quote on personal income taxes (IRPEF), etc. Altogether, the Metropolitan Cities can count on tax resources ranging from 50 to 100 euros per capita, depending on the area. The margins of manoeuvrability are really tight (Agnoletti et al., 2016; Servizio Studi Camera dei Deputati, 2020). In this respect, financial autonomy appears to be a highly relevant issue, given that metropolitan cities, as the Italian Constitutional Court puts it, are '*entities also enjoying a supranational relevance when it comes to access EU funds*' and are provided with own powers and functions, distinct from those of the municipalities (Boggero, 2016).

The substantial spending review measures imposed on provinces and metropolitan cities, combined with the review of competences, have deeply affected the financial arrangements of these entities. Over the last few years, in order to overcome the financial difficulties that had arisen, the necessary resources have been allocated for the exercise of the basic functions of provinces and metropolitan cities as well as to support investments (Servizio Studi Camera dei Deputati, 2020). Since 2019, an experimental fund for rebalancing the provinces (Fondo sperimentale di riequilibrio delle province) has been finally introduced.

The metropolitan city of Florence has a budget consisting of:

- current expenditure (public administration financing) of approximately 120 million
- capital expenditure (investments) of approximately 150 million.

Challenges and critical elements

- The strengthening of the metropolitan body must also be linked to greater investment capacity and greater attractiveness of available resources
-

3.6 Role of social groups and the business community in metropolitan governance

Thanks to a long history of participation and collaboration in Tuscany Region, many decisions relating to planning are taken after a participatory process in which also the third sector and the business community are involved.

In the 2000s, the public-private association Firenze 2010 – established in 2003 and which later became Firenze Futura – was in charge of the preparation of the strategic plan for the Florence 2010 metropolitan area. The association promotes the implementation of the strategic plan and the planning of a large area, however it does not have a real operational structure to implement the provisions of the planning. More than the feasibility and implementation of strategic projects, the positive element of the plan formation process was related to the communication of the idea of the city / metropolitan area, in fact, forums and conferences have been promoted to present the Florence plan and case studies of European metropolitan cities².

In 2016, for the drafting of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, a Promoting Committee has been set up, in which the University, the Chamber of Commerce and the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze (bank foundation) participate with an equal role compared to the Metropolitan City. At the same time, the main metropolitan stakeholders actively participated in the participatory process of the plan.

3.6.1 Social groups and the civil society

The Tuscany Region has a long tradition of participation and active citizenship, also recognized by the regional law 46/2013 "Regional public debate and promotion of participation in the development of regional and local policies". Numerous associations have participated in the participatory process of the strategic plan, in particular with regard to the issues of inclusion and social cohesion. Many associations actively collaborate on issues and projects related to support for inclusion and housing. The CRF Foundation (banking foundation) and the University of Florence with its Research and Innovation Foundation (FRI) actively participated in the promoting committee of the PSM. The CRF Foundation, as a local banking foundation, is now financing many projects in the city of Florence and in the metropolitan area. In the post-COVID phase, the Foundation actively contributed to the strategic document "Rinascita Firenze" and set up a working group, including personalities from the business world and the academic world, to develop a set of Tuscan projects for the Recovery Plan.

3.6.2 Business community

In reference to the drafting of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, the business community took part in the participatory process through trade associations (Confcommercio, Confindustria, Representatives of large companies). In particular, these associations participated in focus groups on economically relevant issues such as tourism and internationalization processes.

² See the project Urbact II Joining Forces: <https://urbact.eu/joining-forces>.

Challenges and critical elements

- Thanks to a long history of participation and collaboration, in the Tuscany Region many decisions are taken after a participatory process in which also the third sector and the business community are present.
 - In the post-COVID phase, the interaction and participation of third sector associations should be increased to coordinate social interventions.
-

3.7 Participation to policy networks

The Metropolitan City of Florence and the City of Florence participate to several international and national policy networks:

- Eurocities: the biggest network of medium-large cities in Europe that through joint work, knowledge-sharing and coordinated Europe-wide activity, ensure that cities and their people are heard in Europe. The Mayor of Florence is the President since 2021 after being the Vice President for 2 years;
- World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF), international tourism organization which has the Mission to improve the attractiveness of cities as international tourist destinations and contribute to the development of sustainable tourism;
- Major Cities of Europe (MCE), organization that aims to improve the performance of local governments through the use of information technologies;
- The New Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (Nuovo Patto dei Sindaci per il Clima & l'Energia) is an initiative aimed at achieving the EU target for a fairer, climate-neutral Europe;
- Urban Agenda for the EU- Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage, thematic partnerships aim to identify the critical issues related to the achievement of the EU 2020 objectives by cities;
- ANCI – National Association of Italian Municipalities;
- Metropoli Strategiche – Network of Metropolitan Cities promoted by a project funded by the NOP
- Governance 2014-2020
- UNESCO

Challenges and critical elements

- Through the participation in national, European and international networks, the metropolitan cities can increase the role of the urban areas and activate fruitful collaborations. In the case of the MCFI, the City of Florence has a strong participation in the policy networks.
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In a multi-level governance framework, the metropolitan agenda should be implemented and coordinated with the various administrative levels and different actors
- Within a perspective of interinstitutional cooperation, different modes of action should be combined, finding ways to make different systems and languages dialogue (European, national, regional, local dimension)
- The Metropolitan City should consolidate its role of coordination, within and beyond the boundaries of its competences (institutional, strategic, financial, etc.) pursuing the vision of a balanced territorial development.

4 Cohesion policy governance

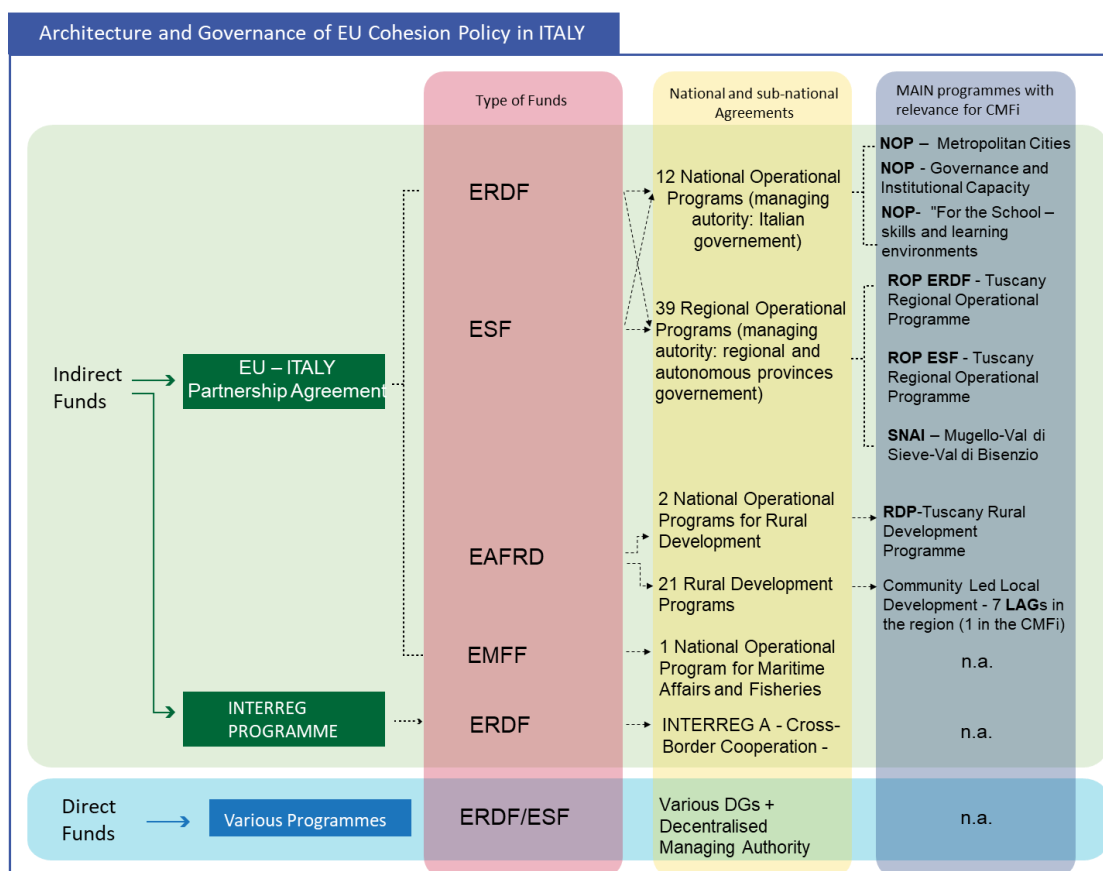
4.1 EU cohesion policy institutional architecture and competences

The cohesion policy is implemented in Italy through 75 Operational Programs National and Regionals:

- 12 National Operational Programs (NOPs): the NOPs are managed at the national level and cover the entire territory. Each of them has a thematic scope of particular relevance for the country. They are related to specific competencies of the national level, not shared with the regions or in relation to investments to be made at supra regional level. The themes identified by the Italian NOPs for the 2014-2020 programming period are: infrastructure, culture, legality, business, research, urban policies, governance, social inclusion, youth, employment, school, rural development and fisheries. In principle, the NOP “Metropolitan Cities” and the NOP “Governance and Institutional Capacity” are the most relevant to metropolitan cooperation and governance. Moreover, considering the competences and functions of CMF, also the NOPs “School - skills and learning environments” are relevant and will be analysed.
- 39 Regional Operational Programs (ROPs): are owned by a local Administration (Region or Autonomous Province), concern the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (PSR FEASR), depending on the types of funds made available to the Regions in relation to regional specific competencies. Most of them are monofund, some are multifund (ERDF-ESF).
- 21 Rural Development Programs: for each of the 21 Italian regions or autonomous province, a RDP concerning EAFRD
- 2 National Operational Programs for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- 1 National Operational Program for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (EMFF).

To reinforce the institutional governance and administrative capacity for managing the cohesion policy funds, and the Programmes co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (EIS), the programming, coordination, monitoring and accompanying action of the cohesion policy have been assigned to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Agency for Territorial Cohesion.

Figure 4.1
The governance of the EU Cohesion policy in Italy



Source: Authors' own elaboration

4.1.1 The role of metropolitan actors

Despite the high level of institutionalization, CMFi presently does not have relevant role and competences in the elaboration of key policy and programming documents of the EU cohesion policy and in their management and implementation, while the Region and the national level are the main actors.

The management of the Operational Programmes is entrusted to the Managing Authorities (MA). The State may, for some specific NOPs, exercise this function. The MA may choose to delegate the execution of certain tasks to Intermediate Bodies (IB). IBs, that can be public or private, are appointed to the development of certain tasks or for the management of part of an operational programme on behalf of the managing authority with regard to beneficiaries implementing operations.

Metropolitan actors are involved to a different extent in each Programme and Region, according to the rules of each programme and regional legislation. As regards CMFi its role in the institutional architecture of the EU cohesion policy has been rather limited in the 2014-2020 period and seems to be further limited in the 2021-2027 programming period.

With regard to the NOP METRO, in the case of Florence, the organizational and operating model of the Intermediate Body provides for a "control room" that will be convened whenever there is a need and, in any case, indicatively every semester, to ensure the correct execution of the Program, the Operational Plan and the compliance with the objectives and deadlines implementation of interventions. This control room, coordinated and directed by the City Manager, is also composed by the Director of the Mayor's Office as supervisor with regards to the coherence of the actions and interventions with the strategic political direction of

the Mayor. It will also be the natural place for meetings with the Metropolitan City, as a natural consequence of the collaboration activities already underway also through working meeting established for the drafting of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan and for common and co-created projects already in the planning and implementation phase as the traffic supervisor. The relations with the Metropolitan City (represented by the City Manager or his delegate) will be thus maintained in a stable and continuous manner and the proactive collaboration between the parties will be also realized thanks to co-created projects based on the reuse and replicability of the actions (namely the ones of axis 1), when concretely and operationally feasible.

The municipality of Florence acts as “Urban Authority”, the intermediate body which receives founding and manages them according to a participatory process that involve both other institutions and main local stakeholders (as third sector). Started as a pilot sharing process, due to other in-place project activities (like the participation to Integrated Sustainable Development Plans in the frame of regional founding programs/ Sustainable Urban Development Strategy that brings to create a common office) and the participation to European Networks as Eurocities and Metrex, in the framework of the NOP Metro Program this process of interaction has become more structured.

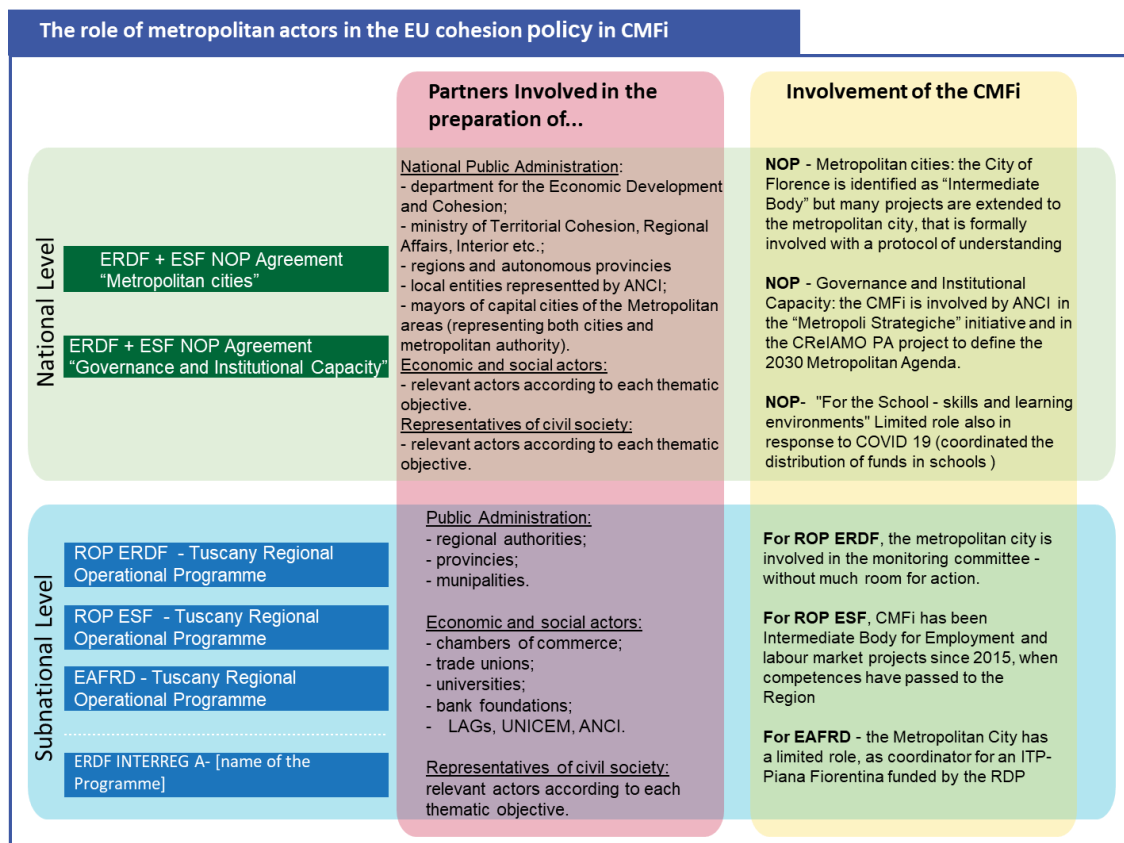
The Metropolitan City of Florence participates in the Strategic Metropolis project managed by ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) as a beneficiary body. This project is funded by the NOP Governance and Institutional capacity, managed by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, with delegated powers to the Department of Public Administration and the Ministry of Justice.

Also within the NOP Governance and Institutional Capacity, the Metropolitan City is involved in the CREIAMO PA project which supports the definition of the 2030 Metropolitan Agendas for Sustainable Development.

Another national program is the NOP “For the School - skills and learning environments” which aims to create a high quality education and training system. This NOP is managed by the Ministry of Education and is aimed at schools. The Metropolitan City can play a coordinating and supporting role in the request for funds, as it has the competence on the management of secondary school buildings. For example, the MCFi coordinated the request for additional funds for the COVID-19 emergency.

Within the Regional Programs, the former province of Florence was a programmer body in the ROP ESF, for a limited period of time, and managed funds for projects related to “Employment and mobility of workers”.

MCFi does not have a role within SNAI and LAGs Start, initiatives in which local actors (municipalities, business communities, social groups) participate. Instead, it has an important role in the PIT-Piana Fiorentina project (funded by the RDP) as a coordinating body within a consortium agreement between public and private actors (municipalities, business communities, small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises).

Figure 4.2**The role of metropolitan actors in the EU cohesion policy**

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Challenges and critical elements

- CMFi does not have relevant role and competences in the programming, management and implementation of EU cohesion policy funds.
- At the local level, the main actors are the Region and the Municipality of Florence, for the management of the NOP Metro. The CMFi has a relevant coordination role only in the PIT-Piana Fiorentina funded by the RDP and as a Province it has had the role of programmer within the ROP ESF.
- Social groups and the business community are not involved in the institutional governance of EU cohesion policy instruments but are extensively involved in its implementation, as beneficiaries of projects.
- Metropolitan actors (social actors and business community) recognize the added value that cohesion policy could provide in the implementation of metropolitan policies and in the achievement of metropolitan territorial development objectives.

4.2 EU cohesion policy instruments at the metropolitan level

The MCFi is involved in national and regional operational programs, as well as in specific multi-fund strategies such as National Strategy for Inner Areas' (SNAI).

Florence is one of the 14 metropolitan cities involved through its capital city in **NOP Metro, the National Operational Programme for Metropolitan Cities** aiming to address in a coordinated way all the territorial and organisational challenges faced in urban contexts. It is funded by the European Union (ERDF – European Regional Development Fund and ESF – European Social Fund), with a budget of 40 million euros for each city located in the more developed (Central/North of the country) and transition regions (the region of Sardinia), and 90 million euros for each city in the less developed regions (South of the country).

The program is focused on five main axes (four priority issues and one axis for technical assistance): Digital Metropolitan Agenda, Sustainability of Services and of Urban Mobility, Services for Social Inclusion, Infrastructures for Social Inclusion, and Technical Assistance. NOP Metro is based on two strategic drivers: putting the “Smart City” paradigm in practice (for the redesign and modernization of public services through the digital agenda and a more efficient and sustainable mobility) and promoting social innovation (for the inclusion of the most fragile population segments and areas and for disadvantaged neighborhoods through services and infrastructure).

The National Agency for Territorial Cohesion is the Managing and Certifying Authority responsible for implementing and managing the Operational Program, and the 14 capital municipalities of the metropolitan cities are the intermediate bodies that manage the program locally. NOP Metro has the same strategy for the 14 metropolitan cities (the abovementioned one), but each city is responsible for creating its own Operational Plan. This plan contains both the list of actions and the involved actors for each project/intervention and the expected impact through indicators.

As already mentioned above (4.1.1), the organizational and operating model of the Intermediate Body provides for a “control room” to ensure the correct execution of the Program.

The resources of the NOP Metro, allocated at local level through the Municipality of Florence as capital city of the Metropolitan City acting as Intermediate body, are meant to finance projects which have a metropolitan perspective/interest/reuse. However, following the rules of the Programme, a distinction should be done between material and immaterial projects.

As a matter of fact, the investment projects on infrastructures are linked to the territory of the municipality of Florence (see the project concerning the public lighting system), but they also concern infrastructures that are directly connected with the ones of surroundings municipalities, as the project concerning the extension and improvement of the network of bicycle lanes in Florence, that is aimed at mending the cycling network of neighboring municipalities in the frame of the metropolitan bike system network or the ITS (Intelligent Transport System) implementation conceived for city users (residents, students, commuters, ...)

The immaterial projects have a more direct metropolitan value, since the project developed through NOP Metro founding are meant to develop procedures or IT products which can be directly used by or transferred the other municipalities, or to be reused at metropolitan level. Examples are the smart tourism platform “Feel Florence” and the simple tax system platform that allows to standardize data on payments and debt positions at the metropolitan level. The assumption at the base of these project is that a small Municipality alone could face severe difficulties developing IT technologies, so the NOP Metro projects are conceived to be transferred or reused from the capital city to all the surrounding municipalities and, particularly, to those adhering to Silfi Spa, the in-house company for developing IT solutions for 22 municipalities of the metropolitan city that, through this cooperation, also create a critical mass for lowering costs.

Through the “**Metropoli Strategiche**” project, MCFi is involved in NOP Governance and Institutional capacity.

The **NOP Governance and Institutional capacity**, managed by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, with delegated powers to the Department of Public Administration and the Ministry of Justice, is the main instrument for implementing the strategic priorities for strengthening and innovating the Public Administration agreed between Italy and the European Commission and contained in the 2014-2020 Partnership Agreement. The NOP Governance is aimed at public administrations throughout the country, finances interven-

tions that accompany and implement the PA reform measures set at national level and, through its intervention strategy, contributes to achieving the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth defined by Europe 2020. The Programme has a budget of more than 805 million euros, from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national public resources. The actions financed concern skills, organisational methods and the provision of services, methods and procedures, technological tools and solutions, and forms of institutional cooperation, with the aim of moving towards a more efficient and effective Public Administration that is closer to territories, citizens and businesses.

The management of the Programme is assigned to different public entities with different responsibilities for management, implementation, monitoring, audit and control. The Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority are located in specific offices of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, while the functions of the Audit Authority are entrusted to the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The Programme foresees two Intermediate Bodies to which some functions related to the management and implementation of part of the Programme are delegated by the Managing Authority: the Department of Public Administration of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice. Within the framework of the projects, the Beneficiaries are identified, who are responsible for the implementation of the interventions for the projects managed by the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Bodies, while for some projects the Beneficiaries are the Managing Authority or the Intermediate Bodies.

The most relevant project having an impact on metropolitan governance is the “Metropoli Strategiche” project, which beneficiary is ANCI (the national association of Italian municipalities). The project, with a 3,6M€ budget, aims to accompany organisational changes and the development of competencies related to institutional innovation in the Metropolitan Cities. The project is based on the direct, continuous and active involvement of the political and administrative structures of the Metropolitan Cities and their municipalities within them, on the contribution of the Coordination of Metropolitan Mayors set up within ANCI and on the integration of capacity building actions that the Department for Public Administration, the Department for Regional Affairs, the Agency for Territorial Cohesion and the Agency for Digital Italy will develop through the NOP Governance and NOP Metropolitan Cities on the same territories.

The “Metropoli Strategiche” project has three thematic areas of intervention:

- Plans for the institutional and organisational reorganisation of the metropolitan area: accompaniment and experimentation of forms of optimal aggregation of Municipalities and of pathways for the associated management of services and municipal aggregation. Through the implementation of integrated policies, the reorganisation of the subsidiary companies, the creation of shared offices and innovative models aimed at promoting administrative simplification, unitary regulation, etc.
- Metropolitan strategic plans: support for metropolitan strategic planning processes, with particular reference to the methodologies for engaging local stakeholders and the design of organisational management and monitoring of the Plans throughout their implementation.
- Administrative simplification in building and urban planning: analysis, experimentation and development of innovative organisational models aimed at fully implementing the principles laid down in the recent reforms, also by means of open data management tools.

The intervention method is based on three levers:

- construction of a national network and a local one for each Metropolitan City
- field experimentation of innovative organisational models
- coaching and training of officials and administrators to develop their skills and competencies.

Also within the NOP Governance and Institutional Capacity, the Metropolitan City is involved in the **CRiAMO PA** project “Skills and Networks for Environmental Integration and for the Improvement of PA Organizations”. This project promotes the enhancement of the skills and knowledge developed in the various territories, promoting the dissemination of best practices in the environmental policy sector.

The project is divided into seven lines of action relating to environmental issues. One of these, Line 2, is the general objective of supporting the integration of environmental sustainability objectives into administrative actions through the implementation, in the regional context, of the strategic system linked to the 2030 Agenda as set out in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. In this context, training and accompanying actions were implemented to support the Regions and Metropolitan Cities in the drafting of their

Sustainable Development Strategies and in the Metropolitan City of Florence the process of defining the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda was launched.

Some territories of the MCFI and part of the province of Prato (Mugello, Sieve valley, Bisenzio valley) have been selected as beneficiaries of the **National Strategy for Inner areas**. The SNAI is aimed to address rural development challenges with a holistic, multilevel and multifund approach. The SNAI was launched in 2012, as a national testbed for the place-based approach to regional development promoted by the EU cohesion policy (Barca et al., 2012; Cotella and Vitale Brovarone, 2020; Servillo et al., 2016). According to the SNAI, inner areas are those territories that are at a significant distance from centres offering essential services (Barca et al., 2014). Inner areas typically feature low territorial density, with small rural and mountainous towns and villages, and are suffering from depopulation and socio-cultural impoverishment. At the same time, they are often repositories of significant environmental and cultural resources. The SNAI is aimed at reversing demographic and socio-economic processes that have led to the marginalisation of these areas, acting on the structural prerequisites for territorial development, to secure and preserve the territory, to promote natural and cultural resources and to exploit the potential of underutilised resources (Barca et al., 2014). To these aims, the strategy acts both on the prerequisites for development – namely health, education and mobility – and on the reinforcement and activation of local development processes. Access to services is considered as an essential precondition for development and territorial development imbalances are no more analysed at the regional level, but at a lower scale, catching intraregional disparities. In so doing, the SNAI clearly expresses the conceptual link between welfare services and development (Carrosio, 2016).

The governance of the SNAI is entrusted to a Technical Committee (CTAI), coordinated by the Department for Cohesion Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and is composed of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion as well as a number of sectoral ministries (agricultural policies, cultural activities and tourism, education, infrastructure and transport, employment and social policy, health, environment).

The inner areas of MCFI elaborate the strategy “Virere. Sustainable communities for new development” to create the pre-conditions for a local and place-based development of the territories.

The Strategy focuses on the pre-conditions of local development: social services and health services; empowerment and support services for education and vocational training; services in support of mobility. These must guarantee the conditions of livability and the development of an economy that enhances the endogenous resources through the creation of the Green District.

The Strategy area is made up of 19 municipalities, 4 of which are located in the province of Prato: Carmignano, Cantagallo, Vernio, Vaiano; the remaining ones in the MCFI: San Godenzo, Londa, Pelago, Rufina, Pontassieve, Rignano SA, Reggello Palazzuolo Sul Senio, Marradi, Firenzuola, Barberino di Mugello, Borgo S. Lorenzo, Dicomano, Scarperia and San Piero, Vicchio, with a total population of approximately 159,423 inhabitants. Within this strategy area, the Project area is identified, which includes the municipalities directly benefiting from the strategy, consisting of 5 municipalities, peripheral and ultra-peripheral with a population of 16,516 inhabitants. This affects the municipalities of: Firenzuola, Marradi, Palazzuolo sul Senio, San Godenzo (FI) and Vernio (PO), all mountain and Apennine municipalities. The territory of the project area has a total (contiguous) area of 697 sq.km with a population density of 23.7 inhabitants / sq.km.

The **Regional Operational Program (Por Creo)** is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and contributes to the implementation of the European Union strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, as well as to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion. The program allocates most of the resources to support the entrepreneurial system and concentrates resources on interventions for the development of social, service and environmental quality in the territories.

The operational structure of the ROP ERDF is divided into 6 priority axes (in addition to an axis dedicated to Technical Assistance activities):

1. Enhance and promote research, technological development and innovation
2. Improve and extend access to ICT, including the improvement of ICT services
3. Promote competitiveness and improve access to credit
4. Sustain energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies as well as the efficient use of resources
5. Preserve and promote natural and cultural heritage
6. Urban development- Inclusion and cohesion in urban area

The most interesting to analyze is Axis 6-Urban development which in the metropolitan area has financed Urban Innovation Projects (PIU), urban regeneration interventions in Prato and Empoli, and new sustainable mobility interventions. Among the sustainable mobility interventions, one of the most important is the "so-called" "super cycle path Florence-Prato" (an important cycle infrastructure for the metropolitan area).

The **Regional Operational Programme ESF 2014-2020** is focused on the development of human resources through a highly competitive system based on knowledge, lifelong learning and the creation of economically stable, qualified and protected work, in a context of strong social cohesion. The strategy is divided into seven priority areas of intervention:

- promote and support the processes of autonomy of young people, through adequate preparation for the labor market;
- favoring the matching of labor supply and demand, with particular attention to women and the most disadvantaged groups of the active population;
- support the development strategies and enhancement of the various territories, as well as their innovation processes;
- promoting social inclusion, through active inclusion, to improve employability and combat discrimination;
- reduce gender inequalities and strengthen lifetime balance policies;
- prevent early school leaving, improve learning levels, the quality of education and vocational training;
- promote mobility policies to support education, training and employability.

Four priority axes of intervention are identified in the operational program, developed on the basis of the priorities indicated by the EU for the European Social Fund. A fifth axis is dedicated to technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation, information and publicity activities:

Axis A: Employment

Axis B: Social inclusion and the fight against poverty

Axis C: Education and training

Axis D: Institutional and administrative capacity

Axis E: Technical assistance

The MCFI managed some projects related to the axis A-Employment as an intermediate body. Specifically, projects related to active labor policies managed through the Labor Department and the Employment Centers, for an amount of approximately 8,500,000 million euros. However, since 2015, with the transformation of the institution from a province to a metropolitan city, the coordination of labor policies and employment centers has passed to the Tuscany Region. The MCFI maintained the management of the projects financed by the ROP ESF 2014-2020 until 2018.

The **Regional Rural Development Plan** is funded by European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD), the total budget amounts to € 949.000.000. The RDP follows the 6 European priority strategies:

- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- enhancing the viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
- promoting food chain organization, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Each of these priorities shall contribute to the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

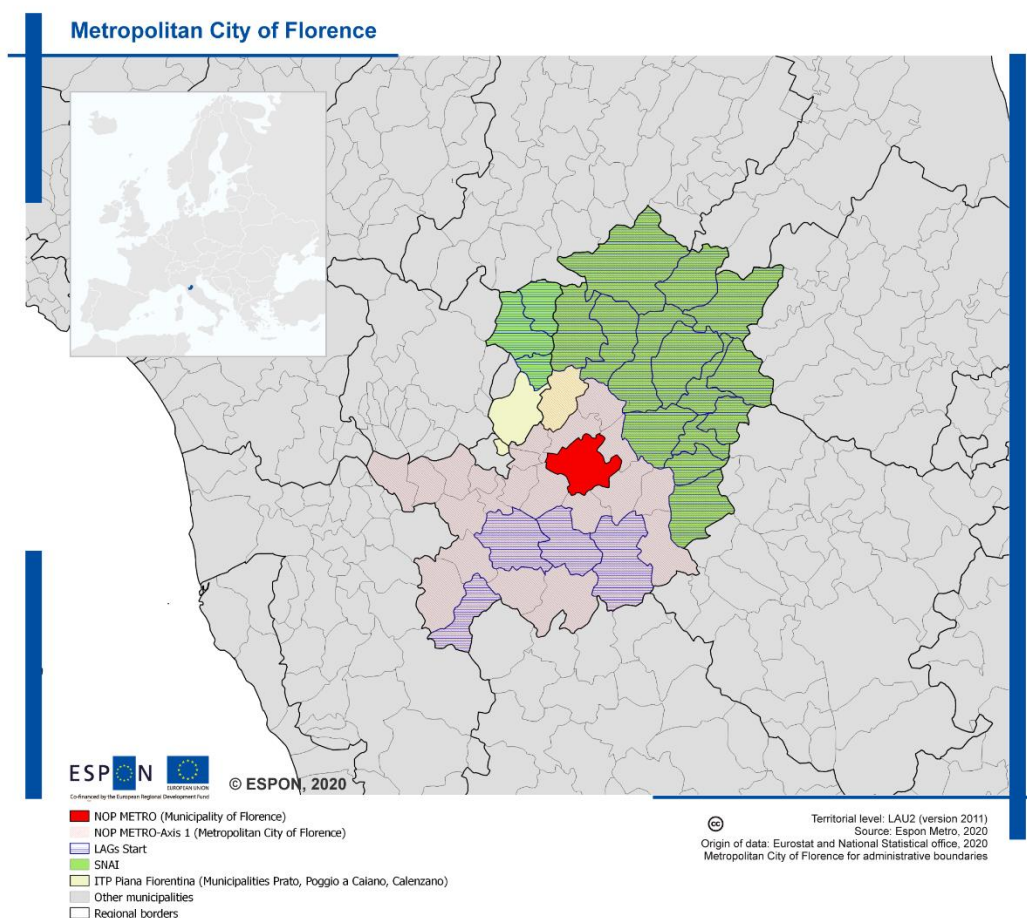
The RDP is originally divided into 20 measures (plus 1 introduced post COVID phase), articulated in sub-measures and operations; with updating measures have been modified and integrated:

1. Knowledge transfer and information actions
2. Consultancy, replacement and assistance services for farm management
3. Quality schemes for agricultural and food products
4. investment support
5. Restoration of agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events and introduction of adequate prevention measures
6. Farm and business development
7. Basic services and village renewal in rural areas
8. Investments in the development of forest areas and in improving the profitability of forests
9. Agro-climatic-environmental payments
10. Biological agriculture
11. Compensation in favor of areas subject to natural or other specific constraints
12. Cooperation
13. Support for local development Leader
14. Exceptional temporary aid for farmers and SMEs operating in the processing and marketing and / or development of agricultural products particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis

Tuscany Region finances operational phase of **Leader** local development through a specific sub-measure of the Regional Development Plan (measures 19). The Region has recognized seven **Local Action Groups (LAGs)** operating in Tuscany. The seven LAGs have a financial endowment of a total of € 46.149.389 for the management of sub-measure 19.2 “Support for the implementation of the interventions within the community local development strategy” of the 2014-2020 RDP. The LAG Start is active in the CMFi, it includes many metropolitan municipalities, in areas such as Chianti or Mugello and the province of Prato, and many private partners (as trade associations, business operators, cooperative societies). The local development strategy is articulated through the sub-measures and the operations of the RDP. The objectives concern: the diversification of agricultural activities and the marketing of products; the regeneration of rural areas through better services and accessibility; the enhancement of the cultural heritage.

The **RDP finances Integrated Territorial Projects (ITPs)** developed through the organic action of public and private entities. The ITPs address specific environmental criticalities at a local level by promoting the maintenance and development of agricultural activities within the following topics: soil and hydrogeological instability, management and protection of water resources, biodiversity, landscape, power.

The ITPs allow the activation, within the same project, of a multiplicity of sub-measures / operations envisaged in the RDP. For each ITPs, a lead subject must be identified and the minimum number of participants is 15. At least 12 subjects are direct participants, request contributions within the project and at the same time bear the financial burden due to them for the different types of investments. The presence of at least 10 farmers is mandatory among the participants. The interested parties will sign a “Territorial Agreement” lasting three years, which will constitute a mutual commitment to address the identified environmental problems. In the territory of CMFi a specific project has been identified for the “Piana Fiorentina” aimed at promoting agricultural activities and improving environmental and landscape quality.

Map 4.1**EU cohesion policy instruments (NOP Metro, LAGs, SNAI, ITP-Piana Fiorentina)**

Source: authors' own elaboration

Table 4.1**EU cohesion policy programmes and instruments in the Florence metropolitan area**

Instrument	Level (geo-graphical scope)	Type	Program-ming	Manage-ment	Implemen-tation	Role of metropoli-tan actors
NOP Govern-ance	National	National Opera-tional Pro-gramme	Agency for Territorial Cohesion	Agency for Territorial Cohesion	National, re-gional and local admin-istrations, universities, judicial of-fices, other public bod-ies	Involved in the “Metropoli Strategiche” project, im-plemented by ANCI

Instrument	Level (geographical scope)	Type	Program-ming	Manage-ment	Implemen-tation	Role of metropoli-tan actors
NOP Metro	National	National Operational Programme	Agency for Territorial Cohesion	City of Florence (Urban Authority)	City of Florence	Formally involved with a protocol of understanding
ROP ESF	Regional	Regional Operational Programme	Tuscany Region	Tuscany Region	Public administrations, enterprises, professionals, third sector associations	Intermediate body for some activities (until 2015 with extension until 2018)
ROP ERDF	Regional	Regional Operational Programme	Tuscany Region	Tuscany Region	Public administrations, enterprises, professionals, third sector associations; Municipalities as Urban Authority (PIU Projects funded Axis 6)	Involved in the monitoring committee
Local Development Programmes	Regional	CLLD-Leader	Tuscany Region	LAGs	Enterprises, municipalities, third sector associations	Involved in the monitoring committee RDP, not in LAGs
National Strategy for Inner Areas-SNAI	National (Strategy) / Local (Project area)	National Programme/ multi-fund tool	Agency for Territorial Cohesion	Agency for Territorial Cohesion	Municipalities of the selected project areas	No role
Integrated Territorial Project (Piana Fiorentina)	Regional	Regional Operational Programme	Tuscany Region	Metropolitan City	Municipalities, Enterprises, associations, Universities	MCFi has the role of leader and coordinates the activities

Challenges and critical elements

- The NOP Metro, although aimed at Metropolitan Cities, was managed by the capital municipality (Florence), which played the role of Intermediate Body. As highlighted in the interviews, this choice was nationally driven but was intended as a good one because of the greater management and organization capacity of the capital city. In fact, it should be emphasized that in the Metropolitan city there are no structures with professional specifically skilled and dedicated to the management of European projects and funds.
 - An interesting example of project managed and coordinated directly by the Metropolitan City is that of the ITPs Piana Fiorentina. In this project, the metropolitan city has assumed a strong coordinating role between the region, municipalities and private actors. Specifically, it managed to coordinate not only municipalities and metropolitan actors, but also municipalities and actors in the territory of the neighbouring Province of Prato. From this example emerges the coordination role that the Metropolitan City is increasingly strengthening and that can play also outside its institutional boundaries, in particular in functional socio-economic area.
-

4.3 Involvement of social groups and the business community in the EU cohesion policy

Concerning public-private partnerships, although many administrative rules exist in their definition, the implementation of the NOP Metro shows how those very different entities can talk to each other and work together. For example, in tourism an organization system have been held by the Urban Authority to have a broader characterization: region, convention bureau, trade fair system, trade associations. The platform and the related app “Feel Florence” has been developed since the beginning as a co-created process, as a project involving both public and private partners, that were involved in the operational management to address raised problems with pro-active solutions. For instance, tour guides (private and registered entities) participated in the creation of contents and interacted with the platform draft to test it.

Moreover, thanks to a strong tradition of supporting and enhancing participation and collaboration, many decisions are taken after a participatory process in which also the third sector is present. For the cycle path, for instance, the National Association of Environment and Cyclists (FIAP- Federazione Italiana Ambiente e Bicicletta) was involved.

Likewise, the projects on axis 3 (social inclusion services) reinforce the existing system of relationship with voluntarist associations and third sector. Nothing new has been created, but the projects selected for the NOP Metro, enhance the relationships among associations and institutions that were already in place.

Finally, in the post-COVID phase, many relevant stakeholders, such as social and trade associations, actively participate in the debate on the future of the city of Florence in the post-covid phase (participation in the strategic plan “Rinascita Firenze”).

Challenges and critical elements

- Thanks to a long history of participation and collaboration managed and supported by the Tuscany Region, many decisions are taken after a participatory process in which also the third sector and the business community is present.
 - In the post-COVID phase, the interaction and participation of third sector associations should be relevant to better focus on social interventions.
 - In the post COVID phase, think-thanks as “Rinasce Firenze” can be considered as a pilot project for future thinking (a sort of future literacy lab), to be extended to the whole metropolitan city
-

4.4 The governance of EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency

Relevant changes that will occur in the programming period 2021-2027 are affected by the actual situation due to the pandemic in course.

The drafts of the new programming period had already defined the challenges (which are in any case confirmed by the post-pandemic crisis, see green new deal) but the operating procedures and the principle of partnership that is still in the signing phase, remain to be defined.

If for the next programming period the budget is not approved, the so called “Next Generation EU” program (recovery fund) has represented the real novelty in this phase.

The program will count on 750 billion euro of which the most important part is for the Recovery and Resilience Plans (672,5 billion EUR). The rest of the subsidies will be channeled through other "pillars" of the anti-crisis operation including:

- React EU (47,5 billion EUR),
- Rural development (7,5 billion EUR),
- Horizon EU (5 billion EUR),
- InvestEU (5,6 billion EUR),
- Just transition fund -JTF (10 billion EUR),
- RescEU (1,9 billion EUR).

In Italy, the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan** was drawn up, with the aim of completing objectives, reforms and investments to mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic.

The "Italia Domani" plan, approved in July 2021, will have a total value of 235 billion euros between European and national resources.

The Plan is divided into 6 Missions, which represent the structural "thematic" areas of intervention:

- Digitization, innovation, competitiveness, culture, and tourism
- Green revolution and ecological transition
- Infrastructure for sustainable mobility
- Education and Research
- Inclusion and Cohesion
- Health

In addition, an Execution document is attached to the plan which defines, in relation to each investment and reform, precise objectives and targets, timed in time, the achievement of which is linked to the allocation of resources on a six-monthly basis.

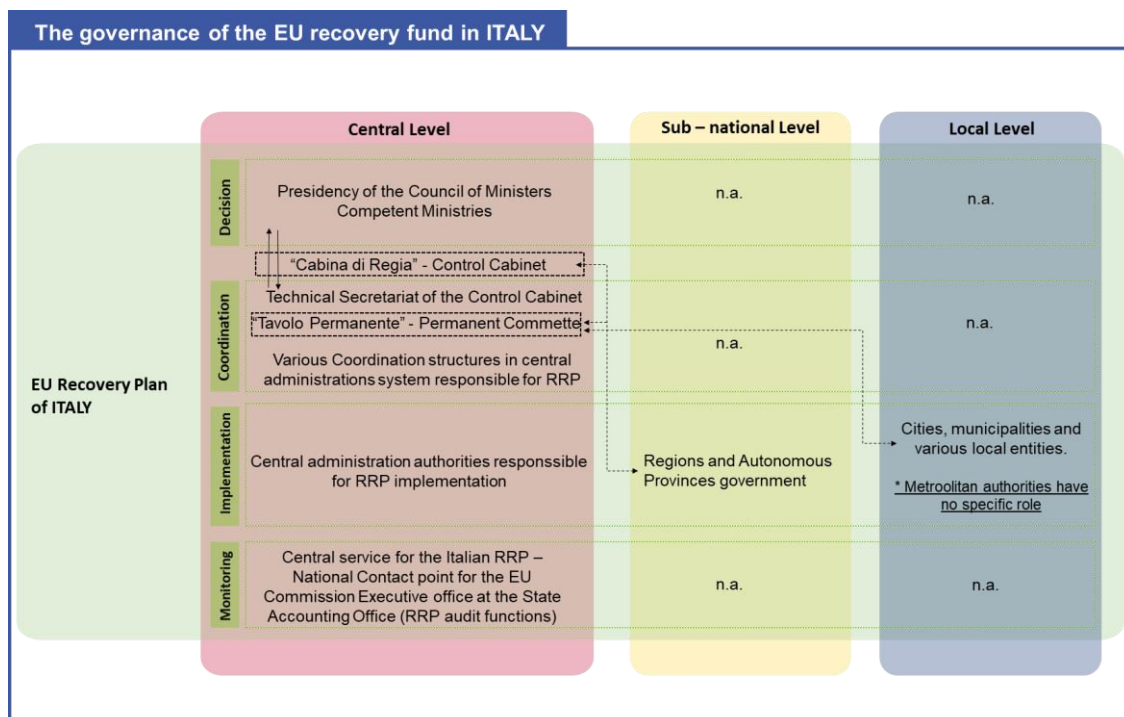
Concerning the management architecture of the Recovery fund, Italy was an example because it immediately identified in the European Affairs Inter-Ministerial Committee – CIAE (in which also attend the Conference of the Regions, the National Association of Italian Municipalities and the Union of Province) the natural place in which to manage the recovery fund and to elaborate the Recovery and Resilience Plan (the guideline has been already defined and submitted)

During the previous government legislation (Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte), the Minister of European Affairs Vincenzo Amendola (in office from September 2019 to February 2021) has then chosen operating methods that do not have to interface with all the cities but with an interlocutor capable of representing them: the National Association of Italian Municipalities (Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani – ANCI) that, as part of the CIAE has been chosen as the referent able to receive requests or needs from territories and cities. Within ANCI, a sub-section is dedicated to metro cities, led by the Mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella.

In the city of Florence, the Mayor has activated a working group coordinated by the City Manager which acts as an administrative collector of proposals from the metropolitan city and the municipality of Florence, on the base of ongoing activities (as the NOP Metro actions and urban authority organization). This working group has analyzed the correspondence of these projects with the ministerial guidelines and has collected and drafted a proposal presented by ANCI, together with the ones of all metropolitan cities, to the Ministry Amendola.

Within this framework, the NOP Metro structure was seen as an already-in-place opportunity as coordination management system to have an overview of the actual and future projects, so that the Recovery Fund was conceived as a scaling up opportunity, toward a program in continuity worth the previous one, a sort of “NOP Metro - Recovery Fund axis”.

Figure 4.3
The governance of the EU recovery fund in Italy



Source: authors' own elaboration

Challenges and critical elements

- To deal with the pandemic in progress, the budgets of some operational programs have been implemented, in some cases additional measures have been added. Looking at the NOP Metro, some interventions were reviewed and implemented to face the new problems in progress: the strengthening of cycle mobility systems, new management of the housing problem.
 - Compared to the new planning phase, this obviously presents many innovative aspects and for some actors it should be seen as a real “*transition plan*”.
 - In the Italian context, structural problems remain in the management of funds: a high level of technicality is required in the management and implementation part, a great effort is required to overcome the misalignment between national and European legislation (eg. management of contracts). Another major obstacle is given by the very rapid evolution of some sectors, as digitalization or new forms of mobility, which the pandemic has accelerated.
-

4.5 Coordinating metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy

The implementation of the cohesion policy in Florence develops in an already structured governance context in which metropolitan governance structures and cooperation practices are already in place and seems to work. Given that, the stakeholder's priority concerns the added value that cohesion policy could provide in implementing metropolitan policies and achieving metropolitan spatial development goals, by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the relationship between the cohesion policy and the “Next Generation EU” program at the metropolitan level.

The identified actors (table 4.2) establish relations with many other actors in the metropolitan area for EUCP and non-EUCP purposes. The interviewees were asked fill in a roster questionnaire, specifying the main actors with which they establish relations and what is its purpose (EUCP or non-EUCP relations).

Table 4.2**Nodes of the metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy network**

Institution's name	Subsection of the institution	Status	Scale	Sector
Tuscany Region	Urbanistica e Politiche abitative	Public	Regional	territorial development and spatial planning
	Autorità di gestione del POR FESR	Public	Regional	Social cohesion
	Autorità di gestione del POR FSE	Public	Regional	Social cohesion
	Agricoltura e Sviluppo Rurale	Public	Regional	rural development
	Programmazione Finanziaria e Finanza locale	Public	Regional	Economic development
Metropolitan City of Florence	Strategic projects	Public	Metropolitan	territorial development and spatial planning
City of Florence		Public	Metropolitan	
Union of Municipalities		Public	Local	territorial development and spatial planning
Municipalities (41)		Public	Local	territorial development and spatial planning
Local Action Groups		Public	Local	Rural Development
City of Prato		Public	Metropolitan	
Province of Prato		Public	Metropolitan	territorial development and spatial planning
City of Pistoia		Public	Metropolitan	
Province of Pistoia		Public	Metropolitan	territorial development and spatial planning
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio-Bank foundation		Non-Profit organization	Metropolitan	Economic development
IRPET-Istituto Regionale Programmazione Economica Toscana		Public	Regional	Economic development
Camera di Commercio (Chamber of commerce)		Private	Metropolitan	Business
University of Florence		Public	Metropolitan	University
Fondazione Ricerca e Innovazione		Non-Profit organization	Metropolitan	University
Silfi SPA	Centro servizi territoriali	Public/private	Local	Infrastructure, transports, communication
Ambito Turistico Fiorentino	18 municipalities	Public	Metropolitan	Business
Casa SPA		Public/private	Metropolitan	Housing
ASL- Società della salute		Public	Regional	Health
ANCI	Tuscany Section	Public	Regional	Territorial development and spatial planning
ANCI	Area Studies and Research	Public	National	Territorial development and spatial planning

The identified actors establish relations with many other actors in the metropolitan area for EUCP and non-EUCP purposes. The interviewees were asked fill in a roster questionnaire, specifying the main actors with which they establish relations and what is its purpose (EUCP or non-EUCP relations).

To ensure the maximum comparability across case-studies, the team decided to apply the following procedures:

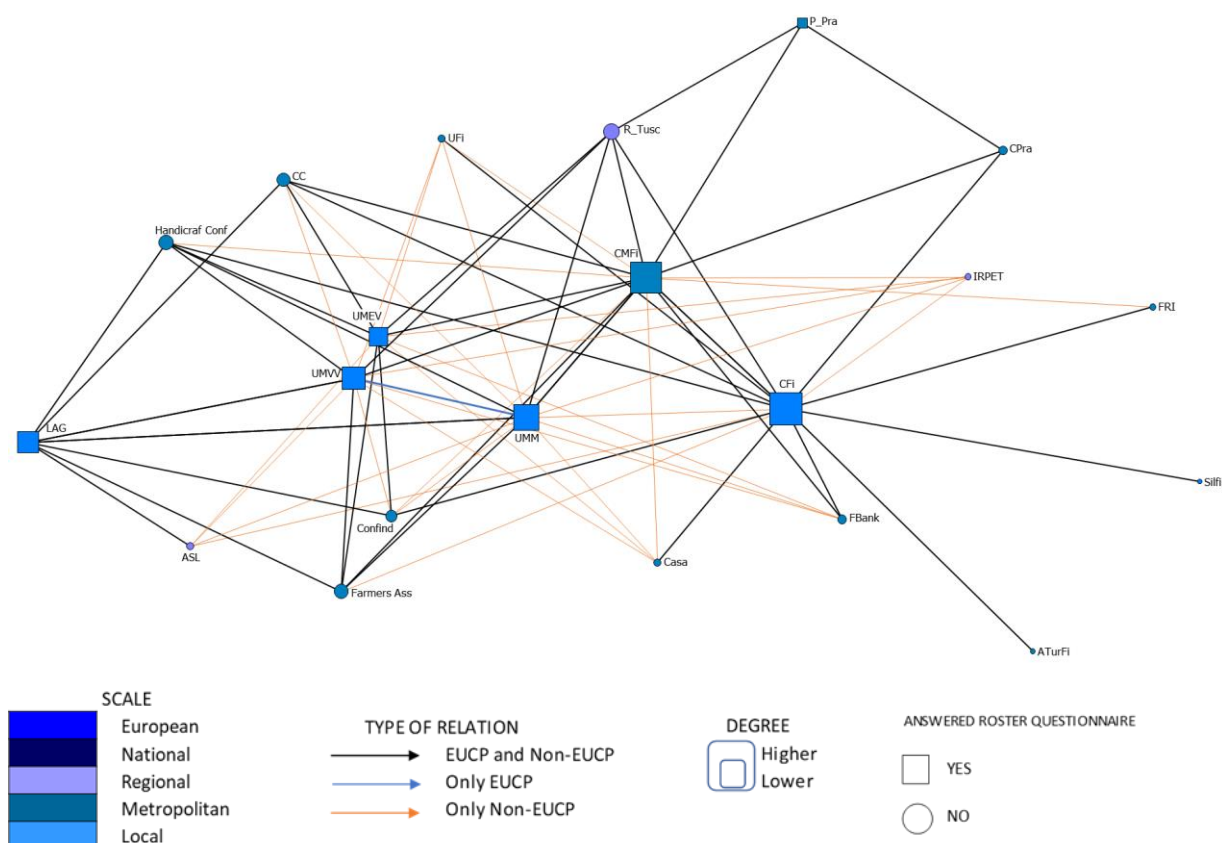
- No consideration of roster questionnaire answers from local authorities, except if they are the city that originated the metropolitan area, as it may unbalance / bias comparative analysis across case studies;
- No consideration of intensity of relations because it is difficult to ensure all organisations have a common criteria /understanding on different levels;
- No analysis of intra-organization relations in each institution.

We use the UCINET software package (Borgatti *et al.*, 2002) to elaborate the matrices of dichotomous relationships between the actors and we use the NetDraw module to draw the networks of relationships. The following steps were applied:

- Dataset consolidation;
- Computation of binary symmetrical matrixes (UCINET);
- Elaboration of one network per case study (NetDraw);
- Networks include the type of relation (EUCP, non-EUCP), scale of intervention of actors (European, National, Regional, Metropolitan, Local), and the degree of each node (calculated according to the number and type of connections, where both EUCP and non-EUCP equals 3 points, only EUCP equals 2 points and only non-EUCP equals 1 point).

Figure 4.4 depicts the metropolitan governance network in the Metropolitan City of Florence.

Figure 4.4
The metropolitan governance network



LEGEND

ID	ID_name
ASL	ASL- Società della salute
ATurFi	Ambito Turistico Fiorentino
CC	Camera di Commercio (Chamber of commerce)
CFi	City of Florence
CMFi	Metropolitan City of Florence
CPra	City of Prato
Casa	Casa SPA
Confind	Confindustria
FBank	Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio-Bank foundation
FRI	Fondazione Ricerca e Innovazione
Farmers Ass	Associazioni Agricoltori (Coldiretti, ...)-Farmers' associations
Handicraf Conf	Associazioni Artigianato (CNA,...)-Confederation of Handicrafts
IRPET	IRPET-Istituto Regionale Programmazione Economica Toscana
LAG	LAG-Start
P_Pra	Province of Prato
R_Tusc	Tuscany Region
Silfi	Silfi SPA
Ufi	University of Florence
UMEV	Union of Municipalities Empolese Valdelsa
UMM	Union of Municipalities Mugello
UMVV	Union of Municipalities Valdarno Valdisieve

Despite the limited number of actors interviewed and involved in the development of the governance network, the analysis confirms that CMFi operates in an articulated and consolidated governance system. CMFi interacts with many public and private actors in the metropolitan area, in a formal and informal way, mainly in the processes of spatial planning and metropolitan governance. The role of the CMFi in the EUCPs is much more limited, while the Region and the Municipality of Florence have a much stronger role. The Region as the planning body of the ROP and the RDP, the Municipality as the managing authority of the NOP Metro.

Within strategic planning and metropolitan development, the Unions of Municipalities play a prominent role, as they are a link between the local dimension and the vast area.

An important actor for the local development of rural and mountain areas is the Lag Start which, however, does not interact with the CMFi, rather with the municipalities, the Unions of Municipalities and the trade organizations. Very important social actors are the CRF Banking Foundation and the FRI Research and Innovation Foundation. Both have played an important role in metropolitan strategic planning, together with the University and the IRPET Research Institute. Other important nodes for metropolitan development are organizations and trade associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Confindustria, Confartigianato, Confagricoltori.

In an overall multilevel governance system it can be highlighted that:

- The Metropolitan City of Florence has a strong role in strategic and territorial planning and is increasingly acquiring a strong coordinating role for supra-local projects;

- the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, at national level, and the Region play a fundamental role in the architecture of the EUCP funds;
- The LAGs play an important role in the institutional architecture of the EUCP (as regards their territory), regardless of the Metropolitan City;
- Various actors at different levels are involved in metropolitan governance processes, both inside and outside the EUCP.

Challenges and critical elements

- To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance of cohesion policy at the metropolitan level, the NOP Metro should be considered an instrument as the ITI and thus it should be institutionalized.
 - Strengthen the role MC in the governance of EU cohesion policy instruments and the involvement in the other programmes and initiatives that have a significant impact on its territory (ROP ERDF, NOP Governance, RDP, CLLD-Leader, SNAI).
 - Collaborate with other Italian Metropolitan Cities and define a Position paper to advocate their role in the EU cohesion policy in the 2021-2027 programming period (to have an impact, this should be done by the beginning of summer 2021 at the latest)
 - Regulate/reward mechanisms for interinstitutional managing authorities (involving metropolitan cities) also in relation to Next Generation Europe
 - Reinforce the use of multi-fund / multisector tools (e.g.: conditional access to funding subject to the creation of ITIs)
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- The structure of the NOP Metro is working quite well. The idea of switching to a NOP Metro 2 and recognizing the activity carried out so far, recognizing it as something structured and no longer just as a pilot project, can be a good achievement.
- For instance, in managing the NOP Metro, the structure was divided by Axes and managed through specific working group organized following the topic and one related to the Intermediate bodies. The Governance Working Group was crucial in this process. In this group, the Italian metropolitan cities meet and discuss their work system, their progress and the challenges/obstacles they've met. This provides added value and helps overcome the obstacles that the various realities faced and will face in the future. Having been able to share the various experiences made it possible to face this as an opportunity and less as a burdening of the bureaucratic machine. Therefore, this way of working strengthens the way of approaching the European Commission. This improves moreover the qualitative certification of the different administrative bodies, thus allowing more funds to be obtained from a multi-fund perspective.
- Regulate/reward mechanisms for interinstitutional managing authorities (involving metropolitan cities) also in relation to Next Generation Europe.
- Reinforce the use of multi-fund / multisector tools (e.g.: conditional access to funding subject to the creation of ITIs).

5 Cohesion policy impact

5.1 EU cohesion policy objectives and actions

Nationally, The Metropolitan Cities are affected by common challenges in the field of sustainability, energy saving and urban mobility, which require the adoption of a joint and coordinated approach also because of the objective of adopting common innovative solutions.

The MCFi is involved in national and regional operational programs, as well as in specific multi-fund strategies such as National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI).

The main objectives concern:

- Sustainability of Services and Urban Mobility,
- Digitalization and Metropolitan Digital Agenda
- Services and Infrastructure for social inclusion
- Institutional and administrative capability
- Infrastructure for education
- Accessibility to public services in rural areas
- Health;
- Education and Training;
- Infrastructure
- Addressing specific environmental criticalities by coordinating the action of public and private actors in rural areas
- Enhancement of agricultural productions
- Sustainable Tourism

Table 5.1
Objectives of the EU cohesion policy in the metropolitan area

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
National Operational Programme on Metropolitan Cities (NOP METRO)	ERDF/ESF	1. Metropolitan Digital Agenda 2. Sustainability of public services and urban mobility 3. Services for social inclusion 4. Infrastructures for social inclusion 5. Technical Assistance	Sustainability of Services and Urban Mobility, Digitalization, Social inclusion

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
National Operational Programme on Governance and Institutional Capacity ("Metropoli Strategiche" project)	ERDF/ESF	1. Development of administrative and institutional capacity to modernise public administration 2. Development of e-government, interoperability and support for the implementation of the Digital Agenda 3. Strengthening multi-level governance in public investment programmes 4. Technical Assistance	Organisational changes and the development of competencies related to institutional innovation
National Operational Programme on Education		1. Instruction 2. Infrastructure for education 3. Institutional and administrative capability 4. Technical Assistance	
National Strategy for Inner areas	ESFR, ESF, EAFRD, Stability Law	1. Health 2. Education and Training 3. Infrastructure 4. Green District	Place-based development
Regional Operational Program (CREO)	ERDF	Axis 4. Sustainable energy and quality of life; Axis 6- Urban Areas	active labor market policies
Regional Operational Program	ESF	Axis A. Employment	
Regional Rural Development Plan- ITPs	EAFRD	Integrated Territorial Projects (ITPs)	
Regional Rural Development Plan- LEADER	EAFRD	LEADER/ LAG Start	
			To address specific environmental criticalities
			Enhancement of agricultural productions, Accessibility to public services, Sustainable Tourism

Source: authors' elaboration

5.1.1 Funded measures: main sectors and spatial distribution

The main areas of intervention concern: mobility and infrastructure, access to public services, digitalization of services, rural development, sustainable tourism, smart strategies for District.

The resources of the **NOP Metro**, allocated at local level through the Municipality of Florence as capital city of the Metropolitan City acting as Intermediate body, are meant to finance projects which have a metropolitan perspective/interest.

In this framework, the Municipality of Florence, in charge of the local management of the Program, has a total budget of €. 40.355.143,14 spread among its 5 axes:

- Axis 1 Metropolitan digital agenda;
- Axis 2 Public services and urban mobility;
- Axis 3 Social inclusion services;
- Axis 4 Social inclusion infrastructures;

- Axis 5 Technical assistance.

However, a distinction should be done between material and immaterial projects.

As a matter of fact, the material projects (concerning infrastructures and public spaces) are mainly related to the improvement of the infrastructural system of the Capital City (see the project concerning the public lighting system), but they also concern infrastructures that are directly connected with the ones of surroundings municipalities, as the project concerning the extension and improvement of the network of bicycle lanes in Florence, that is aimed at mending the cycling network of neighboring municipalities in the frame of the metropolitan bike system network or the ITS (Intelligent Transport System) implementation conceived for city users (residents, students, commuters, ...)

The immaterial projects have a more direct metropolitan value, since the project developed through NOP Metro founding are meant to develop procedures or IT products which can be directly used by or transferred the other municipalities. Examples are the smart tourism platform “Feel Florence” and the simple tax system platform that allows to standardize data on payments and debt positions at the metropolitan level. The assumption at the base of these project is that a small Municipality alone could face severe difficulties developing IT technologies, so the NOP Metro projects are conceived as pilot projects to be transferred from the capital city to all the surrounding municipalities and, particularly, to those adhering to Silfi Spa, the in house company for developing IT solutions for 22 municipalities of the metropolitan city that, through this cooperation, also create a critical mass for lowering costs.

In inner and rural areas, the main funding comes from LEADER / ERDF funds and the **SNAI strategy**. The main priorities are:

- Better accessibility to public services (Health, Education, Infrastructure);
- Enhancement of agricultural and forestry productions;
- Promote Sustainable Tourism.

These priorities are divided into two macro-areas of activity for total budget of about € 7.500.000:

- interventions aimed at creating the pre-conditions for development (Education and Training, Health, Infrastructure);
- interventions to activate local economies (Construction of a Green District “Foresta Modello”; New entrepreneurship-generational change; Eco-friendly tourism.

The total budget is financed with national resources for € 3.750.000 and regional resources related to ESFR, ESF, EAFRD fund for € 3.750.000.

Local Action group **LAG Start** operates as a local development agency promoting innovative rural development strategies integrated between public and private entities. The Local Action Group, funded by RDP, managed a total budget of € 9.058.599, that is divided into macro areas of activity:

- Enhancement of agricultural and forestry productions;
- Accessibility to public services;
- Sustainable Tourism;
- Management

The RDP fund financed, also, the **ITP “Piana Fiorentina”** with a budget to approx 3.000.000 €. The MCFI has the role of leader and coordinates the activities of many public and private entities (consortium agreement) that fall within the Florentine territory and in that of the province of Prato.

Then there are the Regional Operational Programmes that financed urban regeneration interventions, sustainable mobility, social inclusion and employment through different axis.

ROP ERDF is divided into 6 priority axes (in addition to an axis dedicated to Technical Assistance activities):

1. Enhance and promote research, technological development and innovation.

Axis 1 aims to increase the innovation activity of companies, increase the incidence of innovative specializations by supporting the creation of startups and spin offs and supporting the research infrastructures considered crucial for the regional system;

2. Improve and extend access to ICT, including the improvement of ICT services.
The strategies of the Region to favor the spread of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) technologies and the reduction of the digital divide in Tuscany are pursued by extending the spread of broadband and ultra-broadband and promoting its use by citizens and businesses;
3. Promote competitiveness and improve access to credit.
Axis 3 proposes to raise the level of internationalization, favor the creation and consolidation of SMEs, improve access to credit through financial engineering instruments and in particular the system of guarantees;
4. Sustain energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies as well as the efficient use of resources. This axis focuses on actions aimed at reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants of industrial companies, through energy efficiency, the implementation of sustainable mobility and favoring the use of renewable sources;
5. Preserve and promote natural and cultural heritage.
Axis 5 mainly deals with territorial actions related to the enhancement, promotion and networking of cultural heritage and services to support its knowledge and use, in synergy with interventions aimed at innovation of companies in the tourism sector;
6. Urban development- Inclusion and cohesion in urban area.
The interventions envisaged in the Urban axis aim to address the economic, environmental and social challenges of urban areas, implementing Urban Innovation Projects (Piu) characterized by territorial concentration and functional integration of the interventions, in particular in cities and areas where citizens is more pronounced. The priorities of this axis are, in fact, the social dimension and the urban environment. Interventions are carried out for functional recovery and reuse of public buildings for social, sporting and collective participation activities, intended for people in conditions of fragility and hardship, interventions to support social and welfare services for the weaker sections of the population and social services early childhood education.

ROP ERDF is managed by the Tuscan region which through axis 6 and 4 has financed interesting regeneration projects for urban areas through PIU- Urban Innovation Projects. These projects were financed through the signing of program agreements between the Tuscany Region and individual beneficiary Municipalities, which played the role of Urban Authorities. CMFi did not participate in the project, but it is an interesting example of a project that could also be replicated for the metropolitan city.

ROP ERF is divided into Four priority axes of intervention, developed on the basis of the priorities indicated by the EU for the European Social Fund. A fifth axis is dedicated to technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation, information and publicity activities:

Axis A: Employment

Axis B: Social inclusion and the fight against poverty

Axis C: Education and training

Axis D Institutional and administrative capacity

Axis E "Technical assistance"

A substantial part of the resources is aimed at the target of young people. In fact, 35% of the financial resources of the Por ESF 2014-2020 are allocated to young people, amounting to over 255 million euros, which will be used to enhance the experience of GiovaniSì and Youth Guarantee, in particular by supporting internships (66 million), vocational apprenticeship, education and vocational training, school-work alternation and civil service (73 million). About 20% of the entire Program, 145 million, is destined for interventions for the inclusion and promotion of equal opportunities and for social cohesion. The interventions are conceived as active measures to favor the job placement of the most vulnerable subjects.

Until 2015, CMFi held the role of Intermediate Body for some projects relating to axis A (Employment). However, in the transformation of the institution from a province to a metropolitan city, it has the skills related to labor policies and also project management.

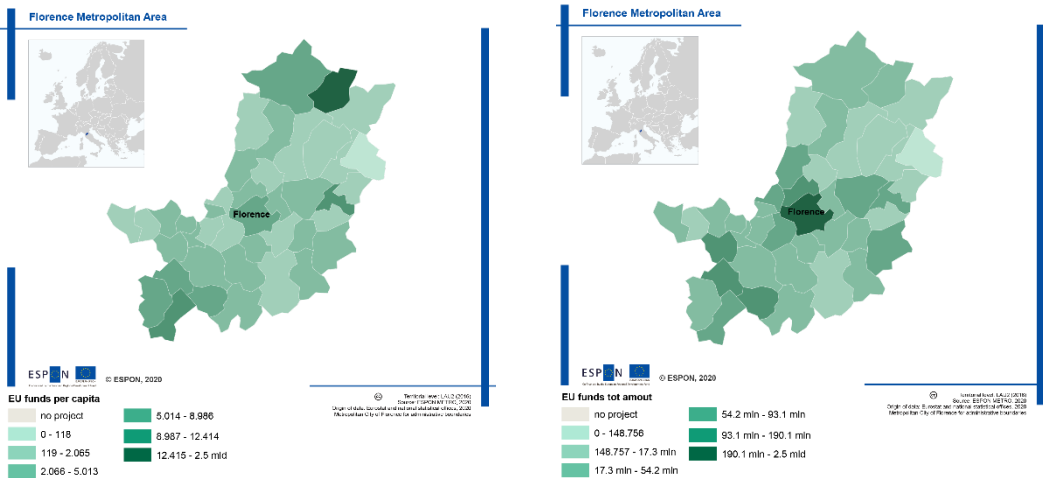
Table 5.2

Localisation, sector and resources of the main EUCP actions implemented in the metropolitan area (NOP METRO, LAGs, SNAI, ITP-RDP, ROP ESF)

Measure	Instrument	Sector	Resources (€)	Localisation (core, suburbs ...)
Metropolitan Digital Agenda	NOP-Metro	Digitalization	6.860.730	CORE/SUBURBS
Sustainability of Services and Urban Mobility	NOP-Metro	Transport	6.860.730	CORE
Services for Social Inclusion	NOP-Metro	Cohesion and Inclusion	10.457.856	CORE
Infrastructures for Social Inclusion	NOP-Metro	Cohesion and Inclusion	5.909.238	CORE
Enhancement of agricultural and forestry productions	RDP-LEADER (EARFD)	Rural development (LAG)	3.200.000	INNER AREA
Accessibility to public services	RDP-LEADER (EARFD)	Rural development (LAG)	2.626.278	INNER AREA
Sustainable Tourism	RDP-LEADER (EARFD)	Rural development (LAG)	2.149.824	INNER AREA
Management of LAG	RDP-LEADER (EARFD)	Rural development (LAG)	1.082.496	
Health (pre-condition)	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	3.000.000	INNER AREA
Education and Training (pre-condition)	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	2.250.000	INNER AREA
Infrastructure (pre-conditions)	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	1.000.000	INNER AREA
“Foresta Modello” wood production chain	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	250.000	INNER AREA
New entrepreneurship-generational change	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	400.000	INNER AREA
Sustainable Tourism	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development	350.000	INNER AREA
Local development	SNAI (multifund)	Rural development		INNER AREA
ITP-Piana Fiorentina	RDP	Rural Development	3.000.000	SUBURBS
Axis A. Employment	ROP- ESF	Employment and labour market	8489298	METROPOLITAN AREA

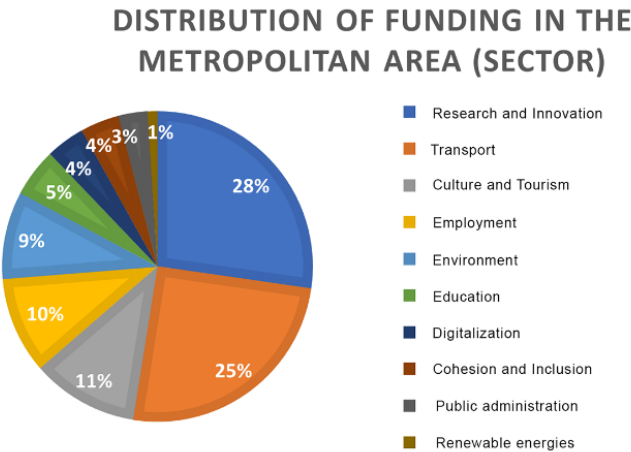
Source: authors' elaboration

Map 5.1
Distribution of funding in the metropolitan area



Distribution of funds per capita by municipality and distribution of total funds by municipality

Figure 5.1
Distribution of funding in the metropolitan area



Source: OpenCoesione (map) and authors' own elaboration based on OpenCoesione data (pie chart)

Challenges and critical elements

- The distribution of funds is not uniform across the metropolitan area. As a matter of fact, the city of Florence, being the target of the NOP, has attracted a greater number of funds, much more than the other municipalities.
 - The “*municipal territoriality*” of the projects is a limitation of this tool; however, the possibility of allocating resources differently (in other metropolitan municipalities, in the frame of a Metropolitan direction) is already under discussion (but has yet to be validated). However, looking at a metropolitan area that presents many differences, it can be highlighted that “*the funds are many and different*” and can respond to specific local needs.
-

5.2 Coherence and synergies with metropolitan objectives and instruments

Through the construction of the urban agenda 2030, the metropolitan city aims to achieve greater integration between cohesion policies and development objectives. The cooperative definition of the metropolitan agenda, built up with the participation of the different territories, aims to define common development objectives but also to promote and valorize local differences. On these basis, different sources of financing can also be defined for the different territories (eg NOP Metro / SNAI).

5.2.1 Alignment with the goals defined in metropolitan instruments

The construction of a metropolitan strategic plan, that is implemented and updated every three years, allows to align the metropolitan and European development visions. However, the interaction between metropolitan strategies and EUCP goals needs to be strengthened.

At the metropolitan level, the relationship between local development objectives (of individual municipalities and Unions) and EUCP goals must also be strengthened. Instead, the city of Florence, thanks to its administrative structures, is quite able to integrate the development objectives with the EUCP goals.

5.2.2 Thematic priorities

With respect to the alignment between metropolitan thematic priorities and EUCP priorities, there are some points of convergence. One of the most relevant issues at the metropolitan level is that of transport. In fact, one of the main development objectives of the Region, Metropolitan City and municipalities is the construction of a metropolitan transport network (rail and tramway). Of the total European funds that arrived in the metropolitan city, 25% were allocated to the transport sector³.

Thematic priorities of EU Cohesion policy in MCFi are:

- Research and Innovation 27% of fund;
- Transport 25% of fund;
- Culture and Tourism 11% of fund;
- Employment 10% of fund;
- Environment 9% of fund;
- Education 5% of fund;

³ Data processed by <https://opencoesione.gov.it>

- Digitalization 4% of fund;
- Cohesion and Inclusion 4% of fund;
- Public administration 3%
- Renewable energies 1% of funds.

Challenges and critical elements

- To pursue a multi-fund perspective, a clear and shared definition of the priorities is needed in order to establish a real and effective strategy, able to combine European strategies with urban strategies and to reinforce the role of the cities and urban impact of the EUCP fund.
- Strengthening and coordinating the urban agenda with the various administrative levels is a need, by combining ways of action with different systems and languages.

5.2.3 Funding magnitude

In Italy, Metropolitan Cities are recognized as driving forces for the development of their respective regions and produce about 35% of the national GDP (Agnoletti et al, 2015). In particular, the central areas provide advanced services (logistics, finance, telecommunications and information technology) and attract knowledge workers, creating a high economic added value compared to the neighbouring areas.

Metropolitan cities also have the competence to promote the economic development of the territories, in particular through the instrument of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, however as an institutional body they manage rather limited resources. EUCP funds are essential for channeling additional investments on the territory and carrying out high-impact projects, but even in this area Metropolitan Cities manage few resources.

In the case of the Metropolitan City of Florence, this produces about 30% of the GDP of the Tuscany Region and has a per capita GDP of about € 30,044 (Agnoletti et al, 2015). The Metropolitan institution manages a rather limited investment budget capital expenditure (investments) of approximately 150 million and also the amount of EU funds that flow to the metropolitan body, are very small.

The MCFi managed some projects related to the axis A-Employment of ROP ESF 2014-2020 as an intermediate body. Specifically, projects related to active labour market policies managed through the Labour Department and the Employment Centers, for an amount of approximately 8,500,000 million euros. However, since 2015, with the transformation of the institution from a province to a metropolitan city, the coordination of labour policies and employment centers has passed to the Tuscany Region. The MCFI maintained the management of the projects financed by the ROP ESF 2014-2020 until 2018.

The NOP METRO tool, explicitly aimed at the development of Metropolitan Cities, is managed by the provincial capitals. In the case of Florence the budget amounts to €. 40.355.143 and will be expanded to € 79.800.000 with EU REACT funds.

Table 5.3
Amount of EU funds per sector/priority compared to the overall metropolitan budget.

Policy area	Responsible body(es)	EU cohesion policy funds	Total budget
Active labour market policies	Labour Department/MCFi	8.489.298 (ROP ESF)	150.000.000

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Challenges and critical elements

- The strengthening of the metropolitan institution must also be linked to greater investment capacity and greater attractiveness of available resources.
 - The MCFi needs to improve the management capacity of the EUCP fund. In fact, the NOP Metro, although aimed at Metropolitan Cities, was managed by the capital municipality (Florence), which played the role of Intermediate Bodies. As highlighted in the interviews, from one side this choice seemed pertinent because of the greater management and organization capacity of the capital city in front of the lack of structures and dedicated personnel to the management of European projects and funds. From the other side, this choice seems to be really capital-centred because many funds, especially the ones concerned with material infrastructures, were dedicated to realising interventions in the capital city.
 - However, this is due to Italian budget procedures, that make it difficult for one municipality to spend financings for infrastructures and intervention on the territory of another municipality, and funding transfer is quite difficult.
 - From the interviews emerge a general concern on the need to transfer NOP funding to the Metropolitan City: this seems to make spending procedures easier, as MCFi, being a supra-local institution, can directly coordinate and manage funding by providing to spend them in whatever of its 41 municipality without procedural budget constrictions.
-

5.3 Outcomes

The comparison between metropolitan development opportunities and EUCP fund implementation seems to show positive results, both by looking at individual programs and at development objectives transversal to several programs

Despite the limited role of MCFi in the management and implementation of these programs and projects, these have had a positive impact at the metropolitan level.

With respect to the alignment between metropolitan thematic priorities and EUCP priorities, there are some points of convergence. One of the most relevant issues at the metropolitan level is that of **transport and sustainable mobility**: as a matter of fact, one of the main development objectives of the Region, Metropolitan City and its municipalities is the construction of a metropolitan transport network.

The PSM defines a specific strategy for achieving “Multimodal Mobility” through the construction of an integrated transport system with intermodal hubs in which rail, tramway, cycle mobility and parking ex-changes are integrated. This system affects both the MCFi territory and the functional metropolitan area in-between the MCFi and the province of Prato, in the Piana area (The Arno Valley between Florence and Prato). In this frame, the so-called “cycle highway” between Florence and Prato (32 km ca) and the extension of the tramway line will be built.

Looking at the EUCP priorities, 25% of the total European funds (ERDF+ESF) implemented in MCFi and managed by Region and Municipality of Florence with NOP Metro, is allocated to the transport sector.

The positive outcome is the implementation of an integrated project at the metropolitan level. Thanks to the participation of different institutional actors, who working on different levels, on different projects and with different funds, the metropolitan impact has been achieved.

By looking at the individual programs it is possible to identify some outcomes that have been particularly relevant.

A successful experience is the **NOP METRO**, as previously mentioned (4.2), a national operational program of interventions for the sustainable urban development of Metropolitan Cities and their capitals.

This program focuses on Europe 2020 development strategies and urban development strategies. It is financed with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) with a financial endowment of over 858.9 million euros.

The NOP Metro focuses on multilevel governance which is ensured by the Managing Authority, the Technical Secretariat and various thematic Working Groups. In this group, the Italian metropolitan cities meet and discuss their work system, their progress and the challenges/obstacles they've met. This provides added value and helps overcome the obstacles that the various realities faced and will face in the future.

The NOP Metro proposes a new co-design model that allows dialogue between cities, the Agency for Territorial Cohesion and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (Anci).

The metropolitan capital cities (Urban Authorities) are identified as Intermediate Bodies that directly manage the economic resources and hold the functions and responsibilities of the interventions.

Resources are distributed differently between cities in central and northern Italy (developed regions) and cities in the south (less developed or transition regions):

- about 90 million euros for the cities of the South
- about 40 million euros for the cities of the Center and the North.

As previously mentioned, the program is divided into 5 Axes:

- Axis 1 - Metropolitan digital agenda
- Axis 2 - Sustainability of public services and urban mobility
- Axis 3 - Inclusive social services
- Axis 4 - Infrastructures for social inclusion
- Axis 5 - Technical assistance

The program mainly intervenes on the territory of the capital city, but the interventions relating to Axis I to Axis III concern the entire metropolitan area.

In the case of CMFi, the program is managed as an Intermediate Body by the Municipality of Florence. Although the Program provides for an integrated strategy with a significant concentration of interventions in the territory of the chief town, the municipality of Florence has tried to maximize the opportunities to carry out projects with a metropolitan impact.

The individual Urban Authorities outline operational plans for the implementation of the projects, pursuing the objective of defining smart cities. The Operational Plans outlined for the construction of smart and inclusive metropolis envisaged a "strategy by layers" composed of four layers: Infrastructures, Sensors, Service Delivery Platform, Applications and Services. These layers integrate horizontally by combining infrastructures and services.

The Municipality of Florence has drawn up an Operational Plan which includes projects aimed at improving infrastructure and network services with direct repercussions on all city users. Top priority is given to the use and reuse of existing functional and intangible material resources, available to the community. Through the establishment of a project network, the intention is to stimulate the concept of co-design applied to urban planning, consisting in the aggregation of city stakeholders within the process of defining services for the city. Public service providers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Region, Silfi Spa and the Metropolitan City were involved. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Metropolitan City for the potential dissemination and replicability of the projects envisaged in the plan.

In the Operational Plan, within axis 1, projects with metropolitan impact and for all city users have been envisaged and implemented, these concerned tourism, an important economic sector, and the government. The Smart Tourism project aims to facilitate a unified and comprehensive vision of the tourist offer and provide a platform of integrated services shared by metropolitan municipalities. Instead, the other governance projects aimed to facilitate administrative procedures and strengthen the data centers with a view to metropolitan integration.

These "intangible" projects are very relevant for the construction of a metropolitan digital infrastructure. The "material" projects mainly concern smart mobility interventions, sensors, energy requalification and cohesion and inclusion (Axis 2, 4). Although according to the rules of the NOP, they are concentrated within the boundaries of the municipality of Florence, they aim to intercept all city users and in general the flows of metropolitan mobility.

In the case of Florence, the management of the NOP Metro as an Intermediate Body was organized through a "control room" (4.2). Through this operational and organizational model it is possible to convene this control room approximately every six months, or as needed, allowing the correct execution of the Program, the Operational Plan and compliance with the objectives and timing of implementation of the interventions. Through this structure directed by the City Manager it is possible to maintain a stable and continuous dialogue with the Metropolitan City, both with respect to common projects and strategic planning. The continuous dialogue and co-design of the projects allows easy replicability and scalability to metropolitan municipalities.

Figure 5.2
NOP Metro architecture

STRATEGY AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE PROGRAM

PRIORITY AXES

To allow the operational translation of the strategic elements outlined the Program focuses on 4 priority Axes as well as an Axis for Technical Assistance

AXIS 1 (TO 2 ESI funds)
Metropolitan Digital Agenda
AXIS 2 (TO 4)
Sustainability for Services and Urban Mobility

AXIS 3 (TO9)
Services for Social Inclusion
AXIS 4 (TO 9)
Infrastructures for Social Inclusion

AXIS 5
Technical assistance

DRIVERS

The NOP METRO operates on the 14 metropolitan cities to enhance and improve the services offered to resident citizens and city users and focuses on two strategic drivers:

SMART CITY

For the redesign and modernization of urban services through the digital agenda and more efficient and sustainable mobility

SOCIAL INNOVATION

For the inclusion of the most fragile segments of the population and for disadvantaged areas and neighborhoods through services (ESF) and the infrastructure (ERDF); some interventions will also be activated through the active participation of associations and citizens

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Territorial Cohesion Agency

Managing authority (Autorità di Gestione- AdG)
Certification Authority (Autorità di certificazione- AdC)

Ministry of Economy and Finance

Audit authority (Autorità di Audit- AdA)
General State Accounting (Ragioneria Generale di Stato-IGRUE)

14 Metropolitan Cities

Intermediate Bodies

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Another NOP that indirectly involves metropolitan cities was the **NOP Governance** through the **Strategic Metropolis project**. Metropolitan cities are involved through ANCI (the national association of Italian municipalities).

This project supports the Italian metropolitan cities in the process of institutional innovation, organizational change and skills development for the full implementation of integrated policies on a metropolitan scale. It aims to strengthen institutional capacity of metropolitan cities through support and coaching in organizational changes and in the development of skills related to institutional innovation.

Even if the direct beneficiary of the funds is ANCI, there is a direct, continuous and active involvement of the political and administrative structures of the Metropolitan Cities and their municipalities.

A successful project for the coordination capacities of the Metropolitan City is the **Integrated Territorial Project - ITP Piana Fiorentina**.

In this multi-measure project financed by the RDP, the metropolitan city has assumed the role of leader and coordinated public entities (Municipalities, Univesrsità, Consorzio di Bonifica), private entities (companies) and farmers' organizations. These subjects are part of both the CMFi and the nearby province of Prato, part of the functional metropolitan area.

The participating subjects have signed a Territorial Agreement and developed an integrated supra-municipal project in line with the strategies of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, in particular with the metropolitan vision "Terre del Benessere" (Lands of Well-being). The objectives of the project are the enhancement of the traditional agricultural landscape and local supply chains, the safeguarding of the hydraulic system and wetlands, the recovery of ecological corridors.

From this example emerges the coordinating role that the Metropolitan City is increasingly strengthening and that it can also play outside its institutional boundaries, in particular in the functional socio-economic area. Furthermore, it can be highlighted that the metropolitan body can play an important role in the implementation of policies and projects of connection between urban and rural areas.

In addition, Florence has been the first Italian city participating in the **Horizon REPLICATE** project (REnaissance of PLaces with Innovative Citizenship And Technology) funded under the Horizon 2020 SCC1 Smart Cities and Communities program. This project, in a broad strategy aimed at creating smart city services, is carrying out complex and integrated action aimed at improving energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, the development of ICT and the Internet of Things IoT, urban resilience and security.

This program, which started at the municipal level, was included among the pilot projects of the PSM and in the SUMP. The results obtained at the local level have been scaled to the metropolitan level, in particular as regards projects related to sensor systems for mobility.

Table 5.4
Successful outcomes

Action	Field	Outcome	Added value	Role of the metropolitan institution
NOP Metro	Smart and Inclusive City	Digitalization of metropolitan municipalities and creations of new digital services Development of a sustainable mobility and infomobility system, scalable at the metropolitan level	The definition of a control room as a space for discussion and co-design between the municipality and the metropolitan city Construction of a metropolitan digital infrastructure	Involvement of CMFi through a memorandum of understanding

Action	Field	Outcome	Added value	Role of the metropolitan institution
NOP Governance	Institutional capacity	Accompany organisational changes and the development of competencies related to institutional innovation in the Metropolitan Cities.	<p>The implementation of metropolitan impact projects, replicable and scalable</p> <p>Direct, continuous, and active involvement of the political and administrative structures of the Metropolitan Cities and their municipalities</p>	Involved by ANCI in the Metropoli Strategiche Project
ITP-Piana Fiorentina (RDP fund)	Rural development	Enhancement of the traditional agricultural landscape and local supply chains, the safeguarding of the hydraulic system and wetlands, the recovery of ecological corridors.	<p>Coordinating role that the Metropolitan City is increasingly strengthening and that it can also play outside its institutional boundaries</p> <p>Role in the implementation of policies and projects of connection between urban and rural areas</p>	The CMFI has assumed the role of leader in the territorial agreement
Horizon Replicate REPLICATE (RE-nais-sance of PLaces with Innovative Citizenship And Technology)	Smart Cities and Communities	complex and integrated action aimed at improving energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, the development of ICT and the Internet of Things IoT, urban resilience and security	The results obtained at the local level have been scaled to the metropolitan level, in particular as regards projects related to sensor systems for mobility	Included among the pilot projects of the PSM and in the SUMP

Source: Authors 'own elaboration

Beside the successful experiences, there are also a number of barriers and impediments that limited the added value of the EU cohesion policy to the achievement of metropolitan goals. These are related both to single programmes or projects and to overarching factors. In particular, the following ones should be mentioned as experiences and factors limiting the impact of the EU cohesion policy:

- CMFi is not involved in the SNAI strategy (Mugello-Val di Sieve-Val di Bisenzio) and in the projects of the LAG Start. This is a missed opportunity not only for the recognition of the metropolitan city as a territorial entity, but also for strengthening metropolitan governance and urban-rural relations.
- Direct access programs, to which the Metropolitan City has few possibilities of access, also due to the absence of supranational contact points: in Brussels there is ANCI representation, but it mainly represents the main Municipalities, while in the case of Metropolitan Cities, a representation expressly oriented to the metropolitan dimension and their complexity would be important.
- The NOP Metro could have a greater impact on the metropolitan territory if "material" infrastructural interventions were allowed outside the territory of the capital municipalities.

Challenges and critical elements

- Territorial inequalities in the location of funds does not allow a balanced development of the Metropolitan City. The MCFi could strengthen its coordinating role in the implementation of the EUCP funds, also to ensure a more balanced urban-rural territorial development.
-

5.4 The impact of the EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency

In 2020, several operational programs underwent an update of their programs so as to be able to integrate actions and measures to address the COVID-19 emergency. This has, among other things, led to the introduction of numerous restrictions on individual and productive activities, with important consequences on the economy and the population.

The projects envisaged within the various PONs can all be classified as "system actions" as national strategic actions which, by their nature, are territorially inseparable and produce widespread effectiveness and an impact on the entire national health system. The related financial implementation will therefore follow the percentage breakdown of the categories of regions for the relevant priority axis.

Within the PON Governance, to respond to epidemiological emergencies starting from the COVID-19 crisis, interventions aimed at strengthening the National Health Service (SSN), the territorial assistance network and the functions of the Ministry of Health are integrated, through the increase in human and instrumental resources. This type of intervention takes the form of financing the increase in hospital staff and the staff of other structures involved in containing the spread of the virus, again with reference to the National Health Service and is therefore aimed at public facilities, as well as strengthening their equipment / additional supplies.

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, cohesion funds were implemented both in the NOP Metro and in the ROPs. this has allowed targeted interventions on some problematic areas such as those related to social

cohesion and unemployment. Looking at the NOP Metro case, some interventions were reviewed and implemented to face the new problems in progress: the strengthening of cycle mobility systems, new management of the housing problem.

New sub-measures were included in the RDP to mitigate the implications of the COVID emergency, such as funds for specific activities affected by the crisis (agri-tourism and the floriculture sector. In addition, measures aimed at the regeneration of local communities have been added)

Challenges and critical elements

- The implementation of post-covid funds has led to implement specific interventions located at the municipal level, for example in Florence with the COVID-implementation of the NOP Metro, or relating to very specific sectors such as schools.
 - The effect of the Next Generation EU funds will certainly be more relevant. These will not only open a new phase of planning but should lead to significant transformations with respect to issues that emerged in the pandemic: resilience, sustainability, inclusion.
-

5.5 The impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

EU cohesion policies operate within an already defined framework of metropolitan cooperation. The role of EU funds has not brought about major changes. However, especially for some areas such as rural and inland areas, it has increased cooperation through LAGs groups or participation in the SNAI. Thus fueling the construction of wide area strategies and participation in partnerships. In the central metropolitan areas (Florence, Prato and the suburban municipalities), cooperation mainly took place with joint participation in individual projects financed with cohesion funds (in particular in the mobility and transport sector). These projects are grafted onto a long history of attempts to plan and elaborate common metropolitan-level strategies that have never been fully realized.

In this framework the metropolitan body does not have a relevant role within the EUCP. This could change with a different management of the funds to the MC instead of to the capital city.

Challenges and critical elements

- Although some EU cohesion policy instruments has had an impact on metropolitan governance and cooperation, the institutional architecture of the funds gives little space to MC in the programming and management of EU cohesion policy instruments.
 - The possibility of having greater political competences and greater resources could certainly strengthen the metropolitan institution and induce changes in governance, strengthening the coordinating role of the municipalities of the sub-regional area involved in its boundaries.
 - Critical element are the possible conflicts that could arise with the super-ordered (Region) and under-ordered (larger municipalities) levels once the evolution and strengthening of skills and funding for the MC take place.
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The implementation of projects at the metropolitan level seems to work, especially if we look at the example of the transport network and NOP Metro funds. However, the update of the PSM and the definition of the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda for sustainable development, co-created between public and private actors, could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the relationship between European policies and metropolitan planning tools, highlighting alignments and multi-level development policies.
- Strengthening and coordinating the metropolitan and urban agenda within the various administrative levels, combining different modes of action with different systems and languages, can increase the impact and effectiveness of EU funds.
- The CMFi should strengthen its coordinating role for pursuing the challenge of overcoming territorial gaps and connecting urban and rural development strategies
- To pursue the multi-fund perspective, a clear and shared definition of the priorities (between Region, CMFi, municipalities) is needed in order to establish a real common strategy that combines European and local level ambitions and targets.
- The use of multi-fund / multisector tools should be reinforced. The logics and mechanisms behind the various EU funds should be further simplified and the possibility to integrate them within territorial development strategies and actions enhanced.

6 Main challenges and recommendations

The nature of the metropolitan cities, as outlined by the Delrio reform, is that of a "systemic institution", more relational than regulatory. Such a nature presupposes that a large part of the body's activity is based on the construction of relations with bodies of different levels (municipalities, Region and State) on the one hand, and with civil society on the other (valorising the contributions of the social community, the public-private partnership, the contribution of the third sector, etc.). In this perspective, the Metropolitan City should be considered as the pivotal coordination body of the local governance system and needs to be clearly recognised within the ESIF programming. However, this does not occur yet to a full extent, due to a number of challenges, that will be presented in the following paragraphs with relation to the three policy questions of the METRO project: the role of Metropolitan Areas in the EU cohesion policy governance; the impact of the EU cohesion policy on the achievement of metropolitan goals; the impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation.

6.1 The role of Metropolitan Areas in the EU cohesion policy governance

Challenges on the role of the Metropolitan City of Florence in EU cohesion policy governance

The Metropolitan City in Italy generally has a very limited role in the EU cohesion policy governance: it should be however emphasized that this body has been defined by Law 56/2014 (so called "Delrio Law") and started its institutional activity only on January 1, 2015.

The Law 56/2014 sought to transform all Italian provinces into second level institutions with non-elected assemblies and to reduce their jurisdiction, while provinces that incorporated major regional capital cities were abolished and replaced with "Metropolitan Cities" (actually 14 and, among them, Florence and Turin) in charge to adopt two territorial planning instruments: the Metropolitan Strategic Plan and the Metropolitan Territorial Plan.

According to the law, the metropolitan city is defined as a city-regional institution with the aim of: managing the strategic development of the metropolitan area, promoting and managing the services, infrastructures and communication networks of interest to the metropolitan city in an integrated way, and taking care of institutional relations pertaining to its level, including those with the cities and metropolitan areas of Europe.

The transformation from Province to Metropolitan City led to a reorganization of functions, some of which passed to the Region and to the municipalities. Regional law 22/2015 (Reorganization of provincial functions and implementation of law 7 April 2014, n.56) has led to a revision of competences: labor policies, vocational training and the Social Observatory have become the competence of the Region, tourism policies have passed to the municipalities. The main competences in charge of the Metropolitan City are school construction and management, the maintenance of provincial roads and spatial planning, with a strong coordinating role of the municipalities to pursue the development and competitiveness of the entire metropolitan area.

Although metropolitan cities play a strategic role in territorial development, they work in a fragmented governance context and in territories with strong imbalances and differences. The Metropolitan Cities works in a very fragmented environment, with very diverse geographic and socioeconomic contexts, and within the metropolitan area there are other forms of cooperation that are independent from the metropolitan institution. Therefore, it is not easy to develop integrated policies at the metropolitan level.

On the one hand, the political representation of the Metropolitan City on its territory is rather weak. It is a second level institution, the President of the metropolitan city is the mayor of the capital city, and this leads to a centralization of power in the capital center and a "feeling" of greater peripherality for the smaller municipalities.

On the other hand, the long process of institutionalization of the Metropolitan City, with its steps back and forth, has led to the emergence of informal and soft models of collaboration between Municipalities (Unions of Municipalities or project based cooperation) which now must be framed in the government processes led by the metropolitan city.

Challenges on the role of the Metropolitan City of Florence in EU cohesion policy governance

That said, the analysis of the EUCPs in the Metropolitan City shows a very limited role in the management of funds.

The CMFi has a role of management and coordination of public and private actors (municipalities, farmers' associations, small agricultural enterprises) for an Integrated Territorial Project- Piana Fiorentina financed by RDP with rural development funds.

Until 2015, with an extension until 2018, the CMFi was Intermediate Body for projects related to vocational training and labor policies financed by the ROP ESF but, as previously mentioned, these competences have passed to the Region.

CMFi also played a role in response to COVID-19: for example, it coordinated the requests for funding for adapting secondary schools to distancing and disinfection, in the frame of the NOP "For the School - skills and learning environments", aimed to make school environments usable also with social distancing, but it could be larger.

The metropolitan capital, the City of Florence, relevant role in the EUCP: as a matter of fact, it is certified as Urban Authority/intermediate body in the NOP METRO, the national program targeted to metropolitan cities.

As highlighted in the interviews, this choice was nationally driven, as a result of dialogue among national, metropolitan and local representatives and ANCI (National Association of National Municipalities) and was intended considered a good one, because of the greater management and organization capacity of the capital city and the opportunity to scaling up to metropolitan level. In fact, it should be emphasized that in the Metropolitan city not always there internal and defined structures with professional targeted skills and administrative staff dedicated to the management of European projects and funds.

However, the institutional role, governance and administrative capacities of MCs is recognized but can be strengthened through projects such as Strategic Metropolises, funded by the PON Governance and managed by ANCI, or through the Technical Support Instrument.

To summarize, MCs face three main challenges in order to acquire a greater role in EUCPs:

- strengthen the role of territorial coordination, also to promote balanced urban-rural territorial growth and promote shared visions of development,
- improve administrative capacities (in the management and attraction of funds). Effective and successful processes often rely on the commitment and competences of the persons involved. People matter, but inadequate management of turnover, divestment, precariousness, poor training and updating, etc. have led to a general feeling of disillusionment and to the lack of a system of competences that is essential for metropolitan governance and development
- increase recognition of metropolitan cities both in Italy and in Europe. Italian Metropolitan Cities are not associated in a formal network, that would allow them to strengthen their position and capacity for dialogue with the state and the EU acting as a category rather than single metropolitan cities. The Metropoli Strategiche project is moving in this direction but to date the network has not been established and metropolitan cities are represented either by ANCI or individually.



Recommendations for the Metropolitan City of Florence (metropolitan level)

- At the metropolitan level, the recognition of CMFi in the NOP Metro could be strengthened, in particular in proposing and leading projects that can be extended to the entire metropolitan area (not just on Axis 1 of the NOP).
- The CMFi should acquire a greater role in the management and implementation of projects, considering the Next Generation EU Fund



Recommendations for the regional and national level

- Italian Metropolitan Cities should strengthen collaboration and define a Position paper to advocate an active role in the EU cohesion policy in the 2021-2027 programming period.
- The system for sharing priorities between the various administrative levels should be implemented, following the example of the NOP Metro.
- The role of MCs has to be strengthened in the governance of EU cohesion policy instruments, as well as the involvement in the other programmes and initiatives that have a significant impact on their territories, linked to strategic territorial plans and the future of rural areas (ROP ERDF, NOP Governance, RDP, CLLD-Leader, SNAI).
- The Metropolitan City should be enabled to act as an Urban Agency for managing metropolitan resources.
- The operational capacities of metropolitan cities (in the management and attraction of funds) need to be strengthened by increasing both the budget and the human competencies.



Recommendations for the EU level

- It is necessary to strengthen the role of metropolitan cities in the multilevel governance system, in the governance framework of the EU cohesion policy.
- The strength and recognition of metropolitan cities as a specific category (by seeking greater visibility and through lobbying) has to be enhanced. It might be useful to establish a European Metropolitan Policy Observatory, to gain and share evidence-based knowledge on metropolitan institutional structures, governance mechanisms and policies.
- Mechanisms for inter-institutional managing authorities (involving metropolitan cities) have to be regulated/rewarded, also in relation to Next Generation Europe.

6.2 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on (the achievement of) metropolitan goals

Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on the achievement of metropolitan goals

National and regional operational programs are active and scaled-up in the CMFi territory, as well as multi-fund strategies such as the National Strategy for Internal Areas (SNAI) or Horizon programs such as Replicate (in charge of Municipality of Florence). The main areas of intervention concern: mobility and infrastructure, access to public services, digitalization of services, rural development, sustainable tourism.

The CMFi has a limited role in both the management and implementation of these programs (NOPs and ROPs) and projects. However, it can be emphasized that in general the EUCP funds have positive repercussions in the construction of projects of metropolitan interest.

With respect to the alignment between metropolitan thematic priorities and EUCP priorities, there are some points of convergence. One of the most relevant issues at the metropolitan level is that of transport and sustainable mobility: as a matter of fact, one of the main development objectives of the Region, Metropolitan City and its municipalities is the construction of a metropolitan transport network, that also lies in the SUMP, approved at metropolitan level.

Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on the achievement of metropolitan goals

The PSM defines a specific strategy for achieving “Multimodal Mobility” through the construction of an integrated transport system with intermodal hubs in which rail, tramway, cycle mobility and parking exchanges are integrated. This system affects both the CMFi territory and the functional metropolitan area in-between the CMFi and the province of Prato, in the Piana area (The Arno Valley between Florence and Prato). In this frame, the so-called “cycle highway” between Florence and Prato (32 km ca) and the extension of the tramway line will be built.

Looking at the EUCP priorities, 25% of the total European funds (ERDF + ESF) implemented in the CMFi territory is destined for the transport sector.

Within the ERDF ROP, both Axis 4 - Environmental Sustainability and Axis 6 - Cohesion and Inclusion in Urban Areas have funded projects related to sustainable mobility.

In the NOP Metro, Axis 2 - Sustainability of services and Urban Mobility financed projects concerning the extension and improvement of the network of bicycle lanes in the city of Florence but mending the cycling network of neighbouring municipalities in the frame of the metropolitan bike system network or the ITS (Intelligent Transport System) implementation conceived for city users (residents, students, commuters, ...). The “municipal territoriality” of the projects could be seen as a limitation of the mobility approach adopted also in the SUMP; however, the possibility of allocating resources differently (connected in other metropolitan municipalities, in the frame of a Metropolitan approach) is already proposed within the new version of PON Metro close to the REACT-EU fund.

In addition, Florence has been the first Italian city participating in the Horizon REPLICATE project (Renaissance of PLaces with Innovative Citizenship And Technology) funded under the Horizon 2020 SCC1 Smart Cities and Communities program. This project, in a broad strategy aimed at creating smart city services, is carrying out actions aimed at increasing electric mobility and ICT technologies. This program, which started at the municipal level, was included among the pilot projects of the PSM and in the SUMP. The results obtained at the local level have been scaled to the metropolitan level, in particular as regards projects related to sensor systems for mobility.

In general terms, the main metropolitan development strategy is in line with the objectives of the EUCPs, and the impact of these funds is positive in achieving the metropolitan goals.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the distribution of funds is not uniform across the metropolitan area: the city of Florence has attracted a greater number of funds (total amount), much more than the other municipalities. On the other hand, the distribution of per capita funds does not present such sharp disparities between center and periphery; but in some small municipalities the data is not proper, because the entire financing of the projects is associated with the single municipality, even when the project is located in several municipalities.

In the frame of a metropolitan area that presents so many differences, it can be highlighted that “the funds are many and different” and can respond to specific local needs.

- The challenge is to integrate the use of EUCP funds into a metropolitan development project framework.
- At metropolitan level, the relationship between local development objectives (of individual municipalities and Unions) and EUCP goals must also be analysed and recognized. At local level, the city of Florence, thanks to its administrative and professional structures, is quite able to identify and integrate the development objectives with the EUCP goals.
- The construction of a metropolitan strategic plan, that is implemented and updated every three years, allows to align the metropolitan and European development visions and targets. However, the interaction between metropolitan strategies and EUCP goals needs to be reinforced and the metropolitan city needs to approve the EU target and ambitions.
- Through the construction of the Metropolitan Agenda 2030, the metropolitan city aims to achieve greater integration between cohesion policies and sustainable development objectives at metro level. The cooperative definition of the metropolitan agenda, built up with the participation of the different territories, aims to both define common development objectives and promote and valorise local differences. On these basis, different programs can also be used for the different territories, balancing urban and rural (e.g., NOP Metro / SNAI).



Recommendations for the Metropolitan City of Florence (metropolitan level)

- The implementation of projects at the metropolitan level seems to work, especially if we look at the example of the transport network and NOP Metro funds.
- The update of the PSM and the definition of the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda for sustainable development, co-created between public and private actors, could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the relationship between European policies and metropolitan planning tools, highlighting alignments and multi-level development policies. In fact, the 2030 Metropolitan Agenda for Sustainable Development helps to place the implementation of the PSM within a strategic and programmatic framework at a global, European, national and regional level with which it intends to align itself in a coherent manner taking into account its own territorial specificities.
- Strengthening and coordinating the metropolitan and urban agenda within the various administrative levels, combining different modes of action with different systems and languages, can increase the impact and effectiveness of EU funds.
- The CMFi should strengthen the coordinating role for pursuing the challenge of overcoming territorial gaps and connecting urban and rural development strategies.



Recommendations for the regional and national level

- The use of multi-fund / multi-sector tools (on the example of the SNAI) managed by the metropolitan level should be strengthened
- In a multilevel governance framework, it is important that all the levels collaborate, defining the main assets and sharing few and clear common rules.
- To pursue the multi-fund perspective, a clear and shared definition of the priorities (between Region, CMFi, municipalities) is needed in order to establish a real common strategy that combines European and local level ambitions and targets.
- The integration between the regional development program and metropolitan strategic and territorial planning instruments should be strengthened



Recommendations for the EU level

- The use of multi-fund / multisector tools should be reinforced. The logics and mechanisms behind the various EU funds should be further simplified and the possibility to integrate them within territorial development strategies and actions enhanced.
- The EU cohesion policy should also be used as a lever to catalyze the action of private actors and civil society organization towards a metropolitan perspective. Indeed, social groups and the business community are not involved in the institutional governance of EU cohesion policy instruments but are largely involved in its implementation, as beneficiaries of the projects. To increase the impact of projects at the metropolitan level and achieve development goals, rewards could be used precisely for those projects managed by public-private partnerships that pursue metropolitan development goals.

6.3 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

The metropolitan city of Florence shows a gap between the territorial and institutional dimensions, this is strongly felt by many actors interviewed. The great theme of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia functional metropolitan area is a 'historical paradigm of planning for the Tuscany region' that has not yet been resolved. In the CMFi territories further away from the central areas, there are Unions of Municipalities that have a strong local identity and are rather cohesive (especially the Mugello and Empolese ones). Some territories, which correspond to inner areas (Mugello, Valdisieve), suffer from peripherality and marginality ("they feel like second-class citizens") not only with respect to the Metropolitan City but to the whole Region.

The peripheral territories, even if they do not feel completely part of the metropolitan system, participate in the CMFi initiatives. Not only in the construction of planning tools, but also in other initiatives as the calls for urban regeneration financed by the state and coordinated by the MCFI (for example the so-called "Call Suburbs" and the "PINQUA program"). This helps CMFi to reinforce its role of governance and permit to work more and better.

Both the drafting of planning tools and participation in funding calls allowed CMFi to build and increase its coordination capacities. An interesting example of project financed by EUCPs, and coordinated by the CMFi, is that of the ITPs Piana Fiorentina. In this project, funded by RDP, the CMFi has assumed a strong coordinating role between the region, the involved municipalities (Calenzano, Prato, Poggio a Caiano), public bodies such as Reclamation Consorzio and private actors (13 agricultural enterprises). Moreover, CMFi managed to coordinate both its municipalities and metropolitan actors, and the ones in the Province of Prato; so as to work together over 6 public entities, 3 professional organizations and 13 agricultural enterprises.

From this example emerges the coordination role that the Metropolitan City is increasingly strengthening and demonstrate the capability to play also outside its institutional boundaries, in particular in respect to the municipalities concerned with the functional socio-economic area Firenze-Prato-Pistoia.

About territorial governance and cooperation, we must emphasize that Tuscany Region has a long tradition of participation and active citizenship, also recognized by the regional law 46/2013 "Regional public debate and promotion of participation in the development of regional and local policies". Thanks this long history of sharing and co-creation, many decisions relating to spatial planning are taken after a participatory process in which also the third sector and the business community are involved as main stakeholder.

For example, for the drafting of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, a Promoting Committee has been set up, in which the University, the Chamber of Commerce and the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze (bank foundation) participate with an equal role compared to the Metropolitan City. At the same time, the main metropolitan stakeholders actively participated in the participatory process for the plan.

The CRF Foundation, a foundation of banking origin, a non-profit organization that pursues the social interest through a careful program of investments and projects in its territory of intervention is now supporting and financing many projects within the city of Florence and the metropolitan area. In the post-covid phase, the Foundation actively participated in the drafting of the strategic document "Rinascita Firenze" (a revision of the development strategies of the renaissance of Florence to build back better) and set up a working group, including personalities from the business and the academic world, to develop a set of Tuscan projects for draft of the local Recovery Plan.

Recently the Metropolitan City, the Municipality of Florence and the Chamber of Commerce have drawn up the "Pact for work and development". This pact aims enhancing the development of the metropolitan community in harmony with the programmatic lines contained in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Here are the challenges:

- The implementation of cohesion policy in CMFi takes place in a metropolitan governance context that is already structured and in which the cooperation practices in place seem to work well.
- Metropolitan actors recognize the added value that cohesion policies and the Next Generation EU fund can provide to the implementation of metropolitan policies and to the achievement of development goals.

Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

- The most relevant impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation (as Metropolitan City entity) is based on:
- The ITP-Piana Fiorentina project as a good example of the coordination and management capabilities of the Metropolitan City of Florence
- The Metropoli Strategiche project, funded by the NOP Governance and managed by ANCI, which is strengthening the role and governance of Italian metropolitan cities



Recommendations for the Metropolitan City of Florence (metropolitan level)

- The coordination role of the CMFi between the different metropolitan municipalities and with the entities of the metropolitan socio-economic area has to be strengthened.
- CMFi can act as facilitator to strengthen cooperation between municipalities and promote their participation in projects and programs.
- A further extension of the NOP METRO project to the municipalities of the CMFi, in particular the more peripheral ones, could increase cooperation and broaden the impact of the program.



Recommendations for the regional and national level

- Enhancing / Reinforcing the role of the Metropolitan City in the NOP METRO 2 program and in the Next Generation Funding Program. An increased role in the programs also leads to the strengthening of institutional governance.
- To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance of cohesion policy at the metropolitan level, the NOP Metro should be considered an instrument as the ITI and thus it should be institutionalized.



Recommendations for the EU level

- Increase the recognition of metropolitan cities as a specific category and as large-area/city-regional entities with great coordination skills.
- Recognize MCs as mediating bodies that can increase and coordinate cooperation central and peripheral areas (or urban / rural areas) cooperate.

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4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg

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The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States, the United Kingdom and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

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ISBN: 978-2-919795-65-9