



FUNDING ANALYSIS

The impact of cohesion policy on metropolitan areas during the period 2021–2027

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The impact of cohesion policy on metropolitan areas during the period 2021–2027

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Introduction

This publication has been produced by the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA), the network of political leaders from Europe's major cities and metropolitan areas working to strengthen the metropolitan perspective at the European level. The document examines the impact of European funding related to cohesion policy (CP) during the 2021–2027 programming period on metropolitan areas, analysing this impact through several key projects identified by the metropolitan authorities themselves.






The study collected data from 23 metropolitan areas (and regions) across 12 EU countries. It analyses key figures and highlights relevant projects co-financed through European funds in different areas of competence.

Moreover, the study aims to illustrate the important role that CP funding plays in the development and implementation of projects that affect hundreds of thousands of residents in metropolitan areas. By comparing the amounts of EU funding managed by metropolitan areas with those received by regions and Member States, this report assesses how significant European funding is for these territories.

Metropolitan areas are at the forefront of innovation, economic development and sustainability in key areas of competence, yet the EU funding they manage remains very limited compared with their population and overall impact.

Areas of competence

Around 70% of European legislation has a direct impact on cities and metropolitan areas¹. EMA members hold responsibilities in several policy areas related to sustainable regional development, aligning with some of the main objectives of CP. These competences include sustainable transport and mobility, waste management, social development and the circular economy, among others.

Area of competence	Relation to the SDGs*
Mobility & transport	
Housing	
Urban planning	
Public space	
Waste management	
Circular economy	
Digitalisation	
Innovation & research	
Employment & social inclusion	
Nature & biodiversity	
Culture & tourism	
Other	

*SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals

In the following section, several flagship projects are presented to illustrate the role EU funding plays in supporting metropolitan action.

¹ European Committee of the Regions (CoR). (n.d.). <https://cor.europa.eu/en/about>

Competences

METROPOLITAN INSTITUTION	Region	State	Competences													
			Mobility & transport	Housing	Urban planning	Public space	Waste management	Circular economy	Digitalisation	Innov. & research	Emp. & soc. Inclusion	Nature & biodiversity	Culture & tourism	Other, not CP-related		
Toulouse Métropole	Occitanie	FR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Poznań Metropolitan Area	Greater Poland Voivodeship	PL	X											X	X	
Brussels-Capital Region	Brussels-Capital Region	BE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Łódź Metropolitan Area Association	Łódzkie	PL	X											X	X	X
Gothenburg Region	Västsverige	SE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CIM Cávado	Braga	PT			X	X	X	X	X				X		X	
Warsaw Metropolis Association	Mazowieckie Voivodeship	PL	X										X			X
Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia	Silesia	PL	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Brno	South Moravian Region	CZ	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X
Budapest	Budapest	HU	X	X	X	X		X				X	X			
Zagreb	Zagreb County	HR														
Rennes Métropole	Brittany	FR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot	Pomerania	PL	X	X	X					X			X	X	X	X
Kraków Metropolitan Area	Małopolskie	PL														
Eurometropolis of Strasbourg	Grand Est Region	FR	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vienna	Vienna	AT														
Grand Paris	Grand Paris	FR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Metropolitan Area of Lisbon	Lisbon	PT	X		X	X							X	X		
Metropolitan City of Rome	Lazio	IT	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barcelona Metropolitan Area	Catalonia	ES	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X			
Metropolitan City of Genoa	Liguria	IT	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Helsinki-Uusimaa Region	Uusimaa	FI	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wrocław	Lower Silesia	PL	X			X							X	X		X

2

² NUTS 2 regions have been used for the purpose of this study. However, CP funding is administered differently in the countries included. In the case of FR, NUTS 1 have been added; in the case of CZ, NUTS 3 have been added.



Selected case studies

Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)

Title: EUI TOP SEC - Ecological green roofs bringing nature back to cities through metropolitan circularity and community engagement

Summary: Challenged with improving harmony between Barcelona's human residents and urban wildlife in a context of climate change, TOP SEC offers a groundbreaking solution: transform the metropolises' flat rooftops into naturalised, seasonal green – or brown – spaces that do not need irrigation. How? By developing an innovative substrate made from high-quality biochar produced from organic waste digestate and pairing it with a comprehensive study to identify the best plant species for these low-maintenance, naturalised roofs.

CP grant: €1,505,532.00 (AMB)

Total project budget: €4,595,906.00

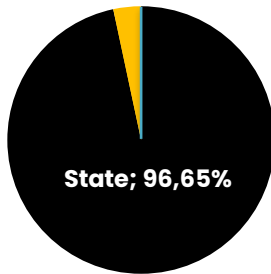
Role of funding: The second call for proposals of the European Urban Initiative (EUI-IA) selected 22 projects, including TOP SEC, a proposal led by the AMB. The call offers overall funding of 98 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme, a key source of funding for metropolitan projects.



Distribution of funds by governance level

Region: 3,32%

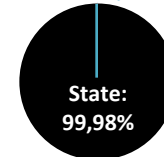
AMB: 0,02%



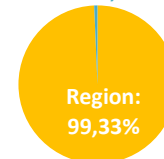
Spain's CP funds for 2021–2027 total about €37.3 billion, and **Catalonia's** funds are around €1.24 billion (taking into account the €840 million from the ERDF and the €401 million from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)). However, **AMB's** CP funds are limited to €8.3 million

Metropolitan share vs State and region

AMB: 0,02%



AMB: 0,67%

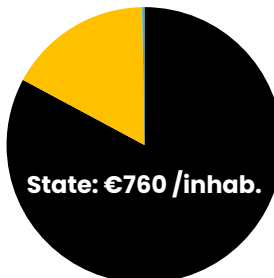


Hence, the **AMB** is responsible for the management of 0.67% of the funds compared to the totals managed by the **region**, and 0.02% compared to the **country**.

Funds managed by institution per inhabitant

Region: €155 /inhab.

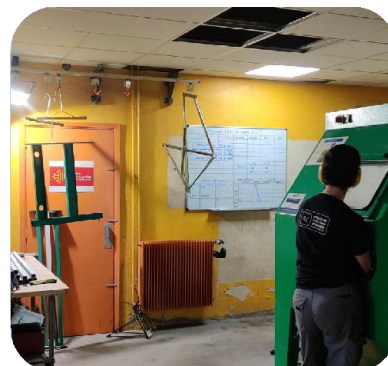
AMB: €2.5/inhab.



Considering that around 70% of European policies have a local impact, it is very unbalanced to see that the **AMB** manages around €2.5/inhabitant coming from the CP, compared to the €155/inhabitant managed by **Catalonia**, and the €760/inhabitant managed by the **Spanish Government**.

Toulouse Métropole

Toulouse Métropole acts as an intermediary body for the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). As such, it manages a 9 million-euro grant, more than 95% of which has already been programmed. With this funding, Toulouse Métropole is promoting professional integration and social inclusion for those furthest from the labour market and the most vulnerable or excluded (priority 1 of France's ESF+ programme: employment, inclusion, youth and skills). It finances 40 local projects and supports the PLIE scheme, a local plan for insertion and employment, implemented by Toulouse Métropole. In addition, the metropolitan area has received 24 million euros from the ERDF.

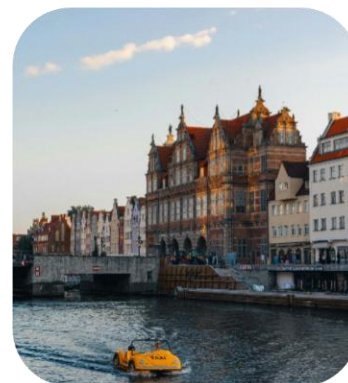


Poznań Metropolitan Area

Together with other cities, Poznań leads a project to **support small water retention and the development of green and blue infrastructure in the Poznań Metropolitan Area** in three stages. The main goal of this integrated project is to support adaptation to climate change and prevent the risk of natural disasters. The project also aims to increase resilience by protecting water resources in Poznań Metropolitan Area municipalities and developing green and blue infrastructure, resulting in a reduced risk of flood and drought. The project's scope includes investment activities such as the construction of water retention systems, peat bog protection, the construction and reconstruction of parks/squares/green areas, tree plantings and the elimination of heat islands in urban areas. Stage I received a CP grant of 22,725,254.20 PLN (€5,380,999.32); Stage II, 43,864,313.66 PLN (€10,386,411.51), and Stage III, 42,071,860.00 PLN (€9,961,985.37).

Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot

The "**Technical Assistance Project for the ZIT Intermediate Body 2026, Measure 9.1 'ERDF Technical Assistance', European Funds for Pomerania 2021–2027**" has been almost entirely funded through CP: a total of 1,733,333.00 PLN (€402,191.00), and a CP grant of 1,300,000.00 PLN (€302,326.00). The project, co-financed by the ERDF, ensures ongoing support for beneficiaries implementing Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) projects in the region. It includes expert advisory services, monitoring support, training and knowledge-sharing, enabling local governments to effectively absorb EU funds and comply with programme requirements. The activities contribute to the successful delivery of CP objectives through the ITI instrument.



Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia (GZM)

Title: Supporting the just transition process through the promotion of higher education

Summary: The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the opportunities and possibilities arising from the just transition process among residents, students, and workers in one of the seven mining subregions of the Silesian Voivodeship covered by the Territorial Just Transition Plan. Particular attention is given to education, employment and life in the region. The GZM's task will be to develop an IT platform in response to the diagnosed need of universities to strengthen the area of higher education promotion.

CP grant: €978,000.00 (GZM)

Total project budget: €4,840,000.00

Role of funding: Directly funded under Priority X – European Funds for Transformation (Measure/Action 10.26 – Strengthening the just transition process in the Silesia region), the project will have a direct impact on a wide-ranging audience – residents, students or workers in one of the seven mining subregions of the Silesian Voivodeship. Therefore, they will be conducted on a larger scale and will reach approximately 25,312 people.



Metropolitan share vs State and region

GZM: 0,05%

State:
99,95%

GZM: 0,77%

Region:
99,23%

Like other cases, the **GZM** manages 0.77% of CP funds compared to the totals administered in the **region**, and 0.05% compared to the **country**.

Distribution of funds by governance level

Region: 6,29%

GZM: 0,05%

State: 93,67%

Poland's CP funds for 2021-2027 total about €76.5 billion, and **Silesia's** funds are around €5.14 billion combined. However, the **GZM's** CP funds were limited to €39.5 million.

Funds managed by the institution per inhabitant

Region: €1.195 /inhab.

GZM: €18.8/inhab.

State:
€2.017
/inhab.

Poland, as a high-priority beneficiary country for EU funding, manages around €2,017/inhabitant in CP funding. The funds are also very high in the region of **Silesia**, which manages a ratio of around €1,195/inhabitant. However, funds decrease drastically in the **GZM**, which only manages €18.8/inhabitant.

Warsaw Metropolis Association

The **Metropolitan Advisory Support Centre** (Metropolitalne Centrum Wspierania Doradczego) was set up with a CP grant of €600,000 and a total project budget of €1,200,000, co-funded with a city contribution. The project aims to provide services that support local government units in developing their administrative capacities, strengthening their potential to comprehensively manage development. This includes the effective implementation of both supra-local/territorial development strategies and integrated projects.



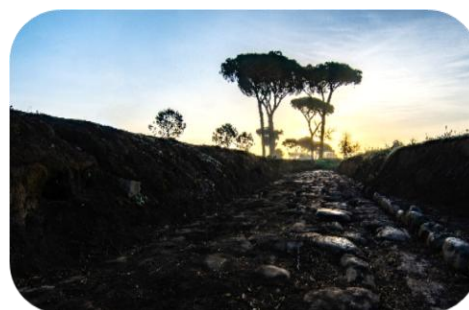
CIM Cávado



The municipalities of Amares, Barcelos, Braga, Esposende, Vila Verde and Terras de Bouro have launched **CDCT Cávado 2021-2027**, with CP co-funding of €133,585,626.00 and a total project budget of €153,623,469.00. This action plan constitutes the Intermunicipal Community of Cávado's (CIM Cávado) proposal for the framework of operations to be managed by the CIM as the intermediate body of the Regional Programme (PR) North 2030, part of the CIM Cávado 2030 ITI Territorial Approach. In a context of challenges and commitments, the regional discussion and coordination process allowed the territorial development strategy (EDT Cávado 2030) to focus on five priority areas of intervention, which correspond to the strategic agendas that frame the planning for this period and the consolidation of the CIM Cávado itself. (The agendas were designed not only based on the contracted ITI CIM between CIM Cávado and PR North 2021-2027, but also to encompass all the intervention of the ESF+ in the territory.)

Metropolitan City of Rome

CP grants are also a great example of transnational cooperation. In this case, the metropolitan area of Rome partnered up with six cities and regions – Amsterdam, Kraków, Tallin, Andalusia, Seville and Braşov – under the leadership of Breda on the **Tourism in Balance (TIB)** Interreg Europe project. With a CP grant of €245,130.00 and a total project budget of €1,754,151.00, TIB aims to create a more sustainable and balanced tourism industry, where local communities are supported and the environment is protected.



Gothenburg Region (GR)

Title: Samverkan skola och socialtjänst, skolnärvaro (ESF+, 231101-241031)

Summary: The pre-study contributed to the broader effort of building evidence-based knowledge regarding the structural and cultural conditions that need to be in place to support effective collaboration between schools and social services. Despite being under the same name, the target group, effort and organisation differ between the municipalities. On an overall level, the goal is the same for all member municipalities, which is that more children and young people successfully complete their schooling.

CP grant: €89,000.00 (GR)

Total project budget: €166,000.00

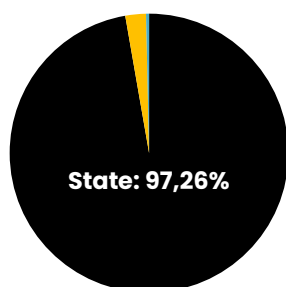
Role of funding: Current legislative changes and reforms bring new opportunities in terms of working methods and forms of collaboration. The state grant for school social team personnel costs has also helped put the issue of collaboration regarding attendance problems even more so on the agenda and has contributed to a national sense of urgency. The rapid advancement of this initiative would have been impossible without CP funds.



Distribution of funds by governance level

Region: 2,39%

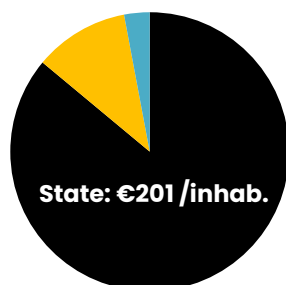
Gothenburg Region (MA): 0,35%



Sweden's CP funds for 2021–2027 total about €2.15 billion, and the **region's** funds are around €51.4 million. Nonetheless, the **metropolitan area (MA)** oversees a total budget of around €7.6 million from CP funding.

Funds managed by the institution per inhabitant

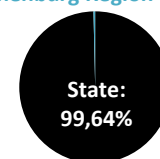
Region: €26 /inhab. **Gothenburg Region (MA): €18.8/inhab.**



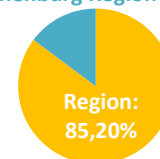
Being a consolidated EU beneficiary, **Sweden** operates a total of around €201/inhabitant in CP funding. This amount gets significantly reduced when analysing the €25.7/inhabitant managed by the **region of Västra Götaland**, and the €6.9/inhabitant managed by the **Gothenburg Region metropolitan area**.

Metropolitan share vs State and region

Gothenburg Region (MA): 0,36%



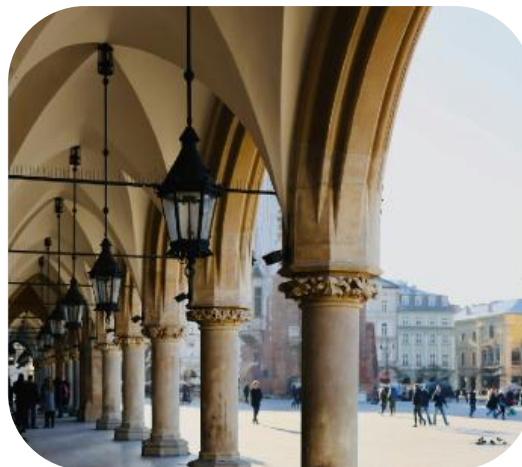
Gothenburg Region (MA): 14,80%



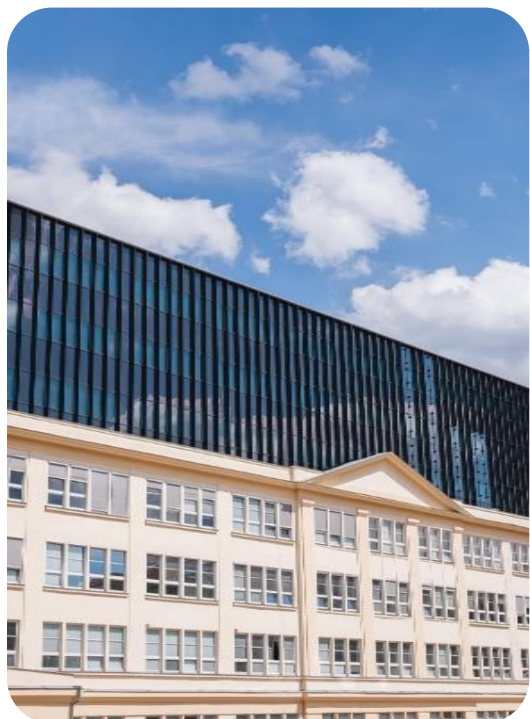
Like other cases, **Gothenburg Region** manages the 14.8% of CP funds compared to the total administered in the **region**, and 0.36% compared to the **country**.

Kraków Metropolitan Area

CP funds are key for the development of projects in the Małopolska Region. Through the ESF+, the EU allocated a total of €28,376,170.53 in European funding for Małopolska 2021-2027 **to improve the availability and quality of social services in the Kraków Metropolitan Area**. As a result, 31 projects were implemented in all 15 municipalities of the metropolitan area. Projects cover the development and deinstitutionalisation of social services, creating support centres for families, children, young people, the elderly and dependent persons, as well as the provision of emergency assistance and relief for informal caregivers.



Brno



With a total budget of 404 million CZK (approx. 16.8 million euros) and CP funding of 164 million CZK (approx. 6.8 million euros) through the ITI tool, the metropolitan area of Brno launched the **Czech Cyber Security Centre**. Thanks to an integrated approach, two projects focused on cybersecurity were created in Brno: the CERIT Science Park II and the Čichnova Secondary School of Informatics, Postal Administration and Finance. The Science Park is located at the IT CAMPUS CITY CENTRE and has enabled the development of cutting-edge security research, technology transfer, and facilities for innovative companies. For its part, the secondary school, located on Čichnová Street in the Komín district, has a unique technology centre for cybersecurity and information and communication technologies (ICT) that educates students in this unique field. The Čichnova Secondary School of Informatics, Postal Administration and Finance in Brno is one of only two schools in the Czech Republic offering cybersecurity studies. The ITI funds have also been used to equip a modern Junior Centre of Excellence for Cyber Security. This centre also helps guarantee quality education in other fields such as information technology, telecommunications and transport security.



Łódź Metropolitan Area Association

Thanks to CP grants of €673,612.36, the municipal area of Łódź could launch a project **on Improving the energy efficiency of the district hospital in Brzeziny**. With a total project budget of €2,245,374.53, the municipality started the comprehensive modernisation of the heating/cooling system in the hospital building (at Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie 6 Street) and the district clinic.

Brussels-Capital Region (BCR)

Title: HIPPODROME

Summary: The Hippodrome project aims to revitalise the former Uccle-Boitsfort racecourse by creating a large-scale recreational green space of regional significance. As a true gateway to the Sonian Forest, this site embodies a regional vision that harmoniously blends urban planning with nature. It addresses the need to preserve biodiversity while enabling residents and visitors to reconnect with the natural environment. Initiatives led by Brussels Environment encompass landscaping works (creating access routes to the forest, planting vegetation in the relaxation meadow and installing information panels, fencing and gates), an enhanced visitor experience through fun and educational trails along the track, and an audio walk. Also included was the renovation of the Grange Nature, as a centre dedicated to nature education (with the structural work completed jointly with the Urban Development Corporation (sau-msi.brussels)), and its surroundings, as well as the creation of a regional playground.

CP grant: €392,610.31 (EU + BCR)

Total project budget: €2,424,113.45

Role of funding: The Hippodrome project is the result of a public-private partnership between Brussels Environment – an ERDF beneficiary, the Urban Development Corporation (responsible for the structural renovation of the buildings), and Drohme SA (managing the Village des Paris buildings, the golf club, hospitality facilities and parking).

The case of the BCR is quite particular, as the institution represents both the region and the metropolitan area. The BCR represents the NUTS 2 region and is the managing authority for the ERDF programme. It has therefore been excluded from the arithmetic means of this study, as the funding it receives mainly derives from its status as a NUTS 2 region.



Metropolitan City of Genoa

The **energy efficiency refurbishment of the I.I.S. Italo Calvino school complex** is a perfect example of how CP grants (around €1,000,000) are positively affecting the metropolitan area of Genoa. Through CP grants and other revenues (for a total project budget of €1,200,000.00), the project focuses on energy efficiency improvements for the I.I.S. Italo Calvino upper secondary school complex. The project aims to reduce energy consumption and operating costs, improve environmental performance, and enhance comfort and safety for students and staff. It contributes to climate and energy objectives under the ERDF framework and supports the modernisation of public social infrastructure at metropolitan level.



Zagreb

During the 2021–2027 financial period, the metropolis of Zagreb submitted 143 projects with a total value of €430.3 million, of which more than €250.4 million are non-repayable grants. Currently, 196 projects are being implemented with a total value of €684 million, with non-repayable grants accounting for €547.3 million. In the same period, 352 projects have been completed with a total value of €376.9 million, of which €288.1 million were non-repayable grants. The largest number of project applications has been submitted under the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)**, covering the areas of green and digital transition as well as the renewal of public infrastructure, particularly the construction and equipping of preschool and school institutions. By using this financial mechanism, the metropolis of Zagreb has secured additional funds for the implementation of development activities.

Rennes Métropole

As digitalisation is a key area, the Rennes Métropole launched the **Responsible Digital Transition** project with a 5 million-euro grant. The funding supports eco-designed digital services, low-impact public web platforms, and improved digital accessibility and public service interfaces. Two projects are officially published as beneficiaries under this axis: the eco-designed redesign of the Rennes Métropole website and the digital ecosystem redesign for Les Champs Libres.



Budapest

With total funding of 120.857.031 HUF (€318,592.31), of which 38.229.925 HUF (€100,818.39) is from CP, the Metropolitan Area of Budapest is working on phase 2 of **energy efficiency upgrades to buildings owned by the Municipality of Budapest** and its institutions. Together with the Ministry of Construction and Transport, the municipal buildings in the capital city are being modernised from an energy standpoint (improving the thermal properties of buildings; modernisation of doors and windows and heating, cooling, ventilation and domestic hot water systems; installation of solar panels, solar cells or autonomous electricity). During phase 2 of the project, the renovation of a building with temporary family shelters was completed.



Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

Projects with lower budgets, such as the **TEPA24 Uusimaa – Support for Employment Services Reform**, are a valuable source of change promoted by CP funding. With a grant of €162,418.00 and a total budget of €541,392.00, The TEPA24 project, led by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, focuses on preparing for a major reform of employment services in Finland (TE24 reform). The reform will transfer the responsibility for organising public employment services from state TE offices to municipalities starting in January 2025.

Wrocław

For many years, Wrocław has been working to develop rail transport and integrate it with other transportation subsystems to create a coherent, sustainable public transport network. With this in mind, Wrocław's authorities have decided to implement the next, fourth phase of a broader project entitled **Integrated Rail Transport System in Wrocław**. This initiative would have been difficult to achieve without the CP grant of 189,764,227.64 PLN (€44,920,987.97), which covered part of the total budget of 338,515,422.45 PLN (€80,133,370.80).



Eurometropolis of Strasbourg

The Grand Est Region acts as the managing authority for a portion of EU funds (notably ERDF and ESF+) within its territory. The region defines its own priorities through its **Regional Operational Programme (ROP)** and directly manages the selection of local projects; administrative and financial monitoring; and communication and impact assessment. The Grand Est Region has delegated part of its ERDF package, amounting to €10 million, to the Eurometropolis for the 2021-2027 period, granting another €5 million under the ESF+. The Eurometropolis uses these funds to support its local sustainable economic strategy and territorial cohesion, particularly through the ITI tool.



Metropolitan Area of Lisbon

Through Interreg Europe, the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML) has received co-funding of €115,868.00 within the project **GreenGov**, which has a total budget of €2,216,728.00 (ERDF co-funding of 80%). The GreenGov project aims to assist regional and local authorities in applying the European sustainable taxonomy and improving financing frameworks. Through coordinated and collaborative work, the project seeks to consolidate the process of adapting regional and local strategies to the new European framework by developing a guide that empowers territorial stakeholders to apply innovative sustainable financing mechanisms. Among the public policy instruments analysed are four regional ERDF programmes, a green financing strategy, an economic transition governance strategy, territorial and climate development strategies, and a sustainable energy and climate action plan.

Funding analysis

The highlighted cases help to illustrate both the impact of metropolitan projects and the imbalance in the distribution of EU funding. In all data received from the 23 metropolitan areas included in this study, several projects have been identified that rely directly on CP funding.

This report also compares the funds managed by metropolitan areas with those managed by regional and national governments. It shows that metropolitan institutions manage much less funding than regional counterparts.

Although this imbalance may appear logical if the objective is to foster development in less populated areas, it is also true that projects implemented in densely populated metropolitan areas have a much broader impact, reaching a larger share of the population and generating benefits for the wider territory.

We can see how the selected cases exemplify this imbalance. For example, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area manages only 0.67% of the amount managed by the region, while it represents 50% of its population. Similar cases apply in most of the selected cases; the following chart compiles the information for the 23 metropolitan areas included in this study:

Cohesion policy funds

Metropolitan institution	Region	State	Country population	CP funds x country	Regional population	CP funds managed by the region
Toulouse Métropole	Occitanie	FR	69,280,000	€ 17,971,884,225.00	5,830,000	€ 466.121.595,46
Poznań Metropolitan Area	Greater Poland Voivodeship	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	3,491,000	€ 2.100.000.000,00
Brussels-Capital Region ³	Brussels-Capital Region	BE	11,840,000	€ 2,756,262,115.00	2,150,000	€ 174.000.000,00
Łódź Metropolitan Area Association	Łódzkie	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	2,340,000	€ 2.744.942.943,00
Gothenburg Region	Västsverige	SE	10,680,000	€ 2,148,423,832.00	2,000,000	€ 51.421.939,00
CIM Cávado	Braga	PT	10,840,000	€ 22,628,718,513.00	416,652	€ 3.395.213.726,00
Warsaw Metropolis Association ⁴	Mazowieckie Voivodeship	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	5,500,000	€ 2.096.611.002,00
Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska M.	Silesia	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	4,300,000	€ 5.139.119.473,00
Brno	South Moravian Region	CZ	10,910,000	€ 21,144,975,312.00	1,230,000	€ 2.100.000.000,00
Budapest	Budapest	HU	9,450,000	€ 21,905,794,704.00	1,686,000	€ 375.000.000,00
Zagreb	Zagreb County	HR	3,810,000	€ 8,730,076,657.00	315,000	€ 250.000.000,00
Rennes Métropole	Brittany	FR	69,280,000	€ 17,971,884,225.00	3,460,000	€ 392.890.876,00
Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot	Pomerania	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	2,360,000	€ 1.751.808.323,00
Kraków Metropolitan Area	Małopolskie	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	3,430,000	€ 2.690.000.000,00
Eurometropolis of Strasbourg	Grand Est Region	FR	69,280,000	€ 17,971,884,225.00	1,931,000	€ 899.170.742,00
Vienna	Vienna	AT	9,197,200	€ 1,300,000,000.00	2,028,289	€ 26.000.000,00
Grand Paris	Grand Paris	FR	69,280,000	€ 17,971,884,225.00	7,115,576	€ 429.051.104,00
Metropolitan Area of Lisbon	Lisbon	PT	10,840,000	€ 22,628,718,513.00	2,961,177	€ 381.000.000,00
Metropolitan City of Rome	Lazio	IT	58,934,200	€ 42,700,000,000.00	5,710,272	€ 1.367.933.932,00
Barcelona Metropolitan Area	Catalonia	ES	49,078,000	€ 37,300,000,000.00	8,012,231	€ 1.240.900.000,00
Metropolitan City of Genoa	Liguria	IT	58,934,200	€ 42,700,000,000.00	1,509,908	€ 1.065.012.353,00
Helsinki-Uusimaa Region ³	Uusimaa	FI	5,636,000	€ 2,000,000,000.00	1,800,000	€ 125.000.000,00
Wrocław	Lower Silesia	PL	37,930,000	€ 76,534,698,850.00	2,896,452	€ 2.310.000.000,00

Although the information received from metropolitan areas regarding the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is more limited and therefore has not been fully included in this study, the situation does not appear to improve significantly in the cases where information is available.

It is important to highlight the reach and impact that projects co-funded by the CP instrument have on metropolitan residents. In many cases, we observe significant amounts of funding allocated to strategic projects, such as those highlighted above. This demonstrates both the strong potential impact of CP funding and the effective use of these resources by metropolitan authorities.

Moreover, in some cases, European funding represents the only opportunity for metropolitan authorities to implement projects at the supralocal level, as they often lack dedicated financial or institutional frameworks to support such initiatives.

Metropolitan area population	CP funds managed by the metropolises	Total budget of projects partially financed through CP funds	Development level of the region Regulation (EU) 2021/1060
832.348	€ 17.000.000,00	€ 51.000.000,00	TrR
1.100.000	€ 101.312.500,98	€ 169.721.456,16	TrR
1.250.000	€ 174.000.000,00	€ 53.800.000,00	MDR
1.000.000	€ 262.138.669,78	€ 435.033.215,11	TrR
1.100.000	€ 7.652.000,00	€ 12.778.000,00	MDR
416.652	€ 133.585.626,00	€ 153.623.469,00	TrR
3.300.000	€ 135.600.000,00	€ 263.100.000,00	LDR ⁵
2.100.000	€ 39.540.000,00	€ 56.660.000,00	TrR
732.000	€ 330.000,00	€ 187.400.000,00	MDR
3.300.000	€ 99.195,72	€ 313.589,43	MDR
1.100.000	€ 80.500.000,00	N/D	MDR
455.000	€ 18.600.000,00	€ 46.500.000,00	MDR
1.693.605	€ 994.186,00	€ 1.217.054,00	LDR
1.145.723	€ -	€ -	TrR
514.816	€ 22.235.693,00	€ 37.700.000,00	MDR
2.890.577	N/D	N/D	MDR
13.171.056	N/D	N/D	MDR
2.800.000	€ 2.000.000,00	€ 120.000.000,00	MDR
2.747.000	€ 757.371,96	€ 1.648.299,89	MDR
3.398.219	€ 8.308.994,88	€ 36.949.067,66	MDR
819.861	N/A	N/A	MDR
1.800.000	€ 125.000.000,00	€ 156.250.000,00	MDR
672.545	€ 68.277.673,00	€ 137.714.787,00	TrR

³ The Brussels–Capital Region and the Helsinki–Uusimaa Region institution represent both the region and the metropolitan area; therefore the figures are the same.

⁴ For the Warsaw Metropolis Association, the allocation of "CP funds managed by the region" correspond to the whole voivodeship, and it does not contain the allocation for the Warsaw metropolis nor the remaining part of the voivodeship in the national operational plans. Regarding "CP funds managed by the metropolises", it relates only to the allocation for the ITI instrument within the regional programme for the Masovia region.

⁵ Outside the Warsaw Capital Region, the area is classified as less developed, while the Warsaw Capital Region itself is classified as more developed under the current statistical division. For the purposes of this table, the entire Mazowieckie Voivodeship, including Warsaw, has been counted as a less developed region (LDR).

We also observe an even more pronounced funnel effect when analysing funding in relation to the number of metropolitan inhabitants. In these densely populated areas, CP funding does not adequately match the needs of urban populations.

On average, metropolitan areas across the selected cases manage €31 per inhabitant in CP funds. Particularly striking are four cases where the amount managed falls below €1 per inhabitant: Budapest (HU), Gdańsk–Gdynia–Sopot (PL), Lisbon (PT) and Rome (IT).

Unfortunately, the percentage of funds comparing the metropolitan areas to the regions and the countries are also quite alarming. The average in this study shows that metropolitan areas oversee **6,49%** of CP funds per capita compared to the regions in which they are located, and they only manage **2,63%** of the funding per capita allocated to the country.

METROPOLITAN INSTITUTION	Region	State	Funds managed per inhabitant at country level	Funds managed per inhabitant at regional level	Funds managed per inhabitant at metropolitan level
Toulouse Métropole	Occitanie	FR	€ 259.41	€ 79.95	€ 20.42
Poznań Metropolitan Area	Greater Poland Voivodeship	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 601.55	€ 92.10
Brussels–Capital Region ^{6a}	Brussels–Capital Region	BE	€ 232.79	€ 80.93	€ 139.20
Łódź Metropolitan Area A.	Łódzkie	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 1,173.05	€ 262.14
Göteborg Region	Västsvrige	SE	€ 201.16	€ 25.71	€ 6.96
CIM Cávado ^{6b}	Braga	PT	€ 2,087.52	N/D	€ 320.62
Warsaw Metropolis	Mazowieckie Voivodeship	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 381.20	€ 82.18
Górnośląsko–Zagłębiowska M.	Silesia	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 1,195.14	€ 18.83
Brno	South Moravian Region	CZ	€ 1,938.13	€ 1,707.32	€ 161.20
Budapest	Budapest	HU	€ 2,318.07	€ 222.42	€ 0.03
Zagreb	Zagreb County	HR	€ 2,291.36	N/D	€ 73.18
Rennes Métropole	Brittany	FR	€ 259.41	€ 113.55	€ 40.88
Gdańsk–Gdynia–Sopot	Pomerania	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 742.29	€ 0.59
Kraków Metropolitan Area	Małopolskie	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 784.26	N/D
Eurometropolis of Strasbourg	Grand Est Region	FR	€ 259.41	€ 465.65	€ 43.19
Vienna ^{6c}	Vienna	AT	€ 141.35	€ 12.82	N/D
Grand Paris ^{6c}	Grand Paris	FR	€ 259.41	€ 60.30	N/D
Metropolitan Area of Lisbon	Lisboa	PT	€ 2,087.52	€ 128.67	€ 0.71
Metropolitan City of Rome	Lazio	IT	€ 724.54	€ 239.56	€ 0.28
Barcelona Metropolitan Area	Catalonia	ES	€ 760.01	€ 154.88	€ 2.45
Metropolitan City of Genoa ^{6c}	Liguria	IT	€ 724.54	€ 705.35	N/D
Helsinki–Uusimaa Region ^{6a}	Uusimaa	FI	€ 354.86	N/D	€ 69.44
Wrocław	Lower Silesia	PL	€ 2,017.79	€ 797.53	€ 101.52
AVERAGE			€ 1,205.29	€ 487.87	€ 31.64

⁶ The following metropolitan areas are excluded from the averages: (^{6a}) Brussels–Capital and Helsinki–Uusimaa, where the metropolitan and regional levels coincide; (^{6b}) the least populated metropolitan area; and (^{6c}) those with incomplete data.

It is important to highlight that CP management mechanisms differ between countries. Metropolitan areas access funding through different instruments, including the **ERDF, competitive programmes or ITI**. These mechanisms strongly influence the level of funding that metropolitan authorities can manage.

Regarding the involvement of metropolitan areas in the design of European policies, the situation remains unbalanced. In some cases, metropolitan authorities have participated in the preparation of operational programmes and in monitoring or follow-up committees.

However, **most metropolitan areas report limited involvement in discussions related to the next multiannual financial framework (2028–2034)**. Many indicate that their proposals have not been sufficiently considered, while others report being excluded from preparation processes.

Percentage of funds managed: comparing the metropolis to the region	Percentage of funds managed: comparing the metropolis to the country
25,55%	7,87%
15,31%	4,56%
100,00%	59,80%
22,35%	12,99%
27,06%	3,46%
34,47%	15,36%
10,78%	2,04%
1,58%	0,93%
0,03%	0,02%
0,01%	0,00%
9,22%	3,19%
34,75%	15,76%
0,08%	0,03%
0,00%	N/D
9,28%	16,65%
N/D	N/D
N/D	N/D
0,56%	0,03%
0,12%	0,04%
1,58%	0,32%
N/D	N/D
100,00%	19,57%
12,73%	5,03%
6,49%	2,63%

Classification of Areas by Development of the Region

LDR	TrR	MDR
Least Developed Regions 2 of 23 areas GDP per capita <75% of Eu avg	Transition Regions 7 of 23 areas GDP per capita 75–100 of Eu avg	More Developed Regions 14 of 23 areas GDP per capita >100% of Eu avg

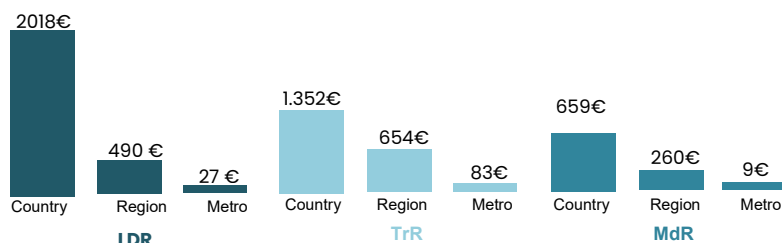
Funds managed by Metropolitan areas compared to regions



Averages

Metropolises classified by region	Metropolitan funds per capita managed by MAs vs region	Metropolitan funds per capita	Max. € per capita	Min. € per capita
LDR	5,59 %	27 €/inhab	41,09 €/inhab	0,59 €/inhab
TrR	12,75%	83 €/inhab	262,14 €/inhab	18,83 €/inhab
MDR	3,37%	8 €/inhab	73,18 €/inhab	0,03 €/inhab

Average per capita State/Region/Metropolitan Area



Conclusions

European metropolitan areas play a central role in achieving Europe's objectives for cohesion, resilience and competitiveness, yet they manage only a very small share of the available financial resources.

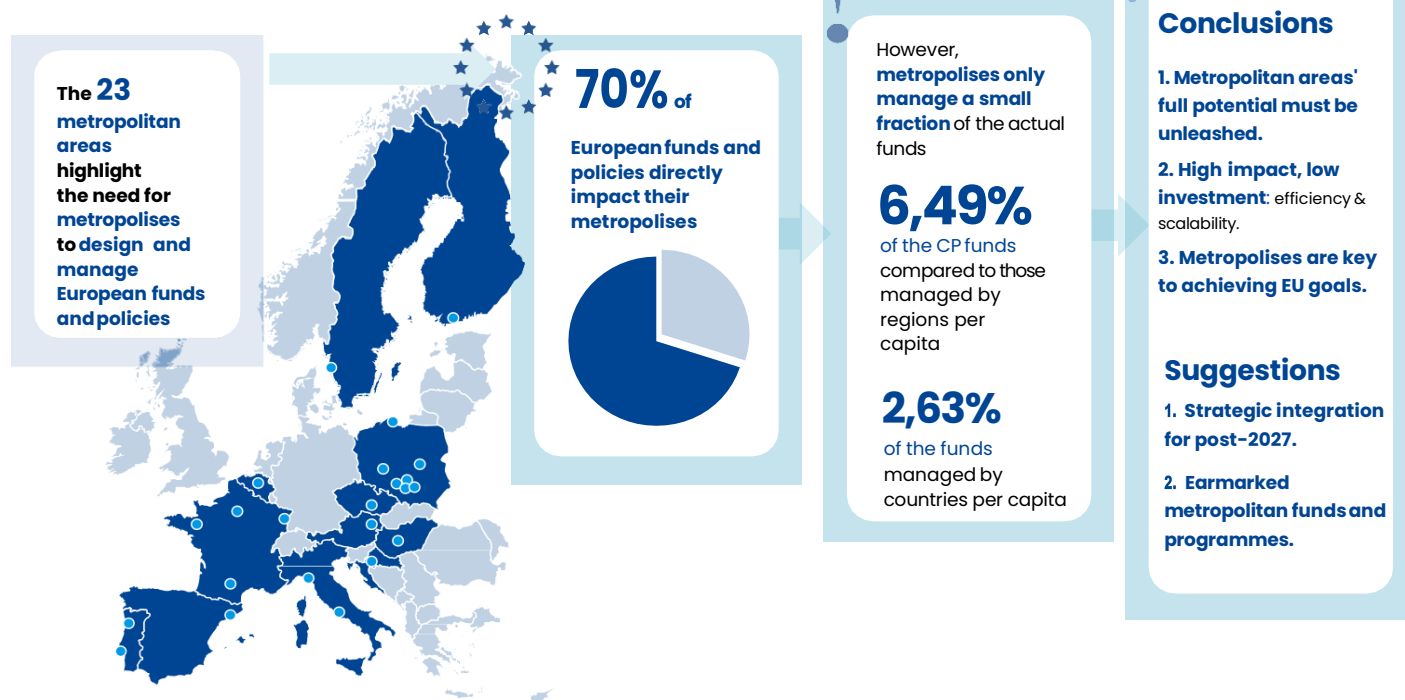
This report demonstrates a clear and consistent pattern across 23 metropolitan areas in 12 Member States: metropolitan authorities transform limited CP allocations into high-impact projects that benefit millions of citizens, while their role remains structurally underfunded and insufficiently recognised within the EU funding architecture.

Metropolitan areas concentrate population, economic activity, innovation capacity and social diversity. They are also where Europe's most complex challenges converge: climate risks, housing pressure, mobility transitions, social inequalities and labour market transformation.

Despite this, the evidence shows that **metropolitan institutions manage on average less than 2,7% of national CP funding, and barely 2,63% of regional allocations**, even though they manage key competences related to CP objectives, and the projects implemented at metropolitan scale consistently generate wide territorial spillovers and systemic benefits.

The selected case studies illustrate this paradox clearly. Whether addressing climate change adaptation in Barcelona, supporting the just transition in Silesia, strengthening social inclusion in Gothenburg, or regenerating natural and cultural assets in Brussels, metropolitan authorities deliver projects that are strategic, integrated and citizen-centred. These initiatives align directly with EU priorities under **the European Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the digital transition**; yet they are implemented with funding levels that reflect neither their ambition nor their reach.

This imbalance is not merely a question of fairness; it is a question of effectiveness. Investing in metropolitan areas is one of the most efficient ways to maximise the impact of CP. Due to population density, governance capacity, and cross-sector coordination, every euro invested at metropolitan level reaches more people, faster, and with clearer outcomes than in many other territorial contexts. This report shows that metropolitan authorities already deliver strong value for money; increased funding would significantly amplify this impact.





Where metropolitan authorities are not systematically involved in programme design and implementation, opportunities to scale impact, accelerate delivery and strengthen territorial cohesion are lost. This underlines the need for a more balanced and place-based approach to EU funding governance, one that fully integrates metropolitan authorities as strategic partners.

As discussions on the future of CP and the post-2027 multiannual financial framework advance, this report sends a clear signal: **metropolitan areas are not asking for preferential treatment; they are demonstrating that, with**

very little, they already deliver a great deal.

Recognising their role more explicitly, strengthening their access to CP instruments, and aligning funding levels with their real contribution would unlock substantial additional impact for the European Union as a whole.

Empowering metropolitan authorities is not an institutional adjustment; it is a strategic investment in Europe's capacity to deliver on its policy ambitions. If cohesion policy is to remain a cornerstone of a competitive, resilient and socially cohesive European Union, metropolitan areas must be placed where they belong: at the heart of its design and implementation.

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