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*Original*

Metropolitan governance in the European Union. A classification of existing institutional models / Casavola, Domato; Cotella, Giancarlo; Janin Rivolin, Umberto; Vitale Brovarone, Elisabetta. - ELETTRONICO. - 36:(2024). (Intervento presentato al convegno GAME CHANGER? Planning for just and sustainable urban regions tenutosi a Paris (FR) nel 8-12 July, 2024).

*Availability:*

This version is available at: 11583/2990398 since: 2024-07-05T12:37:50Z

*Publisher:*

AESOP

*Published*

DOI:

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## Metropolitan governance in the European Union: a classification of existing institutional models

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### Keywords:

Metropolisation, Functional Urban Areas,

### Abstract

In the last 40 years, new territorial configurations have emerged as a consequence of the consolidation of urban centres and their suburbs. The relevance of these metropolitan phenomena and their governance is subject to debate (Zieman, 2019). This article presents methodologies to define and compare metropolitan areas, conceptualising them as characteristic of less-populated municipalities whose cores (Dijkstra et al., 2019). On the one hand, both the scope of and the reason for metropolitan governance by authorities across Europe have produced strategic visions and plans that tackle mobility, urban planning, employment,

Metropolitan governance, Institutional models, Spatial planning, European Union

## Published

2024-07-01

## Issue

Vol. 36 (2024): GAME CHANGER?  
Planning for just and sustainable  
urban regions - book of abstracts

## Section

TRACK 04: BORDERS

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way to guide the integration of different public and private actors at different scales (ESPON, 2017). Whereas these metropolitan municipal cooperation, which varies according to the stake, in a number of European countries, institutional structures aimed at metropolitan governance have been set up.

Various models of metropolitan governance have emerged greatly in relation to their level of institutional competencies and resources, their geographical context (Salet et al. 2015; ESPON, 2021). These models are often unique, and different arrangements have been developed for regional governance and planning across the continent and their (path-dependent) evolution.

Aiming at shedding light on the materiality of metropolitan governance, the paper presents the results of the ESPON METRO and the METRO-PLAN project. First, the paper surveys the various institutional arrangements in European Union (EU) countries to develop a classification pivoted around two main criteria: (i) the degree of institutionalisation and (ii) the degree of correspondence between institutional action and the actual functional development and planning competencies. The analysis of the types of instruments they adopt to pursue their objectives constitute a preliminary comparison across the EU, as well as to reflect on the place of metropolitan governance in the different contexts.

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