

Exploring European urban policy: Towards an EU-national urban agenda?

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Abstract

In recent years, the European Union has reactivated the “urban agenda process”. The mainstreaming of the “urban dimension” into the EU policies (2009), the explicit integration of the “urban policy” in the new Cohesion policy (2012) and the public consultation on the EU urban agenda (2014) are some examples which offer a new interesting framework for European urban research. Thus, this article addresses, on the one hand, the evolution of the “European urban agenda process”, based on the consolidation of the “integrated and sustainable urban development” (ISUD) approach. On the other, it analyzes the issue of the “urban Europeanization” in the frame of the new Cohesion policy 2014-2020. The cases of Italy and Spain will be addressed in order to explore this trend.

Keywords

EU urban agenda, urban policy, urban Europeanization, cohesion policy, Integrated Sustainable Urban Development approach (ISUD approach).

Explorando la Política urbana europea: ¿Hacia una agenda urbana nacional-europea?</titulo>

Resumen

En los últimos años, la Unión europea ha reactivado el proceso de la “agenda urbana”. El “mainstreaming” de la dimensión urbana en las políticas comunitarias (2009), la integración explícita de la “Política urbana” en la nueva Política de cohesión (2012) y la celebración de una consulta pública sobre la agenda urbana europea (2014) son algunos ejemplos que ofrecen un nuevo e interesante marco para los estudios urbanos europeos. Por tanto, este artículo aborda, por un lado, la evolución del proceso de la agenda urbana europea, que se basa en la consolidación del enfoque de “desarrollo urbano sostenible integrado” (DUSI). Por otro lado, analiza la cuestión de la europeización urbana en el marco de la nueva Política de cohesión 2014-2020. Los casos de Italia y España serán abordados con el objetivo de explorar esta tendencia.

Palabras clave

Agenda urbana europea, política urbana, europeización urbana, Política de cohesión, enfoque de desarrollo urbano sostenible integrado (DUSI).

INTRODUCTION

Cities are strategic territories in the global context in terms of wealth and innovation generation, but also as places where social exclusion and environmental pressure are more concentrated and intensive¹. This statement has become a sort of “mantra” and a compulsory reference in every introduction of each current document dealing with urban matters. However, the really interesting point is that this statement has led to the idea that an “urban agenda” is needed, both at national and international level. According to this, the issue of the “urban agenda” has achieved more and more relevance in the political debate. Indeed, it has been formally addressed by UN-HABITAT², the European Union³ (onwards, EC) and several member states⁴ in the last years. This phenomenon is closely linked to globalization but especially to the European integration process (Le Galès, 2006), which made it clear quite early that cities were at stake and that they had to be involved in the EU policy-making.

A political agenda is defined as the set of issues that are the subject of decision making and debate within a given political system. This presupposes the recognition of a policy problem that requires a public action (Jann and Wegrich, 2006). The ‘urban problem’ was recognized in the 1990s: “In the 1990s the idea that cities mattered to the EU because of their concentration of problems as well as their economic opportunities slowly emerged on the agenda” (Parkinson, 2005: 13) and the need a “European urban agenda” was formally posed by the European commission (onwards, EC) communication: “Towards an urban agenda in the European Union” (1997). The urban agenda’s main goal was to coordinate member states efforts in order to better face the global challenges and promote an integrated and sustainable urban development in Europe. The political intensity of this process was rather low, however, since 2007 the issue has received an increasing attention. In particular, the Leipzig Charter (2007) expressed the consensus of member states (onwards, MS) regarding the principles of a “European urban development model” (Bloomfield, 2011) based on the idea of an “integrated sustainable urban development” (onwards, ISUD) approach.

This consensus led to the mainstreaming of the urban dimension in the EU policies during the programming period 2007-2013 and, afterwards, to the introduction of a “ISUD conditionality” in the Structural Funds 2014-2020 regulation framework in order to access to the funding, especially the European Regional Development Fund (art. 7, ERDF Regulation). The so-called ISUD approach is defined as follows: “The various dimensions of urban life – environmental, economic, social and cultural – are interwoven and success in urban development can only be achieved through an integrated approach. Measures concerning physical urban renewal must be combined with measures promoting education, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. In addition, the development of strong partnerships between local citizens, civil society, the local economy and the various levels of government is a pre-requisite”⁶. It should be noticed that since the aim of the EU urban agenda is to provide the appropriate conditions for urban development (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2015: 4), the ISUD, i.e. a holistic, strategic and participatory approach, becomes the core feature of this process.

In Europe, actually few MS have a national urban policy based on the abovementioned approach (Van den Berg et al., 2004). Instead, what most countries have are “urban policies” focused on different fields of action as urban planning, mobility, environment, energy, economic development or welfare services and generally implemented by institutional actors which often do not collaborate smoothly to each other. Recently, however, several MS have launched (or have acquired the formal compromise of setting up) a national urban agenda according to the European urban development model. Therefore, these changes lead to pose the issue of the “urban Europeanization” (Marshall, 2004; Kern 2007; Becker, 2010; Hamedinger and Wolffhardt, 2010; Dossi, 2011; Carpenter 2013; González, 2013). In particular, Europeanization refers to those “processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli, 2003: 30).

1 It is estimated that around 70 % of the EU population – approximately 350 million people – live in cities, 67% of Europe’s GDP is generated in metropolitan regions. Moreover, about two thirds of final energy demand is linked to urban consumptions and up to 70 % of CO₂ emissions are generated in cities (EC, 2011).

2 UN-Habitat released an initial vision document on the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III in 2013. See more at: <http://citiscopes.org/habitatIII/explainer/2015/06/what-new-urban-agenda#sthash.zAr85aNO.dpuf> [10.10.2015].

3 Riga Declaration, 10th June 2015.

4 *Rapporto sulle città. Metropoli attraverso la crisi* (Urban@it, 2015) See more at: http://www.urbanit.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/150930-Urbanit_Rapporto_2015_Sintesi.pdf.

5 The existence of a “European urban development model” was evidenced in the document “Cities of Tomorrow: Challenges, visions, ways forward” (2011), available in: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/citiesoftomorrow/citiesoftomorrow_final.pdf [10.10.2015].

6 Factsheet on Integrated Urban Sustainable Development, available in: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/themes2012/urban_en.pdf [10.10.2015].

From these considerations, this article proceeds as follows. In the first section will be described the characteristics of the EU urban agenda process. The second section will be focused on the evolution of the EU urban policy process while in the third section will be introduced the urban Europeanization issue in the frame of the Cohesion policy 2014-2020. The cases of Italy and Spain will be explored in order to see to what extent they are adapting their domestic systems to the EU urban agenda process and, finally, last section draws together the main conclusions and considers their implications for the future study of urban Europeanization. The research is based on EU and national document review and discourse analysis.

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EU URBAN AGENDA PROCESS

The idea of building an EU urban agenda was clearly formulated in the early nineties in the EC communication: *“Towards an urban agenda in the European Union”* (1997). However, almost twenty years later, the issue of the EU urban agenda is still being debated. In fact, The Netherlands (presidency of the Council of the EU in the first semester of 2016) has just published the following document which is entitled *“Towards an EU Urban Agenda. Working together on the future of European cities”* (2015). In order to understand this situation, in the following paragraphs will be described the main characteristics of the EU urban policy process (onwards, EUP).

a) *Implicit and contested*

The EUP making has been characterized by an “implicit” nature (Parkinson, 2005; Atkinson and Rossignolo, 2009) due to the fact that the EU had no formal competence in the field of urban development and spatial planning. Actually, the EC proposed in 1991 to modify the Treaty in order to make EU have a specific competence, but MS rejected the proposal (Parkinson, 2005: 13). Thus, the EUP has been built in the frame of an intergovernmental dialogue within periodically informal meetings of ministers responsible for urban development⁷ since 1999, i.e. Postdam, 1999; Lille, 2000; Amsterdam, 2004; Bristol, 2005; Leipzig, 2007; Toledo, 2010; Gödöllő, 2011; Athens, 2014; Riga, 2015 and Amsterdam, 2016.

Besides, there has been certain tension within the EC with regard to the “ownership” of the policy process: *“the ‘conflict’ between DG XI and DG Regio [DG XVI until 1999] in the early 1990s for monitoring of the ‘urban policy’ from DG Regio which Emerged victorious”* (Atkinson, 2001: 394). This situation caused the overlap between the fields of sustainable development and territorial development: *“That it does Appear Both the Urban Agenda and the Developing Their Own ESPD are distinct ‘policy communities’ and [...] there is a degree of overlap between the two”* (Atkinson, 2001: 391).

It should be noticed, however, that in 2012 some changes were entered towards visibility of the “urban development” issue and the integration between the territorial and urban development policy communities in the frame of the Cohesion policy. First of all, the former DG Regio became the “Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy”, turning the EUP somehow ‘explicit’. The mechanism could have been the integration of urban development in the ‘territorial cohesion’ objective, as recommended in the Toledo Declaration (2010). Moreover, in the Lisbon Treaty ‘territorial cohesion’ became a shared competence⁸ between the EU and MS (art. 5 C). Secondly, since 2012 the *Urban Development Group* (UDG, 1999) and the *Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points* (NTCCP, 2007) share the same working-website⁹. Each of them provides technical support in order to prepare the informal meetings of ministers responsible for urban development and spatial development.

b) *Informal and participatory*

The abovementioned situation motivated that the EUP building process leaned on an informal approach. This informality is visible not only in the promotion of an intergovernmental dialogue in the frame of Informal Meetings of ministers, but also in the promotion of a widespread participation of several urban actors and stakeholders. In particular, the key actors of this process have been the EC, the Urban Development Group¹⁰ (UDG); the URBAN Intergroup¹¹ at the European parliament, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Economic

⁷ To be noticed that over time the participation has been modified involving ministers responsible for sustainable development, spatial development, territorial cohesion and urban matters (see Table 1).

⁸ This formula implies that, although both the EU and MS are competent to legislate and adopt legally binding acts, the MS will exercise their jurisdiction only if the EU does not do it.

⁹ More information available in: <http://ntccp-udg.eu/>.

¹⁰ The TCUM (Sub-Committee on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters) was a Sub-Committee of the Coordination Committee of the Funds (COCOF), created in 2007 on the basis of the Council Regulation laying down general provisions on Structural Funds. It belongs to the European Commission “comitology”. The TCUM was composed of one or two delegates (depending on the institutional arrangements in Member States) representing the territorial cohesion and urban matters. It should be recalled that the SUD organized separated meetings for spatial and urban development and that these sub-Groups were merged at the birth of TCUM. The TCUM is considered as a forum for technical discussions on territorial cohesion and urban matters (Salez, 2011).

¹¹ <http://urban-intergroup.eu/>.

and Social Committee (EESC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and a constellation of interest groups, networks and organizations (e.g., Eurocities, ICLEI, CEMR, etc.) as well as technical networks (URBACT, EUKN, ESPON, etc.) that have promoted the “urban knowledge” and exchange of a “common urban practice”. In this sense, “the Commission created a semi-structured context in which networks where different interests and brought together to negotiate over issues important to them within a common framework and create forms of interdependence” (Atkinson, 2001: 397).

Furthermore, the exchange programmes as URBACT helped to strengthen relationships between cities and between cities and EU institutions, giving them an informal path to overcome regional or national dependence and achieve resources (funding, knowledge, relationships, technical support, etc.)

c) Methodological and generative

Urban-oriented initiatives and programmes have contributed to promote a sort of “policy style” based on networking, cross-dissemination (URBACT¹²), multi-actor participation (local development partnerships) and the use of management tools in order to produce comparable and evaluable urban data (Urban Audit¹³, EUKN¹⁴ or ESPON¹⁵). However, the most significant mechanism of influence has been the conditionality introduced by the Structural Funds, specially the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Community Initiative URBAN and currently the article 7 of ERDF¹⁶. As result of URBAN projects emerged a so called ‘urban acquis’, namely the set of methodological guidelines and practices accumulated over time in the frame of these programs (Atkinson and Rossignolo, 2009): “step by step the European Commission is working in the direction of creating a ‘consensus’ that may one day become an explicit EU urban policy. [...] the term *acquis urbain* is increasingly being used to suggest the building up a common European methodology of intervention, a body of knowledge and examples of action that can be seen in broadly similar terms to the *acquis communautaire*” (Atkinson et al., 2009: 2). The EUP has been articulated *de facto* both through this *acquis urbain* (urban method) and the ISUD approach is the result of this.

The centrality of the ‘urban method’ was particularly evident in the Leipzig Charter (2007). The working paper on urban development prepared by the trio of presidencies Spain-Belgium-Hungary (January 2010-June 2011) stated that “new instruments for integrated and sustainable urban policies need to be developed [...] the creation of a common methodology in order to strive an integrated and sustainable urban policy should be addressed on at all levels of governance [...] an integrated approach has become a leitmotiv of urban development policies in most European countries [...] This multi-level approach of integrated urban development policy is closely linked to sustainable development goals” (2010: 3-5). This demand led to the creation of a European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC¹⁷) that became fully operational in 2013. However, the most important EUP generative instrument in the current programming period 2014-2020 is the URBACT program, which was initially conceived as a learning networking experience oriented to the production and exchange of usable knowledge. In the current programming period, URBACT III is in charge of promoting the “ISUD approach” and it is the only interregional project that has increased its budget by 40% for 2014-2020 (total of 74 million euros).

2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN URBAN POLICY

The Treaty of Rome (1958), addressing the objective of “harmonious development”, was the first moment in which the urban dimension entered the debate. Cities in fact seemed to represent the reason for unbalances and socio-economic differentiation at national level and between MS and hence de-concentration and economic support to underdeveloped areas were the solution envisaged. But what become evident quite early was that cities were experiencing signs of decline due to the deindustrialization and globalization processes. Monetary union in 1969, made it almost clear to what extent the urban question was turning into a social question: cities in this respect started to be seen as central nodes to address the emerging social question on the one hand, able to develop new integrated actions (where economics, social and spatial dimension could be tightly linked). On the other, the emergence of territorial unbalances made MS aware of the necessity of a new attention to the

12 <http://urbact.eu/>.

13 <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/cities>.

14 <http://www.eukn.org/>.

15 <http://www.espon.eu/main/>.

16 Guidance for Member States on Integrated Sustainable Urban Development (2015), available in: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_sustainable_urban_development_en.pdf [10.10.2015].

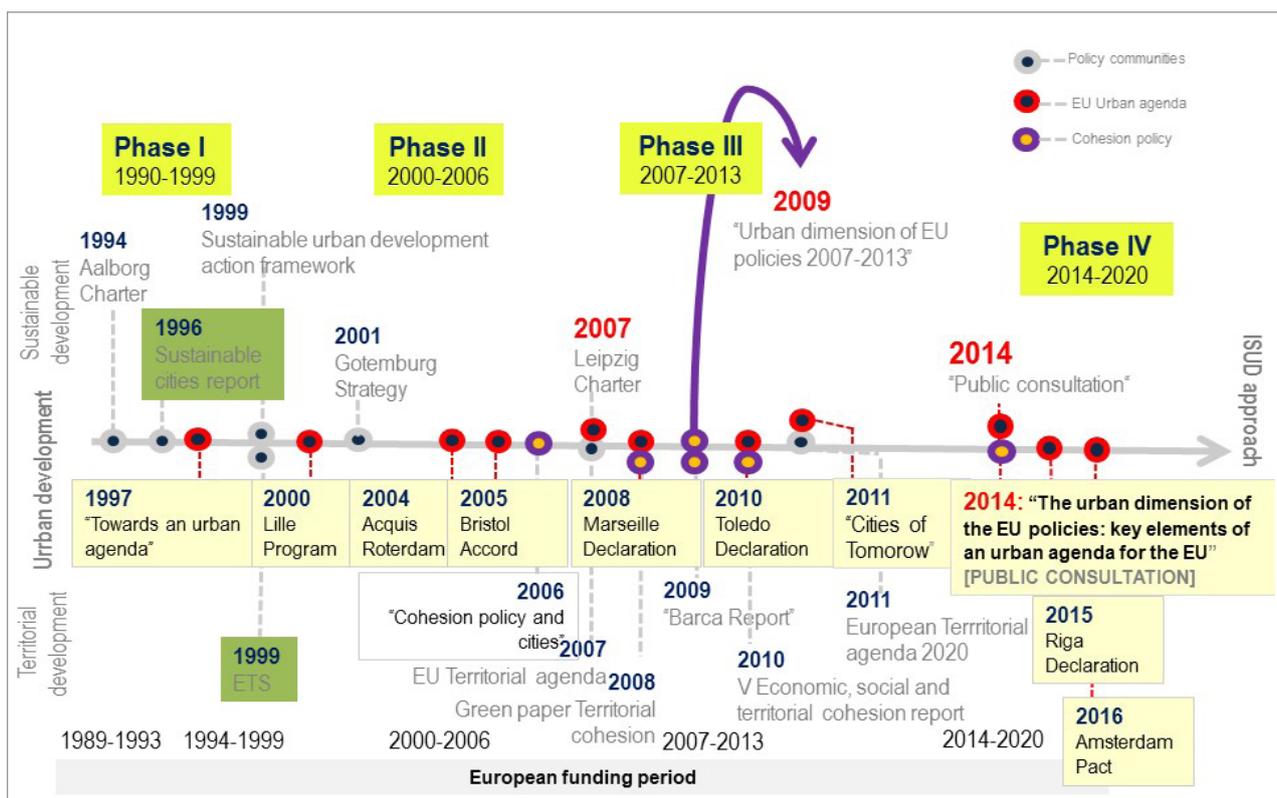
17 “The Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (RFSC) Conference ‘Towards the European Model of a Sustainable City’ concluded that the RFSC tool is a key element of the emerging EU Urban Agenda, allowing cities to find a common language to discuss the challenges they are facing and share the solutions”. However, in the current programming period paradoxically this tool has not been promoted by the EC. Source: <http://www.rfsc-community.eu/news/view/article/2013/10/15/rfsc-tool-vital-to-eu-urban-agenda-affirms-conference/> [24.02.2015].

spatial dimension, at a supranational scale. Later, in the early seventies, a new dimension will be introduced when considering cities as central nodes also in terms of contribution to an emerging environmental crisis (MIT Club di Roma¹⁸)

In the same years cities and local authorities started to acquire or ask for a stronger role, as a consequence as well as a premise of the hollowing out of the state. Cities were experiencing new autonomy in this perspective, but also their limited capacity to contrast transcalar processes produced relevant local effects. It is not a case that mayors of most important European cities had been very active during the seventies in order to gain the attention of European institution, then to gain a role in the European agenda and policies. The role of association of cities in this sense has been particularly relevant (see *Eurocities* manifests in 1989, stating that “Europe lives and expresses itself through its cities”, and that it is necessary “to grant cities a greater degree of responsibility in the task of European construction”). Only in 1989, after the reform of Structural Funds and the revision of the Treaty of Rome (focusing on social and economic cohesion), the first initiatives were launched by the EU namely the Urban Pilot Projects (1989-1994). This first experimentation was then followed by the URBAN I Program (1994-1999).

The early nineties were strongly influenced by the ideas and concerns approached during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development-Rio Summit (1992). In Europe, the Aalborg Charter (1994) embodied the “Rio spirit” and thereby the “urban issue” was formulated in terms of “sustainable development¹⁹”, which was recognized by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) as an objective of the EU. In 1996, the *Report on European Sustainable Cities*²⁰ -promoted by the DG XI Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection and the Urban Environment Expert Group- referred the absence of an explicit EU urban policy and hence the idea of developing a European urban agenda emerged in the early nineties. From this point, the development of the EU urban agenda process can be described as follows:

FIGURE 1. MILESTONES OF THE EUP



Source: own elaboration.

18 MIT Club di Roma (1972): report *The Limits to Growth*.

19 The *Green Paper on the Urban Environment* (1990) and the *Report on European Sustainable Cities* (1996) promoted an integrated approach to urban problems encompassing social, economic and environmental factors. Besides, the Sustainable Cities Project (1993-1996) aimed at encouraging and assisting cities and towns to establish and implement local agenda 21 or similar sustainability plans through policy reports, exchange of experience, networking and dissemination of good practices cases (EC, 1997).

20 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/pdf/rport-en.pdf> [24.02.2015].

Phase I: Demanding an EU urban agenda (1990-1999)

The adoption of the communication “Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union²¹” (1997) marked the objectives to be achieved by a European urban agenda, namely promoting 1) competitiveness and employment; 2) economic and social cohesion; 3) transport and trans-European Networks; and 4) sustainable development and the quality of life in cities.

One year later, these objectives were more specified in the document “Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: a Framework for Action²²” (1998). This framework aimed at better coordinated and targeted community action for urban problems. It was organized under four interdependent policy aims: 1) Strengthening economic prosperity and employment in towns and cities; 2) Promoting equality, social inclusion and regeneration in urban areas; 3) Protecting and improving the urban environment: towards local and global sustainability; and 4) Contributing to good urban governance and local empowerment.

Phase II: Developing the EU ‘Urban Acquis’ (2000-2006)

The absence of formal EU competence in the field of urban and regional development gave the process a strong participatory and intergovernmental character. In 1999, the EC started to promote informal meetings between ministers responsible for urban issues and spatial planning. As a result of these meetings a number of principles and agreements concerning the EUP were tackled.

TABLE 1. INFORMAL MEETINGS CONCERNING THE URBAN ISSUES

Year	Place	Ministers responsible for	Documents
1999	Postdam (DE)	Spatial Planning	European Spatial Development Perspective
2000	Lille (FR)	Urban affairs	Lille Action Programme
2004	Rotterdam (NL)	Urban affairs	Acquis Urban
2005	Bristol (UK)	Sustainable Communities	Bristol Accord
2007	Leipzig (DE)	Urban policy	Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities
2007	Leipzig (DE)	Urban development and Territorial cohesion	Territorial Agenda of the European Union
2008	Marseille (FR)	Urban development	Marseille Declaration
2010	Toledo (ES)	Urban development	Toledo Declaration
2011	Gödöllő (HU)	Spatial planning and Territorial Development	Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020
2014	Athens (GR)	Cohesion Policy	Towards an EU urban agenda – future steps
2015	Riga (LV)	Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters	Riga Declaration
2016	Amsterdam (NL)		Amsterdam Pact ²³

Source: own elaboration.

21 See more: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/pdf/urban/urban_197_en.pdf [24.02.2015].

22 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/pdf/framework_en.pdf [24.02.2015].

23 See more: <http://agendastad.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ROM-special-EAS-ENG.pdf> [30.10.2015].

During the first of these meetings held in Potsdam (Germany), the ministers responsible for spatial planning adopted the so called “*European Spatial Development Perspective*” (ESDP) towards a balanced and sustainable territorial development of the EU (1999). This strategy established three basic goals: a) economic and social cohesion; b) sustainable development; c) balanced competitiveness of the European territory. In addition, they proposed the establishment of a method “*for analysing the effects and coordinating the actions of particular policies on urban areas as well as providing a common framework for organizing a debate on urban issues at the European level*” (Atkinson, 2001: 390). As observed, there was an overlap between the fields of sustainable development and territorial development since both policy communities were dealing with the same topics and goals. This problem would be approached in the next phases making them converge into the frame of the Cohesion policy.

At this stage of the process, the EU political context was defined by the *Lisbon Strategy* (2000). The European Council set out this ten-year strategy to make the Union “*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*”. This goal was complemented by an environment and sustainable development dimension according to the *Gothenburg Strategy* (2001). Both strategies helped to strengthen the discourse concerning the centrality of cities to achieve economic growth, social cohesion and sustainable development. In 2005 and 2006, respectively, both were reviewed on the base of the ideas of ‘territorialisation’ of EU policies (area-based policies) and the empowerment of cities (Gutiérrez, 2009: 8).

Phase III: The “mainstreaming” of the urban dimension (2007-2013)

The EUP experienced a clear new impulse in 2007 in the frame of the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion held in Leipzig (Germany). As result of this meeting, the *Leipzig Charter* and the *Territorial Agenda of the EU* were approved. This evidences the growing link between the urban dimension and the territorial approach of European policies in the framework of Cohesion Policy.

The Treaty of Lisbon (TFEU, 2009) and the adoption of the *Europe 2020 Strategy*²⁴ (2010) highlighted the role of cities in the future development of EU and intensified the need of coordination between both fields. Moreover, the “territorial cohesion” became one of the EU objectives -even if its meaning was not exactly defined (Gløersen and Böhme, 2011)-, as well as a shared competence between the MS and the EU (Art. 5 C, TFUE). This new legal status helped the EC to overcome its historic limit concerning the formal competence in the field of urban development, enhancing its possibility to intervene in the urban development issue. At the same time, urban and territorial development technical arena started to be linked to territorial cohesion (Salez, 2011). This interpretation was supported by the *Toledo Declaration* when stating that the “*urban development should be an integral part of the concept and wider context of territorial cohesion*” (2010: VIII).

During this phase took place the *mainstreaming of urban dimension* into the EU policies. From the perspective of EU Structural Funds this meant that urban actions would be no longer considered as Community Initiatives²⁵ but fully integrated into national and regional Operational Programmes (National Strategic Reference Framework). The mainstreaming²⁶ became clear through three instruments, namely: a) the integrated sustainable urban development approach, b) the empowerment of local governance, and c) the benchmarking and urban networking. Despite the suspicion aroused by the disappearance of the URBAN initiative (Gutiérrez, 2010), it really implied the generalization of the ‘urban method’ to all European cities. In addition, most of these changes must be contextualized in relation to the reflection process “*Cities of Tomorrow*”, launched in 2009 by the Commissioner for Regional Policy -Johannes Hahn-. This process resulted in an expert report published in 2011 that confirmed the existence of a “*European model of urban development*”.

Phase IV: The “formalization” of the EU-national urban agenda (2014-2020)

The current phase is characterized by several changes towards the formalization of the urban agenda, both at EU and MS level. First of all, the 1st CITIES forum (2014) revealed a clear demand for an EU urban agenda from

24 See: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm.

25 As knows, Community Initiatives are specific financial instruments co-financed by the EU Structural Funds aiming at finding common solutions to specific problems which affect the whole of the EU. They are characterized by a) addressing issues of community relevance affecting the majority of Member States aiming to promote transnational, cross-border and interregional co-operation; b) playing an experimental role as they focus on areas where new solutions are needed, and c) involving exchanges of experience, transfers of know-how, co-operation and the creation of networks.

26 In Spain, the integrated and sustainable urban development approach was mainstreamed in a specific axis “Urban and Local Development” and implemented throughout the “URBANA Program 2007-2013”. More information available in: http://www.seap.minhap.gob.es/ministerio/delegaciones_gobierno/delegaciones/canarias/actualidad/notas_de_prensa/notas/2008/06/2008_06_112.html [14.05.2014].

stakeholders across the EU. To better understand how this agenda could be set up and work, the EC launched a public consultation from 18 July to 26 September 2014²⁷ with the following objective: “A growing number of voices argue that cities need to be adequately involved in the conception and implementation of EU policies, and that EU policies need to be better adapted to the urban realities where they will be implemented. This is expressed by calls for an EU urban agenda coming from a range of stakeholders at the EU, national and local level. The purpose of this consultation is to widen debate to all stakeholders and to reach relevant stakeholders and to gather their ideas and further clarifying the need for an EU urban agenda, what its objectives should be and how it could function.” The results of the consultation were presented during the 2nd CITIES Forum²⁸ on June 2015 and summarized in the Commission staff working document: “Results of the public consultation on the key features of an EU urban agenda²⁹” (2015)

Secondly, during this period the ISUD approach shifts from being an ‘option’ to be a ‘mandatory requisite’ in order to access to the ERDF funding (art. 7, ERDF Regulation): “At least 5 % of the ERDF resources allocated at national level under the Investment for growth and jobs goal shall be allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development where cities, sub-regional or local bodies responsible for implementing sustainable urban strategies (“urban authorities”) shall be responsible for tasks relating, at least, to the selection of operations [...]” In order to support this approach, URBACT III, which promotes and assists cities in applying the ISUD, increases its budget during the 2014-2020 period.

Thirdly, some MS has declared explicitly their compromise of initiating a national urban agenda according to the principles of the ISUD model in the frame of the new Cohesion policy. As we will see, Spain and Italy are clear examples.

3. DRIVERS TOWARDS URBAN EUROPEANIZATION

The urban Europeanization process is linked to the ISUD approach, which is strongly fostered by the new Cohesion policy 2014-2020³⁰ through the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020³¹ (onwards, ESI Funds). ESI Funds promote a series of guidelines, tools and conditionalities contained in the new regulatory framework, namely: a) the strengthening of the strategic and integrated programming process for actions in urban areas; b) the enhancing of the integrated approach to urban development through financial instruments; c) the design of new instruments to deliver sustainable urban development and integrated territorial development; and d) the support of local empowerment and networking. All they generate the “adaption or shaping of domestic urban policy”.

a) Strategic and integrated programming process for actions in urban areas:

The main challenges in urban areas are set out in the ‘Common Strategic Framework³²’ (CSF). This provides the strategic direction for the current financial planning period. The CSF is the basis for drafting MS ‘Partnership Agreements³³’ (onwards, PA): “Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes should set out the arrangements to ensure an integrated approach to the use of ESI funds for the sustainable development of urban areas within the wider context of territorial development” (European Commission, 2014).

Besides, the EU has defined 11 thematic objectives in the Europe 2020 strategy and, for the first time, there are urban-specific investment priorities (art. 5, ERDF), namely: Promoting low-carbon strategies for urban areas (OT4.e); Improving the urban environment including the regeneration of brownfield sites and the reduction of air pollution (OT6.e); Promoting sustainable urban mobility (OT7.c); and Promotion of social inclusion through supporting the physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived urban areas (OT9.b). These priorities can be embedded in the integrated urban development strategy of an urban area (art. 7, ERDF³⁴) and complemented by actions supported by the ESF (art. 3, ESF).

27 See more: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/consultations/urban-agenda/ [15.10.2015].

28 See more: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/conferences/cities-2015/ [15.10.2015].

29 Available in: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/consultation/urb_agenda/pdf/swd_2015.pdf [15.10.2015].

30 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/urban_en.pdf.

31 [Regulatory Framework for European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/urban_en.pdf).

32 [Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part1_en.pdf) [15.05.2014]. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part2_en.pdf (Part 1). http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part2_en.pdf (Part 2).

33 The PA constitutes a contract between the EC and the MS on the implementation of Cohesion Policy that define how the MS fulfils the requirements of the individual EU funds (i.e. ERDF, ESF, CF, EARDF, EMFF) as well as the so-called ex-ante conditionality to ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion.

34 European Regional Development Fund [15.05.2014]. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1301&from=EN>.

b) *Integrated approach to urban development through financial instruments*

MS are encouraged to make extensive use of financial instruments in supporting sustainable urban development (Articles 37-46, CPR). Indeed, a minimum of 5 % of the ERDF resources allocated to each MS shall be invested in the implementation of **integrated sustainable urban development strategies** which are the centerpiece of article 7 (ERDF). They should be comprised of interlinked actions which seek to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, environmental, climate, social and demographic conditions of an urban area. In order to help MS to elaborate these strategies, the EC has prepared a “Guidance for Member States on Integrated” Sustainable Urban Development (2015) that embodies the key principles regarding these strategies (point 2.3.2).

c) *New instruments to deliver sustainable urban development and to promote integrated approaches to territorial development*³⁵

An **Integrated Territorial Investment**³⁶ (ITI) is a new territorial governance tool that provides a frame in which several Funds (ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund) can be combined and used in an integrated manner under more than one priority axis of one or more operational programmes (art. 36, CPR). It can take the form of an integrated urban development strategy or a strategy for inter-municipal cooperation in specific territories. It allows the managing authorities to delegate some or all the management and implementation tasks to intermediary bodies (local authorities, regional development bodies or non-governmental organizations), according to the administrative arrangements of the MS or region. However, if ITI implements integrated actions for sustainable urban development (Article 7 of the ERDF regulation) the delegation to urban authorities, at least to the selection of operation, is obligatory. The decision-making process regarding the investments themselves may be top down, bottom up or a combination of both.

The **Community-led local development**³⁷ (CLLD) is the second instrument which is based on the previous experience of LEADER under rural development (art. 32-35, CPR). It is focused on specific sub-regional territories and based on a strictly bottom-up approach. This means that the *local action groups*, composed of representatives of local public and private socio-economic interests, determine the content of the local development strategy and the operations financed under it. The development strategies must be integrated, multi-sectoral and area-based, taking into account local needs and resources. Moreover, it should include innovative features in the local context, networking and co-operation. The types of territories where this approach should be implemented and the specific role to be attributed to the local action groups in its delivery should be defined too. In addition, they should indicate how the CSF Funds will be used as well as the role envisaged for the different Funds in different types of territories (rural, urban etc.).

d) *Supporting local empowerment and networking:*

On the one hand, the implementation of integrated actions for sustainable urban development requires a degree of delegation to the urban authority level (art. 7, ERDF), at least for the selection of operations. On the other, *Urban innovative actions*³⁸ such as studies and pilot projects to test new solutions to urban challenges in the area of sustainable urban development will be supported (art. 8, ERDF) and directly selected by the EC. Furthermore, will be established an *Urban Development Network* composed (art. 9, ERDF): “*This Network will act as a forum for capacity building and exchange between the cities pioneering new techniques and developing integrated investments*”. Besides, under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective, the cooperation between urban authorities will continue under a financially strengthened URBACT III.

The ESI Funds framework draws an interesting scenario to address the urban Europeanization approach because it reveals “*an intensified political and economic interaction between actors at the territorial level, providing urban and city areas, and so their institutions and actors, with access to, and availability of, information, legitimacy and at times financial support.*” (Dossi, 2011: 3-4). All abovementioned instruments can be considered Europeanization drivers since they are part of “*processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies*” (Radaelli, 2003: 30).

³⁵ In relation to this topic see Peter Ramsden’s tweet (URBACT Thematic Pole Manager): <http://www.blog.urbact.eu/2014/04/new-programmes-for-integrated-territorial-development-iti-and-clld-at-a-glance/> [08.05.2014].

³⁶ ITI Factsheet: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/iti_en.pdf.

³⁷ CLLD Factsheet [08.05.2014]: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf.

³⁸ See more [08.10.2015]: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/activity/urban/urban_innovative_actions.pdf.

According to Kern (2007), three dimensions of Europeanization appear to be most relevant for cities:

- *Top-down*: it refers the top-down implementation of EU decisions in the MS and it concentrates in particular on the dimensions and mechanisms of domestic change.
- *Bottom-up*: it refers to the fact that local authorities have become more active in Brussels. They have started to bypass nation-states and influence EU institutions directly: “Besides using formal channels of representation (e.g., through the Committee of the Regions) they try to attain their goals through the direct lobbying of EU institutions” (Kern, 2007: 4).
- *Horizontal*: the Europeanization can take place even if the EU institutions are not directly involved in the process, although they can act as facilitators (this is the case of best practice transfer). The EU has supported the exchange of experience, learning from peers, and best practice transfer: “strategies ranging from city twinning to the establishment of transnational city networks constitute another dimension of the emerging foreign policy and para-diplomacy of European cities.” (Kern, 2007: 5).

Taking into account these three dynamics, the ESI Funds regulatory architecture seems to favor a top-down dynamic of MS urban policy adaptation, even though the bottom-up and horizontal dimensions are present too (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. DRIVERS TOWARDS URBAN EUROPEANIZATION IN THE COHESION POLICY 2014-2020

Drivers		Europeanization dimensions		
		Implementing (Top-down)	Bypassing (Bottom-up)	Networking (Horizontal)
1	Specific investment priorities for urban areas (Europe 2020)	X		
2	Strategic approach to urban issues in Partnership Agreements 2014-2020	X		
3	Integrated sustainable urban development [art.7, ERDF]	X		
4	Integrated Territorial Investments [art. 36, common regulations]	X		
3	Community-Led Local Development [art. 32, common regulations]	X		
4	Increased responsibility for urban authorities [art.7, ERDF]	X	X	
5	Urban innovative actions [art.8, ERDF]		X	
6	Urban Development Network [art.8, ERDF]			X
7	URBACT ³⁹ III			X

Source: own elaboration.

4. TOWARDS AN EU-NATIONAL URBAN AGENDA? THE CASES OF ITALY AND SPAIN

In the present section will be explored how MS respond to these drivers as well as the degree of domestic policy change observed. In line with definitions given in this article, Europeanization “concerns the process through which European integration penetrates and, in certain circumstances brings about adjustments to, domestic institutions, decision-making procedures and public policies” (Jordan, 2003: 2). Therefore, it is expected that the fact that the EC strongly encourages MS to promote their urban national agendas in the current programming period have an impact in their domestic urban policy. In other words, MS that have launched their national urban agenda in this context are expected to adapt their processes to EU urban agenda features. The hypothesis is the larger the ‘misfit’ between national urban policy and EU urban agenda the greater the likelihood of domestic change (see Table 3).

39 <http://urbact.eu/en/about-urbact/urbact-at-a-glance/urbact-in-words/> [02.02.2015].

TABLE 3. DEGREES OF DOMESTIC POLICY CHANGE

	Extent of policy 'misfit'	Amount of domestic change
Absorption	Small: EU and national policy similar	Small: States are able to incorporate /domesticate EU requirements without substantially modifying national policies
Accommodation	Medium: EU and national differ	Medium: states accommodate /mediate EU requirements by adapting existing policy while leaving its core features intact
Transformation	High: EU and national policy markedly different	High: domestication fails; states forced to replace or markedly different substantially alter existing policy to satisfy EU requirements

Source: Jordan and Liefferink (2003), based on Börzel and Risse (2000).

In the following, the changes performed by Italy and Spain in order to achieve this goal will be briefly described.

a) The case of Italy

During the 'CITIES forum'⁴⁰ held in February 2014, the Minister of Territorial Cohesion at the time, Carlo Trigilia, promised to enhance and support the process of construction of a new European urban agenda. Actually, Italy had already started to work on its own national urban agenda according to the EU recommendations with the former Minister of Territorial Cohesion, Fabrizio Barca. In particular in 2013, the national government instituted the "Comitato interministeriale per le politiche urbane", destined to support the coordinated action of all the ministries in relation to urban policies, in connection with the indications of a strategic document issued under Barca's Ministry (Barca 2012; CIPU, 2013). However, the current government lead by Mr. Renzi has shown an only limited attention to this promise and in general to the relevance of the urban question in the political agenda.

In fact, at the national level, the European Commission adopted the 'Partnership Agreement' with Italy on using EU Structural and Investment Funds for growth and jobs in 2014-2020, last October 2014. As a matter of fact, the urban dimension is not so central in the Partnership Agreement adopted: no special focus on cities is available, but for the operative program dedicated to Metropolitan Cities (PON METRO) and in the different regional operative programs. In fact, at the regional and local level some relevant decisions have been made on the use of Structural Funds⁴¹, where, nonetheless, the centrality of the urban question is not at all generalized and evident.

According to several experts in the field, this act, on the one hand has confirmed the engagement of Italy towards the indications and suggestions of the EC, at the end it has betrayed the original promises. In fact, though Italy has quite early formalized its own engagement in this direction, it has not been able so far to produce its own specific advancement in the field of a national urban agenda. An advancement that was expected by both stakeholders and experts in the field, after the relevant premise contained in the document issued by Fabrizio Barca⁴² in 2012. Furthermore, the document "Metodi e obiettivi per un uso efficace dei fondi comunitari 2014-2020"⁴³ (2012) asked for a national strategy based on cities and for cities. This document was followed by the creation of a specific Inter-ministerial Committee for Urban Policies (CIPU)⁴⁴, with the aim to coordinate central administration and local autonomies in developing urban policies. The CIPU issued a second innovative document "Metodi e contenuti sulle priorità in tema di agenda urbana" (2013), asking for a new 'national policy for cities', based not just on extraordinary ESI Funds, but on ordinary local actions and organized along five axis: a) welfare and education; b) mobility; c) urban renewal; d) culture and innovation; e) local finances and governance. Nevertheless, despite great expectations, nothing so far has really happened and CIPU has remained almost empty of power and role in the new governmental phase.

40 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/urban2014/index_en.cfm [02.02.2015].

41 http://www.dps.gov.it/opencms/export/sites/dps/it/documentazione/AccordoPartenariato/Accordo_di_Parteneriato_Italia_rev27052014.pdf [18.02.2015].

42 Mr. Fabrizio Barca was the Italian Minister of Territorial Cohesion during November 2011 and April 2013. He was also the author of the independent report for the EC "An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy. A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations (2009) and has strongly supported the Italian urban agenda process.

43 http://recs.it/userfiles/file/CIPU/Doc%2014-20%20Master_27%20dic%202012.pdf [18.02.2015].

44 Decreto legge 22 giugno 2012, n. 83. Art. 12 bis comma 4.

Furthermore, although the new government is led by the former mayor of Florence, supported by another former mayor -Graziano del Rio- in charge of administrative reforms related to metropolitan governance, no clear sign of commitment has been shown since the new government was voted in the parliament in March 2014. Despite the number of reforms or interventions promoted, we cannot say that the urban agenda is at the top of the Italian political agenda.

As a matter of fact, some interesting indications are provided by the PON Metro, dedicated to metropolitan areas, adopted last July after a long negotiation with EC. The Document, in fact, mainly focused on metropolitan areas provides some interesting elements towards the urban agenda, nevertheless it presents some limits of both problem framing and solving. In particular the focus on metropolitan areas on the one hand is strategically connected with the need of implementing the recent metropolitan reform as well as EU inputs; on the other hand, it represents only partially the complexity of the urban in Italy and also addressing the metropolitan situations still focusses on main cities, due to the frailty of the new metropolitan imaginary (Pasqui, Laino, Briata, 2016)

Recently two facts highlight a further step towards the making of a urban agenda: at national level. In December 2014⁴⁵ in Bologna the National Centre for Urban Policies Studies -Urban@it- was founded by a network of Italian Universities, with the aim of supporting the idea of the necessity of a new season of urban policies in Italy. The academic sphere, in other words, tries to foster the debate on a national and European urban agenda. At the national level, last February, the competence on this issue has been finally given to the new founded “Agenzia per la coesione territoriale”: this should guarantee a more coordinated and integrated action at national level, reducing the traditional national fragmented approach in the implementation of the new EU regulation, in relation to the urban question.

b) The case of Spain

Spain is one of the MS where the national urban agenda has been rather absent since the “urban issue” has been traditionally more related to the housing and urban regeneration matters. The interventions within this field have been mainly conducted by the Ministry for Housing (currently, Ministry of Public Works), the Ministry for Environment (currently, Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment) and the Ministry of the Finance and Public Administrations (a significant number of urban initiatives have been financed by the Structural Funds). Nonetheless, there is no inter-ministerial structure aimed at addressing the urban agenda in an integrated manner.

However, some important steps were made during the 2007-2013 programming period. The Ministry of Public Works seemed to be the main institutional actor in this process. During this period, was created the *Red de Iniciativas Urbanas*⁴⁶ (Urban Initiatives Network) within the Ministry in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration. Its aim is to coordinate all integrated and sustainable urban development interventions and to set up a Spanish urban agenda: “*La Unión Europea, consciente del potencial de las ciudades y de la importancia de la existencia de estas estrategias urbanas integradas, está trabajando en el desarrollo de una Agenda Urbana Europea, y la Red de Iniciativas Urbanas acometerá, en el próximo periodo de programación, la definición de una Agenda Urbana para España.*” (Agreement Partnership of Spain 2014-2020⁴⁷: 222).

It has to be noticed a growing ‘urban sensibility’ during this period as the adoption of several strategic documents shows (e.g. the *Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Mobility and a system of Indicators of Urban Sustainability and Local* (2009)⁴⁸ and the *Spanish Strategy for Urban and Local Sustainability*⁴⁹ (2011). This document contains some general outlines concerning urban matters and its background lays fundamentally on the European Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (2006) and the Spanish Sustainable Development Strategy (2007). All these documents pursued a critical reflection on the urban situation, by describing a detailed analysis and diagnosis in relation to a number of critical issues, namely territorial and urban planning instruments, accessibility, mobility and transport, management and urban governance, housing; and climate change. However, despite all these steps towards a sort of ‘urban agenda’, it cannot be stated that this issue has achieved visibility in the

45 The founders: University of Bologna, Politecnico di Milano, University IUAV of Venice, University of Florence, Roma Tre University, University of Naples “Federico II”, Polytechnic University of Bari, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), the Italian Society of Urbanists (SIU) and the Urban Laboratory. See more: <http://www.urbanit.it/>.

46 See more: http://www.fomento.gob.es/MFOM/LANG_CASTELLANO_ESPECIALES/RED/RIU/.

47 Acuerdo de Asociación de España 2014-2020, available in: http://www.dgfc.sggp.meh.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/jpr/fcp1420/pa/Documentos/20141022_AA_spain_2014_2020.pdf [24.02.2015].

48 http://www.fomento.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/66AB19BC-85A3-47BD-BA1B-CC3698F052B8/111504/INDI_CIU_G_Y_M_tcm7177731.pdf [18.02.2015].

49 Available in: <http://www.fomento.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/7CDD77A5-66FA-4A13-8316-2EAD7A354950/111503/EESULWEB2011.pdf> [15.02.2012].

Spanish political agenda. In fact, the most relevant political action at the local level in the last years has been the reform of the local Administration (2013)⁵⁰ which has been, by the way, appealed to the Constitutional Court⁵¹ for violating local autonomy.

Nonetheless, the ‘urban issue’ seems to be relevant and visible politically specially when linked to the ESI Funds. In this sense, the final report on *Urban Sustainable Development co-financed by the ERDF in Spain 2014-2020: Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities*⁵² (2013) states that the integrated sustainable urban development interventions are only circumscribed to the Urban Pilot and the Community Initiative URBAN. In fact, the Spanish URBANA⁵³ program (2007-2013) actually replicated the methodological logic inherited from the URBAN projects.

The current 2014-2020 horizon seems to offer new incentives towards the construction of a real national agenda according to the EUP recommendations as well as new opportunities to urban authorities. In this sense, in the Spanish Partnership Agreement⁵⁴ has been explicitly accepted the EC’s invitation to promote an urban agenda based on the strengthening of the integrated sustainable urban development approach (2014: 144). Furthermore, it has been elaborated the document *Orientaciones para la definición de estrategias integradas de desarrollo urbano sostenible en el periodo 2014-2020*⁵⁵, in order to help urban territories to apply the “ISUD approach”. However, since the ESI Funds dynamic is controlled by both the national and regional political level and this could be a clear obstacle. Therefore the ‘urban issue’ is not really a priority in the national political agenda because other territorial levels, namely the regional and the national government, are not interested in losing their control over the local level.

CONCLUSIONS

It is out of discussion that the EUP has achieved a great political visibility in the last years as a consequence of the strengthening of the urban dimension in the frame of the Cohesion policy. After the adoption of the Leipzig Charter and the Territorial Agenda of the EU (2007), the issue of the ‘EU urban agenda’ has become a clear priority of the EC. The Lisbon Treaty (2009) and the strategy Europe 2020 (2010) have also pushed in this direction leading towards a greater ‘explicitness’ of this policy. The change of name of “DG of Regional and Urban Policy” symbolizes this transition.

In the current programming period 2014-2020, the EC encourages MS to adopt a national urban agenda according to the EUP. As knows, the cornerstone of the EUP has been its methodological character (acquis urban) concentered in the so called “ISUD approach”. In fact, all policy papers adopted during more than two decades have stressed the importance of establishing a common understanding of integrated sustainable urban development. The ISUD approach is strongly pursued by ESI Funds 2014-2020 (in particular, the ERDF) and therefore, the main drivers for urban Europeanization should be found in the ESI Funds regulatory framework.

According to this, on the one hand, when analyzing urban Europeanization dimensions (Kern, 2007) arises that the top-down dimension is more dominant (and effective). The EC tries to influence in the MS through the introduction of some formal requirements as condition to receive the funding. Meanwhile, the bottom-up and horizontal dimensions remain much weaker. On the other hand, changes observed in the cases of Spain and Italy evidence that both countries react to the urban agenda issue in a similar way and period of time (see Table 4). Moreover, in both cases this is the first time that the issue of a national urban agenda is formally addressed. In both cases there is indeed an explicit linkage of the national processes to the EU urban agenda process, even if it is also clear that there is no strong political support. It a process deeply influenced by the ESI Funds regulatory framework and therefore, more technical than political.

50 Ley 27/2013, de 27 de diciembre, de racionalización y sostenibilidad de la Administración Local: <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2013/12/30/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-13756.pdf> [18.04.2014].

51 <file:///C:/Users/Usuario/Downloads/Ver.PDF> [18.06.2014].

52 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/spain_2014_2020/spain2014_urban_final_report_es.pdf [22.04.2014].

53 http://www.seap.minhap.gob.es/ministerio/delegaciones_gobierno/delegaciones/canarias/actualidad/notas_de_prensa/notas/2008/06/2008_06_112.html.

54 <http://www.dgfc.spgg.meh.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/ipr/fcp1420/pa/Consulta%20Publica/aasociacion2014-2020.pdf> [18.04.2014].

55 Available in: http://www.fomento.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/B5A6E0BC-AA8C-4C3F-8ABD-7558E8141B79/128640/20141127_OrientEstrategiaInte20142020Final.pdf [15.10.2015].

TABLE 4. MAIN CHANGES RELATED TO URBAN POLICY

	ITALY	SPAIN
Setting-up a national urban agenda	The compromise is declared by the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion (2012)	The compromise declared in the Partnership Agreement of Spain (2014)
Ad hoc institutions	- Comitato Interministeriale per le Politiche Urbane (2012) - Centro nazionale di studi per le politiche urbane (2014) - Agenzia per la coesione territoriale (2015)	- Red de Iniciativas Urbanas (created in 2008 but reactivated in 2014)
Strategic documents	- “Metodi e obiettivi per un uso efficace dei fondi comunitari 2014-2020” (2012) - “Metodi e Contenuti sulle Priorità in tema di Agenda Urbana” (2013)	- “Orientaciones para la definición de estrategias integradas de desarrollo urbano sostenible en el periodo 2014-2020” (2014)

Source: own elaboration.

In conclusion, on the one hand, this article has highlighted the specificity and complexity of the EUP process, on the other, the responses generated by this process in member states. The urban Europeanization approach has showed which dimension seems to be more effective when setting up a national urban agenda (top-down). Moreover, responses from Italy and Spain confirm the hypothesis that the larger the ‘misfit’ between national urban policy and EU urban agenda the greater the likelihood of domestic change (Jordan, 2003). The domestic policy changes in both cases reflect the ‘transformation’ of national urban policy. First of all, because the urban agenda has been formally addressed for the very first time in both cases. Secondly, because the changes are inspired by the “ISUD approach”. Finally, the policy misfit between EU and national urban policy was markedly different (e.g. multisectoral versus sectoral) and thus the amount of domestic change has been high since MS are forced to replace or substantially alter existing policy to satisfy EU requirements.

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