

METRO - “The role and future perspectives of Cohesion Policy in the planning of Metropolitan Areas and Cities”

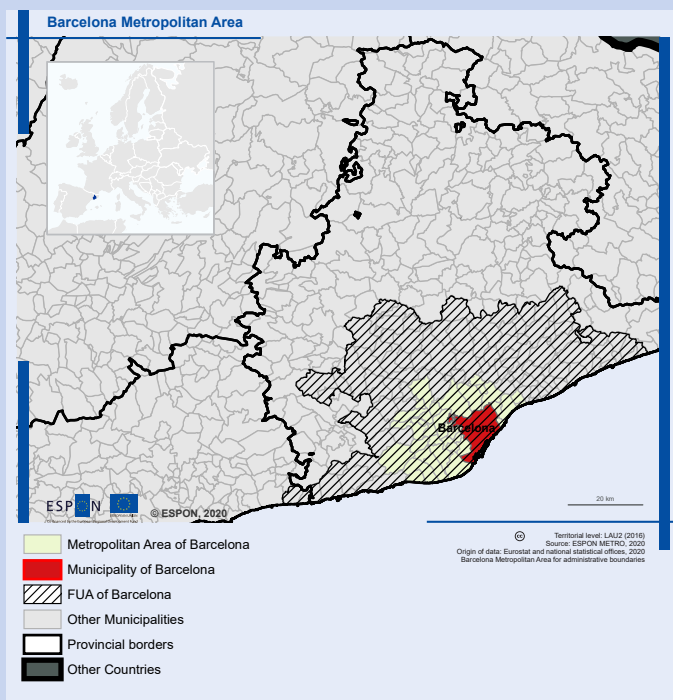
Barcelona Metropolitan Area

Institutional dimension of Metropolitan Governance

The Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) is the unique officially recognised metropolitan institution in Spain. It is composed of 36 municipalities and 3.2 million people, and the territory concentrates 52% of the GDP of Catalonia and 10% of the Spanish GDP. Nevertheless, these 36 municipalities are the core of a wider functional metropolitan region (in economic and social terms). There are diverse definitions of the wider metropolitan region of Barcelona, according to different conceptualizations. For instance, OECD-Eurostat defines the Functional Urban Area of Barcelona as 135 municipalities and 5 million inhabitants, while the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona comprises 164 municipalities and 5.2 million people.

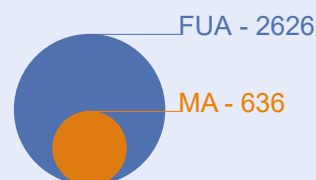
AMB was created by law 31/2010 of the Catalan Parliament, which replaced two existing metropolitan entities (the Environmental Agency and the Transport Metropolitan Agency) and the Union of Municipalities of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona that dated back to the 1980s. After 10 years since its legal establishment, the metropolitan institution has emerged as a supralocal government that acts as a proper metropolitan government for the design and implementation of metropolitan policies. Nowadays, the AMB has responsibilities in urban planning, infrastructures, public space, sustainable mobility, transport, environment, economic policies and international relations and cooperation. Despite the high level of institutionalization and competences, the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona does not have a relevant role in the elaboration of key policy and programming documents of the EU Cohesion Policy.

Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Spain



Territorial data

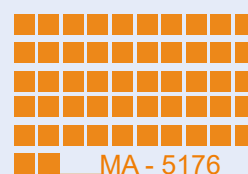
Size (sq.km)



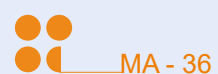
Population (x1000)



Density



Number of Municipalities



The main challenge for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area is to **have a key role in the CP architecture of Spain**. National and regional governments are the main CP stakeholders in the programming, management, and implementation of its policy. The AMB has the capacity to be fully involved in the design and management of the Cohesion Policy and it has reached an agreement with the Catalan Government to receive and manage 30M€ of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the programming period 2014-20 to invest in metropolitan projects in the domains of Smart Cities, Sustainable Mobility, Energy efficiency and natural and cultural heritage. These projects have allowed that small and medium size municipalities with less financial and technical capacities benefit from the Cohesion Policy.



Main Metropolitan Challenges

The challenge now is to **reinforce the role of the AMB in the Cohesion Policy 2021-27** with the re-edition of the agreement or other instruments and reduce the administrative and financial complexity.

In the EU arena, the AMB promotes the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) network, which aims to reinforce the role of metropolitan areas in the Cohesion Policy and other EU policies with a clear urban dimension.

PQ1 How to strengthen the role of metropolitan areas in the development, management and implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy?

Strengthening the role of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area in the design of the CP at European, national and regional levels. The AMB develops policies strongly linked to the EU Green Deal, the Cohesion policies and its priorities but it has a limited role in the programming and managing of the CP. Moreover, the CP funds that receives the Metropolitan Area are very modest in relation to its total budget and investment plans. The Barcelona Metropolitan Area should have representation in committees in which national and regional CP operational programmes are planned according to its competences.



Recommendations

PQ2 How to increase the added value of the EU Cohesion Policy in the planning and implementation of metropolitan policies?

Improving the capacity of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area to develop policies and projects with a metropolitan dimension aligned with the Cohesion Policy objectives. There are key metropolitan responsibilities, also relevant to the Cohesion Policy, that currently do not receive funds from EUCP: enhancing circular economy in waste management and promoting resilience in the water supply, among others.

PQ3 How to valorise the role that the EU Cohesion Policy can play in the consolidation of metropolitan governance and cooperation?

Consolidating the role of Barcelona Metropolitan Area in the development of metropolitan policies beyond the redistribution of resources among metropolitan municipalities. EU Cohesion Policy should also aim to improve the social and economic cohesion in the Barcelona metro area, through a better integration between the core city and other metropolitan municipalities. There is also room to develop a more metropolitan networked governance with metropolitan municipalities in EU funding. In addition, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, in collaboration with other institutions, could have a role in scaling up programmes and projects to the whole metro-region.