A Partnership for the Climate Adaptation: Urban Agenda for the EU

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Abstract. The EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters, meeting held in Amsterdam in 2016, established the Pact of Amsterdam: Urban Agenda for the EU. The Pact of Amsterdam defines Climate Adaptation as one of the priority themes to be addressed by the Urban Agenda. The Climate Adaptation Partnership was set up in 2017 and represents a multilevel and cross-sectoral cooperation instrument for the priority theme Climate Adaptation. The Action Plan developed by Urban Agenda for the EU Climate Adaptation Partnership is the result of a participatory process involving key stakeholders from the EU institutions, national governments, regional and local authorities. Climate Adaptation Partnership members are coming from all EU macro-regions, ensuring broad geographic representation including cities representative of different city size. Among them the Potenza Municipality, played a key role of Action Plan of the Climate Adaptation Partnership. This paper investigates the action promoted by the Potenza Municipality as a preliminary work to prepare the New Urban Agenda (2021–2027) for the development of the town according to a climate responsive perspective.

Keywords: New Urban Agenda · Decision making · Political Academy · Climate Adaptation

1 Introduction

The European Union is one of the most urbanized areas in the world and the development of urban areas will have a major impact on the future sustainable development (economic, environmental, and social) of the European Union (EU) and its citizens. Urban areas play a key role in pursuing the EU 2020 objectives and in solving many of its most pressing challenges. Urban Authorities (i.e. the public authorities such as local, regional, metropolitan and/or national authorities) are often the level of government closest to the citizens and play a crucial role in the daily life of all EU citizens. The success of European sustainable urban development is highly important for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU and the quality of life of its citizens. In 2016, the EU Ministers Responsible for Urban Matters meeting held in Amsterdam, agreed on and

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established the Pact of Amsterdam: Urban Agenda for the EU [1]. The Pact of Amsterdam defines Climate Adaptation as one of the priority themes to be addressed by the Urban Agenda, fully in line with the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Urban Agenda for the EU strives to involve Urban Authorities in achieving three pillars: Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge (knowledge base and exchange).

The Action Plan prepared by Urban Agenda for the EU Climate Adaptation Partnership provides concrete proposals for the design of future and the revision of existing EU legislation, instruments and initiatives relating to the adaptation to climate change in urban areas in the EU. The development of the Action Plan was happened through a participatory process involving key stakeholders from the EU institutions, national governments, regional and local authorities that are represented in the Climate Adaptation Partnership and beyond.

In Sect. 2 the aims and the structure of the of the Climate Adaptation Partnership are commented and Action Plan, in Sect. 3 is given a specific focus one of the activities of the Action Plan engaged with the Potenza Municipality (member of the EU Climate Adaptation Partnership) while Sect. 4 is related to the discussion on main remarks and conclusions.

2 The Climate Adaptation Partnership and the Action Plan

The main focus of the Climate Adaptation Partnership according to the priority themes of Urban Agenda for the EU is *"to anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take appropriate action to prevent or minimize the damage it can cause to Urban Areas. The focus will be on: vulnerability assessments, climate resilience and risk management (including the social dimension of climate adaptation strategies)."*

The Climate Adaptation Partnership members (altogether 22, see Table 1) originate from all EU macro-regions, ensuring broad geographic representation, are coordinated by the City of Genoa. The Climate Adaptation Partnership Members represent all governance levels – from the European to the local level - and key decision-makers and stakeholders engaged in urban adaptation to climate change in the EU.

Working groups (WGs) are made up by all members and are established in order to address 3 key areas of actions: Governance, Resources and Knowledge. The explanation of WG is the following:

- WG Governance is dealing with the political cycle, mandate, integrated strategic planning, decision-making, staff experience and similar topics;
- WG Resources is dealing with funding, human resources, cost-benefit analysis, climate adaptation monetizing topics and similar;
- WG Knowledge is dealing with data, expertise, methodologies, tools, risk assessments, monitoring indicator systems, capacity building, hazard/exposure, vulnerability analysis and other similar topics.

Each WG includes a mix of members representing the different governance and decision-making levels as well as diverse geographical locations and expertise. Every working group has a partner nominated as leader (see Table 2).

Table 1. Climate adaptation partnership members

Member states	Local/regional authorities	European commission	Other EU organizations/observers/stakeholders
France	Genova (IT) Coordinator	DG REGIO	EUROCITIES
Poland	Barcelona Diput. (ES)	DG CLIMA	CEMR
Hungary	Glasgow (UK)*	DG ENV	URBACT
Bulgaria*	Trondheim (NO)	DG RTD*	EEA
	Loulè (PT)	JRC	Covenant of Mayors
	Potenza (IT)		
	Sfantu Gheorghe (RO)		

*Partners that have not contributed or only to a limited extent to the Action Plan.

Table 2. Climate adaptation partnership members

	WG governance	WG knowledge	WG resources
Leader	Loulè (PT)	Potenza (IT)	Barcelona Diput. (ES)
Deputy		Trondheim (NO)	EIB
Partners	Genova (IT)	Genova (IT)	Potenza (IT)
	Glasgow (UK)	Loulè (PT)	DG REGIO
	Sfantu Gheorghe (RO)	Sfantu Gheorghe (RO)	EUROCITIES
	Potenza (IT)	EIB	Glasgow (UK)
	France	Glasgow (UK)	Genova (IT)
	Poland	DG RTD	France
	Hungary	France	CEMR
	DG CLIMA	CEMR	
	CEMR	EEA	
	URBACT	JRC	
	EEA		

The main objective of the Action Plan according to Urban Agenda is *"to operationalize suggested policy and governance solutions for the identified key bottlenecks hindering successful adaptation to climate change in the EU urban areas"*. The Action Plan fulfilling this objective, provides concrete action proposals for the design of future and the revision of existing EU legislation, instruments, and initiatives relating to the

adaptation to climate change in EU urban areas tackling the three pillars of Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge. It defines responsible institutions and organizations and implementation mechanisms for the proposed actions, proposing a timeline for the implementation of each of the actions. Furthermore, it provides the basis for the monitoring of the action Plan implementation by defining Completion Indicators for the proposed actions. The Action Plan is fully in the line with the current initiative of EU Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (G-CoM), in term of coupling energy efficiency and climate adaptation/mitigation. On this track, G-CoM and ITI planning (Integrated Territorial Investments procedure promoted by EU Operative programs 2014–2020) have to be considered as operative tools for Municipalities, looking to energy efficiency and renovation of the building stock, improvement of infrastructure according to sustainable approaches [2–6], adopting solutions like nature-based solution to make cities climate-proof, reinforcing ecosystem services [7–10] and promoting sustainable urban mobility [11–14]. Previous research [15–19] explored this operative aspect at Municipal level, highlighting the opportunity for inland areas and small Municipalities to achieve ambitious targets in term of CO_2 reduction and climate adaptation/mitigation, supported by CoM structure.

3 Potenza Political Academy Geodesign Workshop

The NUA deals with growing urban areas as much as with declining rural context and it is evident that is a discontinuity related to the models provided by traditional planning. There is not enough availability of methodologies and approaches to tackle sustainable solution in order to manage urban decline of the small Municipalities competing with metropolitan areas [20, 21]. As discussed in previous works [22–24], we may put effort in such secondary challenges considering that in such declining context the following principles has to be adopted in order to change planning approach according to NUA common perspective and local needs:

1. Planning "goes toward" Governance
2. Planning Performance has to be assessed
3. Inclusive, equitable, effective and sustainable strategies has to be designed

The process of developing a "vision" for a place and therefore to define a long-term strategy is far to be an easy matter. Generally, such approach, in a multi-agent's framework, delivers conflicts among groups, it takes time, it needs huge technical resources (especially constructing knowledge of the place).

GEODESIGN drives such processes in a framework reducing time for decisions and actions, comparing different interests and priorities, towards feasible decisions. Thus, in order to give specific training to local politicians (mayors, councilors, political local leaders…) [25] on the benefits of climate change adaptation, it has been simulated a process of urban design according to the rules of EU ITI planning. Through this simulation and the active participation of politicians and technicians of the Municipality of Potenza (Basilicata Region Capital city) the basic learning by doing approach had been developed. ITI promotes, within the complex procedures of Regional Operative

Program implementation, a way to give local authorities tools to self-define integrated investments programs. It becomes a critical stage of planning implementation where a Municipality can get the resources to realize its planning previsions. In current practice it becomes a political decision frame in which the results could be a list of investments, infrastructures, public aids, not balances, un-effective in a long-term strategy, oriented fix specific urban criticality without any systemic view of the whole urban structure.

In order to avoid this scenario in urban ITI delivering process, some methodological issues have to be talked: decision makers need methodologies in order to actively participate in the process, time has to be controlled in order to balance the intensity of discussion among the ITI, experience and competences to contribute in decision making process has to be owned by stake-holders.

Therefore, we decided to organize a training session for decision makers and technicians based on GEODESIGN workshop experience.

The workshop preparation had been delivered by the research team at LISUT lab, involving engineering master students. The selection of relevant systems, the territorial analysis and the land suitability evaluation maps was prepared at technical level and then proposed to the workshop participants.

The Workshop was organized by the Potenza Municipality in the frameworks of a broader transnational cooperation activities of the Climate Adaptation Partnership. One full day of activities had been performed in Potenza (17th January 2020) according to the main topic of the event: Political Academy.

The invited participants to the workshop were political representative of the town council of Potenza, including the Mayor, plus technical staff of the main municipal departments dealing with ITI planning and management. Researchers, PhD students and master students in engineering participated to the workshop as mentors, guiding actors through the methodological stages of the GEODESIGN and explaining technical analysis and the use of the online platform GeodesighHUB[1] (Fig. 1).

4 Final Remarks

The UN New Urban Agenda (NUA) [23, 26–28], adopted in 2016 at the HABITAT III Conference, set a shared strategic vision for sustainable urban development globally. It laid out standards and principles for planning, aiming at making cities a more livable place according to a shared vision of development.

We may agree with Las Casas et al. [27] that it refers to plan as a rational instrument in which approaches for sustainable, people-centered, inclusive and gender-based urban and regional development should be implemented by carrying out policies, strategies and at every level capacity building based on essential drivers including:

- urban policies development and accomplishment at an appropriate level;
- reinforcement of urban governance;
- actions to relaunch long term integrated planning and design at urban and regional directed to optimize urban model spatial dimension, guaranteeing all the benefits from the urbanization process;

[1] https://www.geodesignhub.com/ by Geodesign Hub Pvt. Ltd., Dublin, Ireland.

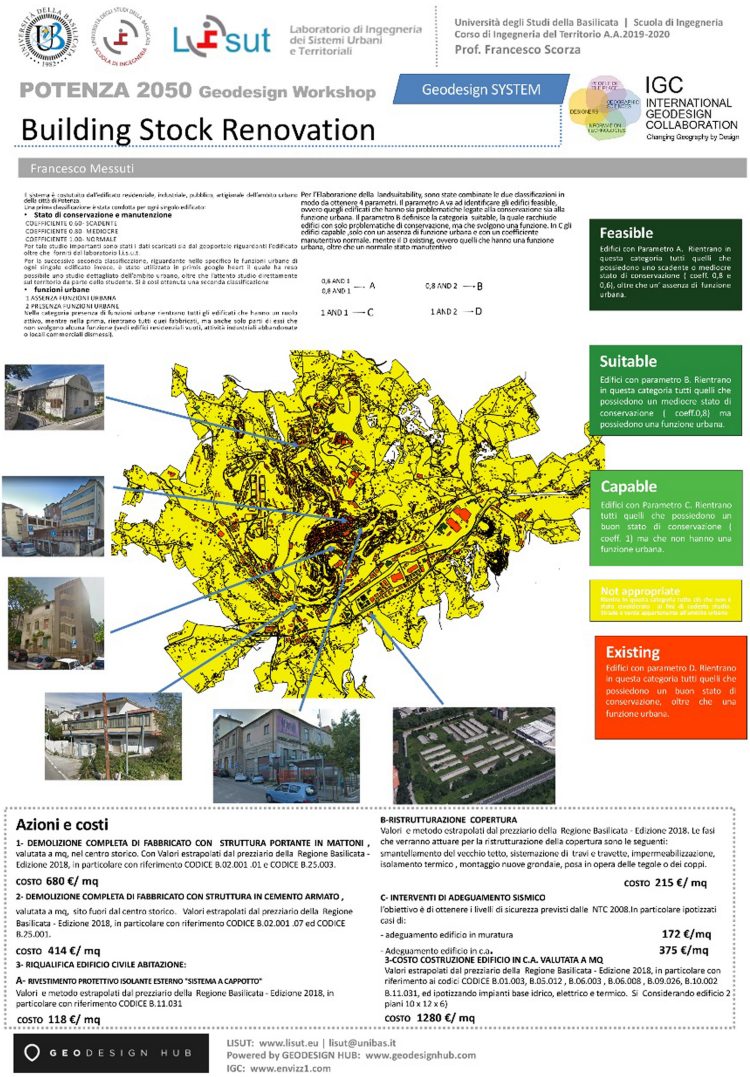

Fig. 1. Posters in the meeting room documented the evaluation maps and become discussion generator among technicians and politicians.

- support effective, innovative and sustainable funding frameworks and tools able to strengthen municipal financial resources and related fiscal system to create, support and share the added value produced by a sustainable urban development.

The Action Plan developed by the EU Urban Agenda, aligns with a number of its statements (in particular 13, 79, 80 and 101) and leads towards their implementation on the European scale. The Climate Adaptation Partnership and its Members strongly share the commitment towards promoting climate change adaptation and the Action Plan is

designed with direct inputs from stakeholders who are the actual or future implementers of urban adaptation efforts in order to understand their needs and provide targeted and effective support. In the domain of the urban transformation great efforts are driven according to sustainable criteria (one of the key domain is represented by Smart City studies [29–32]).

In order to answer to the priority themes of Urban Agenda for the EU, GEODESIGN represents a suitable framework in order to develop "urban vision" in urban planning practices, as an effective way to organize and deploy participatory planning according to the negotiation approach and the experiences coming from scientific literature [33–39].

The challenge to anticipate the adverse effects of climate-change, is nowadays a relevant topic in the EU policies (i.e. European Green Deal [40]) or the EU initiatives such as The Covenant of Mayors for the Climate and Energy (G-CoM). The interest to them is highlighted by the widespread of G-CoM Signatories and their experiences among the EU countries.

Concerning the future developments of this research, they are related to:

- monitoring the results and the changes deriving from the practices of the Urban Agenda among the Partnership Members and the implementation of the planning processes at different levels;
- promoting different approaches [41, 42] and the methodological integration of collaborative planning approaches like GEODESIGN with Logical Framework Approach (among others [43]).

Potenza Municipality is committed to reinforce an integrated approach toward New Urban Agenda development benefitting from lessons learned of Climate Adaptation Partnership and promoting collaborative design practices following experience of the political academy.

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