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EU COHESION POLICY AND EUROPEAN RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY. LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE INTERFACES AND THE ROLE OF TERRITORIALISATION

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Workshop - The Territorialisation of the EU Cohesion Policy, Regional Studies Association (RSA), RSA Research Network on EU Cohesion Policy (#CPnet), Bocconi University, Centre for Research on Geography, Resources, Environment, Energy & Networks (GREEN), Milan, Italy, online workshop, 19 October 2021.

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Framework

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Main purpose

The purpose of this paper is **to analyze to what extent the Recovery and Resilience Plans of the Member States of the EU value a territorial dimension in their strategic approach and on their operationalization model**, as well as **to study of the possible interfaces between the EU Cohesion Policy and the European Recovery and Resilience Facility, especially with regard to the territorialisation of policies and their impacts.**

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Structure

1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework.
2. The exercise of compatibility between public policy instruments arising from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and from Cohesion Policy 2021-2027.
3. The opportunities for territorialisation in the current EU policy cycle.



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1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework

- **The current pandemic context of COVID-19**, appears to be **causing profound changes in essential elements of the EU Policy mainframe**, which until January 2020 were taken for granted, and around which strategic orientations for the EU until 2030 were being prepared.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and public health and civil protection challenges, but also in terms of the resulting consequences for the economy, employment and social mobility, **many of the strategic priorities defined for the European Union at the end of 2019 are now being reformulated and adapted to the new context**, and a set of new public policy instruments have gained central relevance.

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1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework

- **The pandemic context of COVID-19, due to its transversal impacts on the economy and society, is (Neto, 2020):**
 - i) **Implying the redesign of many of the Union's public policy instruments;**
 - ii) **Reordering** some of the European Union's **current strategic priorities;**
 - iii) Changing the **conditions of relative competitiveness of local and regional territories;**
 - iv) **Reformulating the planning guidelines** and assumptions underlying the definition of current and future development models of cities and regions;
 - v) Great **focus on economic and social recovery** with the risk of leaving the cohesion objective behind.

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1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework

- From March 2020 until this moment, the EU has launched a **wide range of initiatives to tackle the pandemic, mainly through two complementary channels.**
 - i) **Through creating a new set of initiatives aimed specifically at resolving and or mitigating the effects of the pandemic** in terms of public health, but also the resulting economic and social effects;
 - ii) **By mobilizing a set of policies and public policy instruments, already existing in the European Union to combat the effects of the pandemic**, with the purpose of allocating resources to the new needs of the European economy and society.



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1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework

- Among the set of **new EU initiatives created specifically to deal with the pandemic**, the following stand out:
 - i) The **EU Recovery Plan for Europe** ;
 - ii) The **SURE / ESM Pandemic Crisis Support / EIB Guarantee Fund for Workers and Businesses**;
 - iii) The **Next Generation EU** policy instrument;
 - iv) The **Recovery and Resilience Facility**;
 - v) The **Re-open EU initiative**;
 - vi) The **European roadmap to lifting coronavirus containment measures**;
 - vii) The **Initiative EUvsVirus Challenge**;
 - viii) The **European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience**.

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1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European Union's policy framework

- Some examples of EU **mobilization of a set of policies and public policy instruments already existing in the European the Union's main policies**:
 - i) The **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII)** supported by the EU Cohesion Policy;
 - ii) The **The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+)** supported by the EU Cohesion Policy;
 - iii) Significant **additional resources for the European Social Fund (ESF) and Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD)**;
 - iv) A **strengthened European Social Fund Plus** proposal;
 - v) A **reinforced European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)**;
 - vi) **Additional funds supporting employment and social objectives**;
 - vii) A new **Health Program (EU4Health)**;

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2. The exercise of compatibility between public policy instruments arising from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and from Cohesion Policy 2021-2027

EU Recovery and Resilience Facility	EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027
Institutional framework: European Commission and European Investment Bank	Institutional framework: European Commission
Nature of the approach: Recovery and resilience	Nature of the approach: Cohesion and convergence
Scope and scale: National	Scope and scale: National, regional, local, inter-regional, inter-local, cross-border, transnational, etc
Territorial targeting: No	Territorial targeting: Yes
Nature of the projects to be supported: Mainly standard investment projects	Nature of the projects to be supported: Evolutionary in line with the Evolution of EU Cohesion Policy' policy cycle

Source: Neto (2021).

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2. The exercise of compatibility between public policy instruments arising from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and from Cohesion Policy 2021-2027

(cont.)

EU Recovery and Resilience Facility	EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027
Thematic and policy framework: Focus on recovery, resilience, digital transition and climate transition	Thematic and policy framework: Focus on an Europe more competitive, smarter, greener, connected, social, inclusive and closer to citizens
Access conditions: Reforms	Access conditions: Conditionalities
Temporal nature: Temporary policy instrument	Temporal nature: Permanent and continuous policy
Timeline: 2021-2026	Timeline: 2021-2027
Main approach background of a territorial nature: European Investment Bank (EIB) Municipalities Survey (2019, 2020) and EIB Investment Survey (EIBIS) (2016... 2020), EIB Cohesion Orientation 2021-2027	Main approach background of a territorial nature: Cohesion reports and interim progress reports from 1996 onwards

Source: Neto (2021).

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3. The opportunities for territorialisation in the current EU policy cycle

- The importance of the **strategic articulation, in the context of each Member State, between the management authorities of the Recovery and Resilience Plan and of the 2030 Partnership Agreement.**
- The need to ensure the maximization, in the context of each Member State, of the effects of **complementarity, and multiplier effects, between the projects that may/ will be supported by the Recovery and Resilience Plan and by the 2030 Partnership Agreement.**



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3. The opportunities for territorialisation in the current EU policy cycle

- The **territorialization of policies, and their effects and impacts**, in the context of each Member State, the respective Recovery and Resilience Plan and the 2030 Partnership Agreement, **should be led by the Cohesion Policy side, and consequently by the 2030 Partnership Agreement.**
- **The current moment - in which are being finalized, by the Member States and the European Commission, Partnership Agreements; the operational programs that will compose them; and in the future, the respective call for tenders and other supporting regulations - is a decisive moment to ensure effective conditions for the territorialisation of policies and their effects and impacts.**

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Thank you for your attention!

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