

URDICO

Urban Dimension of Cohesion Policy and other EU programmes

STRASBOURG EURO METROPOLE

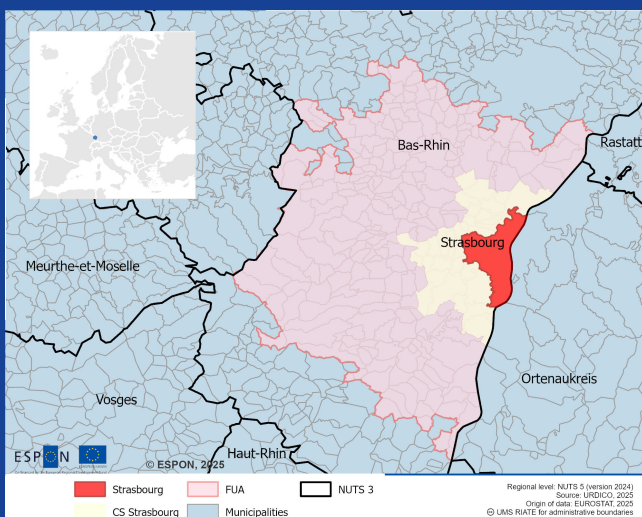
City Description

In France, Strasbourg is located at German border, in the Alsace region, it is the capital and largest city of the Grand Est region. Strasbourg is also the official seat of the European Parliament, and several other EU and other international institutions. After Paris, is the second city in France in terms of international congress and symposia. The metropolitan area is governed by the Eurométropole de Strasbourg (EMS), a framework of metropolitan cooperation that was established in the late 1960s. The population of the EMS was 520 036 in 2024, more than half of the population is concentrated in the city of Strasbourg. Even though Strasbourg is a prosperous conurbation, the income inequalities and high poverty rates in some parts make social and territorial cohesion a major challenge.

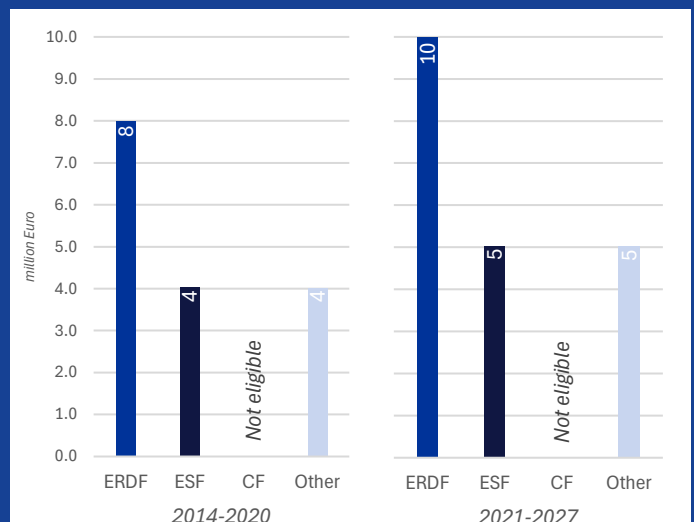
Role in Cohesion Policy delivering

Like other French métropoles, EMS is not included in the design of the EU Cohesion Policy at the national level. However, since 2002, EMS acts as an intermediary body with a full delegation for managing ERDF and ESF. This has long been a unique case in France, but for the 2021-2027 period, the Mulhouse conurbation also got the same status. With this status, the EMS is in charge of the selection of projects but also of the instruction and payment of applications. The ERDF envelope delegated to the EMS is managed as a global grant. Since the 2014-2020 period, the EMS manages ERDF and ESF in the form of ITI, the territorial level of which is the same as the EMS. They developed very strong technical capacity in managing an ITI over the last two programming periods. The priorities defined are closely aligned with the EMS's integrated urban strategy.

Spatial Organisation



EU Funds 2014-2020 and 2021-2027





Selected Challenges

Local **No direct involvement in the development of EU CP at the national level** - The EMS is not involved directly in the development of EU CP at national level, but is involved indirectly through networks of local authorities such as France Urbaine. At the regional level, when developing the ROP, EMS is consulted and treated at the same level as other stakeholders who do not manage EU funds, so it does not have a privileged status and is not a decision-maker.

Difficulties to promote social and territorial cohesion - Mobilizing the economy to promote social and territorial cohesion is a long-term challenge for EMS, given the socio-spatial disparities within the area.

Relatively little amount of available funding - Given the relatively small amounts of cohesion funds available to EMS, the EU influence on locally implemented strategies is very limited.

Weak synergy between CP funds and other EU programmes - The EMS actively leverages direct EU programmes to support its transition initiatives, particularly energy and mobility. Given that the ITI focuses on socio-economic development, cohesion policy funds coexist with other European programmes, rather than working in synergy.

Regional **Limited role given to other levels of subnational government** - While authority to manage ERDF and one third of ESF funds have been decentralized to regional governments since 2014, there is little role given to other subnational levels, like departments and intermunicipal groupings.

Decreasing use of ITI - For the current programming period, 8 regional governments have chosen to use ITIs, whereas 13 regions used ITI during the 2014–2020 period, in some cases due to political disagreements. The financial amounts allocated to ITIs has decreased.

National **No real solutions to tackle the administrative complexity of CP** - For example, the number of OP-s decreased between the two periods, partially in the pursuit of greater efficiency, but it is not clear what concrete solutions have been proposed and implemented by the national administration to address the persistent criticism about the administrative complexity.

The lack of territorial perspective on the NRRP - RRF is managed at the national level by the Ministry of Finance, which is separate from the ministries handling Cohesion Policy funds. The NRRP lacks a territorial perspective, urban authorities were not involved in its development.

Since 2002, EMS has successfully lobbied to receive a full delegation for managing ERDF and ESF. This is a unique case in France. Strasbourg shows a situation where EU CP is embedded within a long-standing framework of metropolitan cooperation. There is a strong stability between the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods, regarding tools, target groups, and a real autonomy. The EMS has developed a very strong technical capacity in managing the ITI, and more generally EU funds.



Main achievements