

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

Gdansk  
 Gdynia-Sopot  
 Metropolitan  
 Area

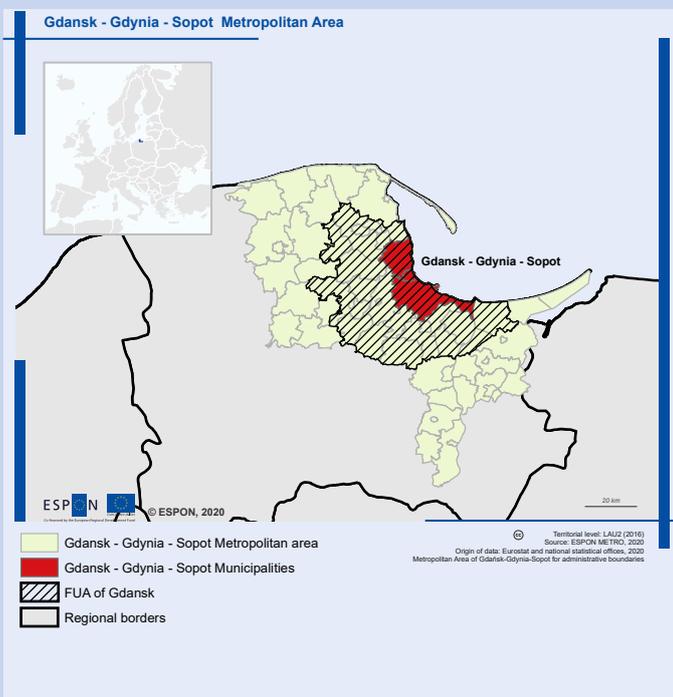
## Institutional dimension of Metropolitan Governance

The Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot Metropolitan Area (MAG) located in Pomorskie region is one of the fastest growing areas in Poland and the Baltic Sea Region being an important transport, energy and ITI hub. The MAG has a polycentric nature created by the fusion of three core cities: Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot.

The MAG Association was established in 2011, as the result of voluntary agreement of the local and county governments around cities. Currently, 59 local governments operate within MAG (67% of the Pomorskie population). It should be considered mainly as a grass root establishment acting to respond to the growing coordination needs (multi-level flexible governance) beyond the administrative borders, which resulted in the MAG development strategy until 2030. At the same time, MAG was born as an answer to some top-down incentives connected with Cohesion Policy implementing model in Poland. The MAG performs duties of ITI Intermediate Body within a framework of Pomorskie Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020. However, the area covered by ITI (slightly larger than MAG FUA) is smaller than the entire MAG area.

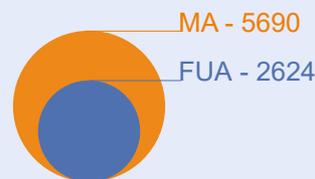
Since metropolitan areas are generally not considered as legal tier of territorial administration in Poland (lack of formal and financial mechanisms to support metropolitan-wide actions), the MAG has a relatively weak position to set up, coordinate and implement its long-term development goals vis a vis national, regional, and local levels. This challenging issue is addressed in a draft metropolitan law for MAG, which is now under consideration in the parliament.

## Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot Metropolitan Area, Poland



## Territorial data

Size (sq.km)



Population (x1000)



Density



Number of Municipalities



---

A role of the MAG in the programming and implementation of EUCP is limited, which is clearly seen especially at the national level. On the other hand, however, the MAG area is broadly covered by the various EUCP interventions. This area seems to be a kind of 'container' for nationally planned projects (distributed funds) implemented without a strategic participation of the MAG.



## Main Metropolitan Challenges

Since ITI is the only instrument dedicated directly to the MAG needs, it has consumed almost all institutional capacity of the MAG Association as well as dominated an approach on how to set overall MAG area objectives. Hence, many projects agreed within the MAG Association seem often too narrow (satisfying the individual expectations of local governments) and short-term (not touching strategic initiatives) in relation to the challenges and needs that are faced by long-term MAG development policy.

The MAG Association creates a policy shaped strongly by the core cities' strategic goals. There seems also too much power on the public sector in the decision-making, meaning suboptimal relations with stakeholders (business, universities, NGOs). The main reasons for this are still not very advanced habits and culture of cooperation.

---

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

Recognize and identify the long-term importance and benefits of integrated approach to cooperation and go beyond pure projects' implementation.

Prepare MAG roadmaps in such spheres as: housing, mobility, green infrastructure, waste management, energy management to better coordinate local policies and instruments, while building institutional capacity for next generation EUCP programmes.

Stay active during national- and regional-wide programming exercise for the next generation EUCP by clearly addressing the MAG specific needs in terms of better governance and efficiency of public spending.

Put continuous pressure on more adequate MAG positioning in multilevel governance structure of Poland (changes in national legislation).



## Recommendations

---

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

Strengthen the MAG institutional capacity in order to use adequate EUCP instruments to address such complex challenges as climate crisis, economic crisis management, socio-economic polarisation and public service delivery/quality, including mainly health, housing, education.

Prepare long-term masterplan with a clear message that EUCP interventions on metropolitan scale, meaning across administrative boundaries, may turn the MAG area into important and positive driver for global environmental change and climate catching-up.

Use EUCP intervention-logic and methods to better identify the future opportunities and threats of the MAG development and to stimulate long-term initiatives for the whole area.

---

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

Use the EUCP tools to further strengthen the MAG institutional potential and to anchor the metropolitan level in the multilevel governance structures.

Overcome particular interests of administrative units comprising the MAG by creating the new level of common interests defined in territorially integrated strategy aimed at solving problems of supralocal and subregional nature with help of the EUCP "pressure" for cooperative and long-term-impact oriented actions.

Empower NGO, science and business representatives in the long-term oriented decision-making structures and procedures for the MAG based on specific EUCP know-how as far as transparency, legitimacy and efficiency are concerned.