

# TeMA

Journal of  
Land Use, Mobility and Environment

The climatic, social, economic and health phenomena that have increasingly affected our cities in recent years require the identification and implementation of adaptation actions to improve the resilience of urban systems. The three issues of the 15th volume will collect articles concerning the challenges that the complexity of the phenomena in progress imposes on cities through the adoption of mitigation measures and the commitment to transforming cities into resilient and competitive urban systems.

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THE CITY CHALLENGES AND EXTERNAL AGENTS.  
METHODS, TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

## THE CITY CHALLENGES AND EXTERNAL AGENTS. METHODS, TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

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The cover image shows the Irpinia hills at sunset, highlighting the enhancement of two renewable energy sources: sun and wind.  
The photo was taken by Giuseppe Mazzeo in August 2022, in S. Andrea di Conza, Avellino, Italy.

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## **REVIEW NOTES – NextGenerationEU and urban development** **The interventions of the Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan: tourism for more competitive cities**

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### **Abstract**

Starting from the relationship between urban planning and mobility management, TeMA has gradually expanded the view of the covered topics, always following a rigorous scientific in-depth analysis. This section of the Journal, Review Notes, is the expression of a continuous updating of emerging topics concerning relationships among urban planning, mobility and environment, through a collection of short scientific papers. The Review Notes are made of five parts. Each section examines a specific aspect of the broader information storage within the main interests of TeMA Journal.

This section of the Review Notes explores a specific topic, related to cities, within the framework of the European program NextGenerationEU.

This contribution deepens the topic of tourism in urban areas within the framework of the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan. It provides an overview of the proposed reforms, strategies and interventions to improve the digitalization of tourism services, the cultural development and the improvement of attractiveness and competitiveness of Italian cities.

### **Keywords**

Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan; Tourism; Digitalization; Competitiveness; Cities.

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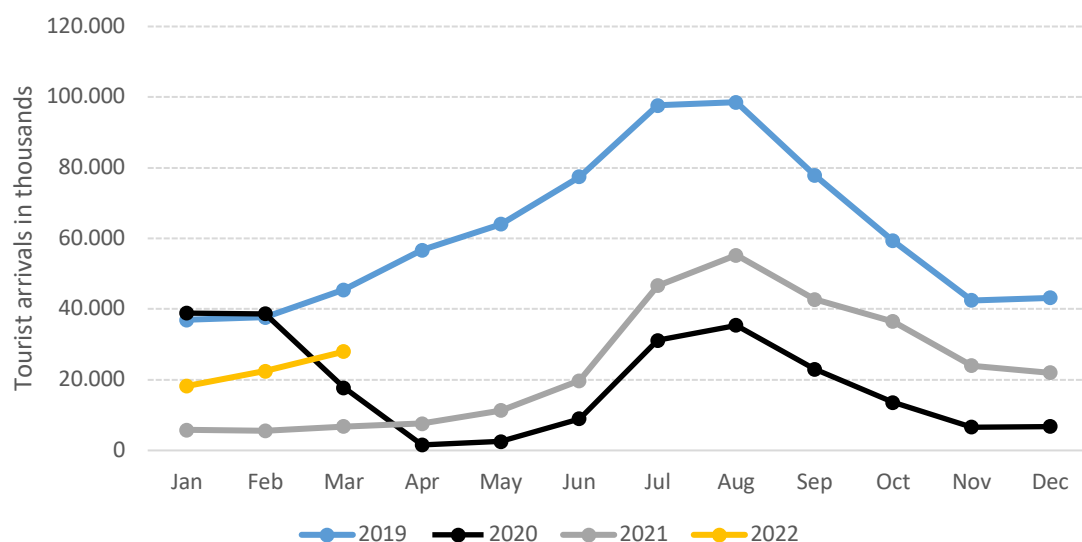
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## 1. Tourism in cities

The management of tourists flows in urban environment together with the supply of services and facilities for the tourism sector has gradually become fundamental in the governance of urban transformations, especially in relation to the sustainability and competitiveness of urban systems (Jiao et al., 2019). Globalization, the increasing affordability in travelling, and the spread of information - also throughout new means of communication such as social media - has substantially increased the tourists flows, particularly in countries with an invaluable landscape, artistic and cultural heritage and in consolidated tourists' destinations characterized by multidimensional attractiveness. It is the case of European cities, global leaders in international tourism, that account for roughly two-thirds of international tourist arrivals worldwide. In Europe, in 2017, urban tourism grew 7.7%, as a result of the acceleration in the growth rate of inbound tourism during the 2010s, reporting a peak of 745 million international visitors in 2019 (Statista, 2022). This makes tourism one of the major pools for economic growth in Europe (according to Statista in 2019 the total contribution of tourism to the GDP was 2,141.4\$), thus, one of the foremost components to be boosted to enhance urban competitiveness and urban quality (La Rocca, 2014). Promoting the right form of tourism, according to the vocations of the city - e.g. artistic and cultural heritage, nature and landscape, multidimensional tourism - can lead to new occupations in the tourism sector, a dynamic labor market, and continuous economic inflows, as well as a renovated urban image. On the other hand, the increasing number of tourists raises issues regarding the impacts on the urban environment and the loss of identity of cities and historical centres, being often associated with the keywords "gentrification", "touristification", and "overtourism" (da Silva et al., 2019). Therefore, one of the challenges to be addressed by local administrators and stakeholders is how tourism can keep on being an economic resource while being managed in a sustainable way.

With the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, the volume of inbound tourists fell unprecedentedly (see Fig.1) since the adopted emergency measures, such as lockdowns, dramatically restricted non-essential travel between territories (Corbisiero & La Rocca, 2020). According to ECM (2021) the average growth rate for tourism in 107 European cities accounted for -60.9% in 2020, an impressive rate if compared with the value of 2019 (e.i.: 4.3%).



**Fig.1 Change in international tourist arrivals in Europe from January 2019 to March 2022 (Source: Statista, elaborated by the author)**

As a reaction to the pandemic crisis, the European Union approved in 2021 a new strategy, namely "re-Open EU" to make tourism safer and more sustainable and to facilitate its recovery in the post-pandemic period. In the context of NextGenerationEU (European Commission, 2021), Italy has proposed its own strategy, promulgating tourism as a mean of economic recovery in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, NRRP

(Governo Italiano, 2021). Italy is, indeed, the third country in Europe by number of visitors (WorldBank, 2022), following France and Spain. The share of travel and tourism's total contribution to GDP was 10.6% in 2019, dropping to 6.1% in 2020 and becoming 9.1% in 2021. Thanks to their unique and heterogeneous cultural and historical heritage and the diffusion of cultural sites, Italian cities are among the most visited locations in the world. This makes tourism a fundamental sector for Italian cities competitiveness and a substantial source of income for local economies. Italian cities can be classified on the basis of their touristic vocation in different clusters: (i) Big cities with multidimensional tourism; (ii) Cities with cultural, historical, artistic and landscape vocation; (iii) Maritime destinations; (iv) Lake destinations; (v) Mountain destinations; (vi) Thermal tourism destinations; (vi) Cities with more than one vocation (ISPRA, 2020). That is why the Italian Government has included the tourism sector within the missions of the NRRP.

## 2. Tourism in the Italian NRRP

The tourism sector has been included among the fields of investment of the Italian NRRP, in the Mission 1-M1 "Digitalization, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism". The Mission M1 includes investments for a total budget of € 40.29 billion, distributed among 3 components which aim to relaunch the competitiveness of Italy by enhancing the connectivity, the digital performance, and the innovation of several economic sectors, including culture and tourism. Indeed, the third component M1C3 "Tourism and Culture 4.0" promotes interventions to renew the touristic and cultural sectors, focusing on the regeneration/valorization, digitalization, and safety/accessibility of cultural heritage and tourism destinations. This component embeds big cities, specifically cities with a metropolitan area, as well as small centers and towns, suburban and internal areas, providing € 6.08 billion that have been divided as follows:

- cultural heritage € 1.1 billion;
- cultural regeneration of small villages, rural and suburban areas € 2.42 billion;
- cultural and creative industry € 0.16 billion;
- tourism 4.0 € 2.40 billion.

€ 3.11 billion are dedicated to cities, with € 820 million reserved for the regeneration of small towns ("borghi") with a population lower than 5,000 inhabitants, and € 1.2 billion for other Municipalities and Metropolitan Cities. In particular, €0.6 billion have been allocated for new projects for the valorization and conservation of architectural heritage and landscape, whereas € 0.3 billion are for programs of valorization of places' identity and for the redevelopment of parks and historic gardens within urban contexts.

ID of the investment	Investment	Implementing bodies	Resources (€ billion)
M1C3.2.1	Attractiveness of small towns	Municipalities with less than 5k inhabitants	1.02
M1C3.2.2	Protection and enhancement of architecture and landscape	Regions and provinces	0.60
M2C3.2.3	Enhancing place's identity and participated regeneration of suburban areas	Public and private owners of parks and gardens of cultural interest	0.30
M2C3.4.2	Support for tourism politics	Different subjects (private and public)	1.80
M2C3.4.3	Caput Mundi. NextGenerationEU for great touristic events	Different public subject (see first table below)	0.50

**Tab.1 the investments for urban regeneration in the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (Source: Openpolis <https://www.openpolis.it/i-nostri-open-data-per-il-monitoraggio-del-pnrr/>)**



The first investment in Tab.1 refers to the attractiveness of small towns, disseminated in the Italian territory. It is intended to promote small historic towns ("borghi") to face the overcrowding that characterizes the main tourists' destinations, creating an alternative sustainable tourism, thanks to the promotion of still not-known cultural sites, historical centres, arts, and traditions. On the other hand, this investment aims at revitalizing the small towns, that are suffering processes of abandonment, ageing and depopulation, and that need measures of economic revitalization. The second investment aims to enhance the historic building stock and protect the rural landscape so as to support local development processes. The main objectives of the investment are preserving the values of historic rural landscapes and promoting the creation of initiatives and activities linked to sustainable cultural tourism. The investment M2C3.2.3 aims to leverage cultural assets as driving factors for the socio-economic regeneration of neighbourhoods and peripheries. This investment aims to respond to the degradation of public areas and public services, parks and gardens, and the lack of places for social life – especially for young people. The investment M2C3.4.2 is divided into several sub-investments. It is linked to different categories of intervention such as the improvement of the accommodation infrastructure, the removing of architectural barriers, the improvement of energy efficiency and seismic performance of touristic areas, the sustainable development of the tourism sector, and the economic support for new enterprises. This investment allows tourism enterprises to benefit financial supports to leverage urban competitiveness, environmental sustainability, innovation and digitisation. The investment Caput Mundi, the last one in Tab.1, will be deepened in the following tables.

In conclusion, tourism is one of the main components of competitiveness for Italian cities and, at the same time, the development of sustainable forms of tourism is one of the main challenges that our cities are called upon to face in the coming years. The investments of NRRP in the tourism sector should be managed paying attention both to competitiveness and sustainable development, using a multidimensional approach. In this regard, the plan includes measures that deal with the management of tourists flows, sustainable mobility, the conservation and redevelopment of cultural heritage, the valorization of public spaces, gardens and parks, as well as the encouragement of private action to improve the touristic attractiveness. Measures at the building level will be accompanied by integrated actions at the urban and metropolitan levels in different sectors (economic, environmental, and so on) and considering both private and public initiatives. It is expected that the promoted measures will provide benefits in terms of economic performance, city image, urban attractiveness, and sustainable development.

In the following tables, there are two of the proposed projects within the framework of the NRRP.

#### **Caput Mundi – NextGenerationEU for great touristic events**

"Caput Mundi" aims to enhance the tourism and cultural heritage of Rome in order to revitalize existing tourist routes and enhance minor destinations, not yet involved in the great tourists tours, in order to promote sustainable tourism and at the same time increase the competitiveness of parts of the city that are still not-known. This project can be embedded within the NextGenerationEU investments for great touristic events since it has been promoted in the light of the great Jubilee of 2025. The role of great events in the increase of urban competitiveness is yet recognized as demonstrated by the example of cities that have taken substantial benefits from the organization of big events (e.g.: the Olympic Games for the city of Turin). The Jubilee is considered an unprecedented opportunity and, for this reason, requires a specific project to enhance the attractiveness of the City of Rome. The targets embed relaunching minor places/monuments, creating new tourist routes, and restoring cultural sites both in the city and its suburbs.

In particular, the resources will be allocated amongst 6 investments, involving 335 measures on 283 cultural sites. The first investment involves 52 measures and regards the regeneration and restoration of the cultural and urban heritage of the city along with the valorization of complexes having high historical and architectural value. The second investment provides 149 measures and concerns the religious architectural heritage ("From Pagan Rome to Christian Rome"), in particular safety, earthquake-proofing and restoration of public places and buildings of historical interest along the City's Jubilee routes. The third investment "#Lacittàcondivisa" (literally, "#thesharedcity"), which includes 61 measures and can responds to the necessity of enhancing not only traditional tourists destinations but also the one included in more marginal areas (this investment includes the redevelopment of the peripheral areas of the City and archeological sites located in the large peripheral areas outside the centre of Rome). #Mitingodiverde (55 measures) is the fourth investment: it regards the renovation and restoration of parks, historical gardens, fountains and villas. This investment is connected to the valorization of cultural sites and also to the valorization of green areas, which is something related

to the green transition of the city. The fifth investment #Roma4.0 (14 measures) is connected to the mission "Tourism 4.0" since it promotes the digitalization of cultural services in order to facilitate the usability of cultural heritage and the tourists flows within the city centre throughout the promotion of innovation within the tourism sector. The last investment #Amanotesa aims at fostering social inclusion in the suburban areas by increasing and improving the cultural supply, for a total of 4 measures. The implementing bodies of the project are the City of Rome, Soprintendenza Archeologica per i Beni Culturali, Ambientali e Paesaggistici di Roma (Archeological Superintendence of Cultural, Environmental and Landscape Heritage of Rome), the Archeologic Park of Colosseum, The Archeologic Park Appia Antica, Diocese of Roma, the Ministry of Tourism, the Lazio Region.

The general objectives of this project concern the regeneration and valorization of cultural and urban heritage. Sustainable tourism is also fundamental, that is why the measures try to increase the number of cultural alternatives to the most famous ones – also outside the historic centre of Rome - by, for example, improving the accessibility and quality of different complexes. The amount for the investment is €500 million.

### The attractiveness of small villages and suburban areas



The tourists flows in Italy are characterized by the "magnetism" of great cultural attractors, specifically the cities of art such as Florence, Venice, Rome, but also the big cities characterized by multidimensional tourism (Milan and Naples). The consequences of this polarization of tourists flows regard the intensive use of some cultural destination which are, in this way, in danger of impoverishment because of the high intensity of unsustainable tourists flows. On the other hand, another important consequence should be considered: there are some cultural sites that stay out of the tourists flow, despite their inestimable historical and cultural value. For this reason, the component M1C3.2 is dedicated to the regeneration of small cultural sites and the enhancement of small villages (namely "borghi"). The investments allow for the promotion of the cultural heritage and history of places, but also the revitalization of the economic and social structure of these places (throughout the valorization of manufacturing, local products, and traditional jobs, with the added value of preserving landscape and traditions), limiting the depopulation processes that have characterized small villages in the last decades. The investments include the revitalization of 250 small villages (within the wider national program "Piano dei Borghi") sponsored by Regions, Provinces and Municipalities. The objective of this plan is to create sustainable and high-quality growth of these small realities, diffused on the whole Italian territory. 21 small towns have been selected by Regions to be financed with €20 million, for the artistic restoration and recovery of historical heritage. The first line of actions is aimed at the economic and social relaunch of villages uninhabited or characterized by an advanced process of decline and abandonment. Each Autonomous Region or Province has examined the applications proposed by the various territories and identified the pilot project. The resources will be used for the establishment of new functions, infrastructures, and services in the field of culture, tourism, social development, and research.

Among the selected projects "Rocca Calascio Luce d'Abruzzo" aims at the restoration and conservation of the archaeological sites and the realization of accommodation services, exploiting abandoned historical buildings. The project for Borgo Castello in Liguria Region is intended to recover and functionalize the historical and rural heritage, to promote sustainable and smart forms of tourism. The project proposed by the autonomous Province of Bolzano for Stelvio involves the realization of socio-cultural, ecological, and socio-economic measures, the empowerment of local manufacturing activities and the creation of new cultural spaces. The Puglia Region has presented the project "Future in the past" for the village Accadia: the project is intended to realize integrated actions on the cultural heritage, in order to relaunch the development of the village from an economic and demographic point of view.

(Image Source Ministero della Cultura. Retrieved from: <https://cultura.gov.it/pnrr-borghi>)

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Fig.1: Data retrieved from Statista ([https://www.statista.com/topics/5254/global-online-art-market/#topicHeader\\_\\_wrapper](https://www.statista.com/topics/5254/global-online-art-market/#topicHeader__wrapper));

Fig.2: Ministero della Cultura. Retrieved from: <https://cultura.gov.it/pnrr-borghi>

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