

EU COHESION POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF LISBON AND GOTHENBURG OBJECTIVES: THE CASE OF ITALY

GIANCARLO COTELLA

Introduction – applying the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas through European cohesion policy

Cohesion policy became a cornerstone of the European Union (EU) with the adoption of the Single European Act in 1986, aiming at balancing out the economic and social disparities between the richest and poorest regions in the Community and to promote further economic integration. In the meantime, the EU adopted the Lisbon strategy (EC, 2000) with a view to turning Europe into a competitive knowledge economy. The main idea of the strategy was that knowledge and innovation are the major resources for the Member States, enterprises and people to sustain the European competitiveness and welfare model. In 2001 the strategy has been further complemented by the Gothenburg European Council that emphasised the role of the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) by stating that ‘the economic, social and environmental effects of all policies should be examined in a co-ordinated way and taken into account in decision-making’ and underscoring ‘the importance of consulting widely with all relevant stakeholders’ (EC, 2001).

Since the adoption of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas, many of the instruments characterising the Structural Funds’ programming periods tried to cope with the challenges to integrate the new dimensions and priorities into EU cohesion policy. Nevertheless, no explicit link between 2000–2006 regional policy and Lisbon and Gothenburg goals was made, mostly due to the fact that the rationale behind the definition of the programming period obeyed to logics developed at the end of the 1990s, in other words before the approval of the two documents. The common dissatisfaction with the scarce engagement it generated led to a review of the Lisbon strategy’s priorities, guidelines and targets. Progress in achieving Lisbon objectives was criticised in the Strategy’s mid-term review (*Kok*, 2004), underlining how measures for strengthening growth and employment in Europe were not yet effectively put in place. In addition, the document noted that the Lisbon process lacked an adaptation strategy at the Member State level, particularly referring to the need for national action plans to implement more effective policy in achieving Lisbon strategy objectives.

The original Lisbon strategy was reviewed in relation to the above critiques and re-launched in 2005. According to the document, Europe's ability to meet new challenges in relation to the need to strengthen growth and employment should improve through the adoption of three central concepts (CEC, 2005a):

- Efforts should concentrate on delivering policies that will have the greatest impact. The Commission thus has to prioritise its policy.
- The Lisbon strategy has to be supported by different parties and these parties have to be involved in delivering the necessary reforms and changes in policy-making.
- There has to be a clear division of work in respect to who does what. An integrated set of Lisbon guidelines is thus needed at the Member State level, backed up by a single report at the EU level presenting the progress made.

Similarly, in 2006 a renewed European Sustainable Development Strategy was adopted as a logical development of the Gothenburg agenda, focussing on the commitment to '[...] promote a dynamic economy with full employment and a high level of education, health protection, social and territorial cohesion and environmental protection in a peaceful and secure world, respecting cultural diversity' (CEC, 2006).

Starting immediately after the described revision process, the 2007–2013 programming period has been pivoted on the recommendations of the spring 2005 European Council, stressing the need for better linkage between the Lisbon/Gothenburg strategies and Cohesion policy. On their hand, the Member States agreed to mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources in the pursuit of Lisbon/Gothenburg objectives. This saw Member States drawing up action plans building on Community priorities, as laid down in the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005–2008) (CEC, 2005b). What is remarkable about the 2007–2013 Cohesion policy is that regional policy instruments such as the Structural Funds are now intended as a tool to implement the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, cohesion of the European territory being just as much about strategies for growth, jobs and innovation as it is addressing structural challenges.

Despite the fact that the strategic dimension of Cohesion policy has been strengthened to ensure a higher integration of Community priorities into domestic development programmes, the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas continue to challenge traditional approaches to policy making as there is no single policy mechanism that can ensure their successful implementation. In this light, whereas there clearly exists a reciprocal relationship between Cohesion policy and Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, with EU policy documents proclaiming 'cohesion policy at the heart of the Lisbon process' (CEC, 2007), the extent to which regional policy instruments may contribute to realising the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives appears less clear. The present paper aims at shedding some light on this issue,

exploring the potential for Italy's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) policy instruments 2007–2013 to contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives for growth, jobs and sustainable development. Drawing on previous research conducted by the author, the contribution starts by introducing the general context for regional policy in Italy, briefly describing the challenges characterising the national territory as well as the framework for 2007–2013 regional policy and the resources dedicated to it. It then focuses on the way Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities are taken into account in the different programmes at the different territorial levels. Firstly, it explores the coherence of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) with the National Reform Programme (NRP) and the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), constituting the national transposition of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda respectively. Then the attention shifts on how Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives are taken into account in the Operative Programmes (National, Interregional and Regional OPs), and on the coherence of the latter with the Community Strategic Guidelines and the pivotal themes of sustainable development and territorial cohesion. A final section rounds off the contribution, providing a set of conclusive remarks on the effective potentials of Italian Regional policy 2007–2013 to contribute to the Lisbon/Gothenburg strategy, and positioning Italy's specific 'road to Lisbon' within the broader EU framework.

Italian Regional Policy

Similarly to many other EU countries, Italy is characterised by a changing economic structure strongly influencing the employment rate and the configuration of the productive sectors. Moreover, different trends can be observed in the different areas of the country: facts and figures are in fact very different in the northern part (a north-western part of old industrialisation striving to succeed in the competition with Europe's strongest areas, a north-eastern part directly linked to the phenomenon of the so called 'Third Italy' of SMEs, together with some central Italy regions), in the centre (with a somehow intermediate situation between northern and southern trends), and the Mezzogiorno (the southern part of the country plus Sicily and Sardinia, the economically weakest part of Italy). Indeed, 'despite the traditional state intervention in the economy, there has been a lack of government reflection on the dynamics of territorial development and on the possible measures to direct them towards forms of re-equilibrium' (*Salone*, 1999, 169). Due to this reason, the Italian context continues to be characterised by significant disparities between the centre-north and the south in terms of infrastructure, services and socioeconomic conditions, therefore constituting an interesting field of investigation in relation to the impact of EU Cohesion Policy.

In order to cope with these challenges, the aims of Italian regional policy are to contribute to raising competitiveness and productivity levels across the whole country, and to reduce the persistent existing imbalances between the centre-north and the Mezzogiorno. The framework of Italian regional policy instruments developed to attain these goals takes into consideration both the large number of NUTS 2 regions within the Italian administrative structure and the particular imbalances characterising the socio-economic development of the national territory. Of the 20 regional units (*Figure 1*), five have special statutory regulations due to their peculiar location and/or geographical historical conditions – Sicilia, Sardegna, Valle d’Aosta, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige, the latter having powers almost completely devolved to the provincial level. The situation is reflected in a system of regional policy instruments that consists of the NSRF – which reflects the priorities of the NRP and of the NSDS – at the National level, of a total of 21 Regional OPs co-financed by the ERDF (two of which concern the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano), and of a group of seven National/Interregional OPs with the goal of promoting and coordinating the various sectoral issues within the Convergence regions (Tourism, Energy, Governance and Technical Assistance, Education, Transport, R&D and Security).

Almost three quarters of the regional territory (including the ‘phasing-in’ Sardegna) are included under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment (RCE) objective for the programming period 2007–2013, leaving only five regions within the Convergence (CONV) objective (Campania, Calabria, Puglia, Sicilia and the ‘phasing-out’ Basilicata). In order to ensure higher continuity with the previous programming period, when the whole of southern Italy was included under Objective 1, and to guarantee higher integration in the interventions targeting the southern part of the country, six of the seven National and Interregional OPs (except the NOP ‘Safety for Development’) are ‘mirrored’ by specific national programmes providing additional resources and widening the field of intervention in the ineligible RCE Mezzogiorno regions (Abruzzo, Molise, Sardegna, and the CONV phasing-out region Basilicata) under the Fund for Underdeveloped Areas¹ (FAS – ‘Fondo per le Aree Sottoutilizzate’). In total, the framework mobilises almost €124.7 billion for the 2007–2013 programming period, if one considers both EU Structural Funds (€28.8 billion, of which €21.1 billion ERDF), national and regional co-financing (€31.6 billion) and specific national resources devoted to regional development (€64.4 billion) (see *Table 1* summarising the allocation of ERDF funding per OP).

¹ The FAS has been instituted by the law 289/2002 (Financial law for the year 2003) and re-financed by the law 299/2006 (financial law for the year 2007) art.1/863 “to realize national regional policy interventions in the programming period 2007–2013”.

Figure 1

Cohesion Policy 2007–2013 in Italy

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/italia.

Table 1

Italian ERDF OPs for CONV and RCE 2007–2013

ERDF CONV Programmes	ERDF (m€)	ERDF RCE Programmes	ERDF (m€)
Basilicata	300.1	Abruzzo	139.8
Calabria	1,499.1	Emilia Romagna	128.1
Campania	3,432.4	Friuli Venezia Giulia	74.1
Puglia	2,619.0	Lazio	371.8
Sicily	3,269.8	Liguria	168.1
NOP Education	247.7	Lombardia	210.9
NOP Research and Competitiveness	3,102.7	Lazio	112.9
NOP Safety for Development	579.0	Molise	70.8
NOP Networks and Mobility	1,374.7	A.P. Bolzano	26.0
NOP Governance and Technical Assistance	138.1	A.P. Trento	19.3
INOP Renewable Energy and Energy Saving	803.9	Piedmont	426.1
INOP Natural and Cultural Attractors and Tourism	515.6	Tuscany	338.5
		Umbria	150.0
		Valle d'Aosta	19.5
		Veneto	207.9
		Sardinia	729.3
Total ERDF CONV Objective	17,882.9	Total ERDF RCE Objective	3,193.0

Source: Author's construction on the basis of figures provided by DG Regio.

Italy is the third largest beneficiary of the EU Cohesion policy after Poland and Spain (the fifth largest, slightly below the Czech Republic and Hungary, if one considers only ERDF/CF). If compared with the figures of the previous programming period however, overall community support has decreased. In the previous period, Italy benefited from almost €34 billion, of which €25.4 billion was devoted to Objective 1 Regions, and €2.87 billion to Objective 2 regions (the rest being devoted to Objective 3, Community Initiatives and fisheries). In the current period Italy will benefit from a total of €21.1 billion, of which €17.9 billion targets CONV regions and €3.2 billion RCE regions. The OPs of Campania and Sicily benefit from the highest amount of ERDF, with €3.4 and €3.3 billion respectively. Among the national programmes focusing on CONV regions, the one benefiting from highest ERDF share is the National OP 'Research and Competitiveness' with €3.1 billion. Among the RCE regional programmes, the highest ERDF beneficiary is the phasing-in Sardinia region (€680 million) followed by the Piedmont region (€426 million).

Overall, the financial allocation between CONV and RCE regions is realistic and coherent with the guidelines for the country's comprehensive regional development policy included in the NSRF. Furthermore, Italy has earmarked a significant amount of resources which will contribute directly to the implementation of the renewed Lisbon agenda for growth and jobs. 68% of the total EU resources available for the CONV objective and 80% of those allocated to the RCE objective are earmarked for Lisbon. A large portion of ERDF resources is set for Research and Development (RCE 37% and CONV 27%), Energy – namely in energy efficient and renewable energy sources (13% for RCE and 8% for the CONV), Information Society (RCE 7% and CONV 9%). Furthermore, in an effort to promote a shift towards sustainable transport, Italy set aside a high share of ERDF resources (mainly in CONV regions 16%, but also in RCE regions 5%) for investment in transport networks, sustainable transport modes and TEN-T projects.

Addressing Lisbon and Gothenburg at the national level

The NSRF (QSN – Quadro Strategico Nazionale per la Politica Regionale di Sviluppo 2007–2013) was approved by the CIPE (Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Programming) in December 2006, and then by the European Commission in July 2007. The document describes the national context as characterised by significant differences between the centre-north and the south, where the southern CONV regions present significant disparities in terms of infrastructures, services and socioeconomic conditions, while the centre-north part of the country is characterised by higher economic growth and lower disparities. Within this framework, the southern RCE regions (Abruzzo, Molise, and the 'phasing-in' Sardinia) are still lagging behind the national average. The available resources are dedicated to four macro policy priorities defined by the NSRF, which constitute the reference for the implementation of the regional policy and for the choice of adequate and effective intervention lines within the various regional contexts:

- 1 The development of the knowledge economy
 - Improvement of human resources;
 - Promotion and diffusion of research and innovation for competitiveness;
- 2 The improvement of the quality of life, security levels and social inclusion
 - Sustainable use of development resources;
 - Social inclusion & services supporting quality of life and territorial attractiveness;
- 3 The strengthening of the production system and the internationalisation and modernisation of the economy
 - Promotion of natural and cultural resources to foster development;

- Networks and mobility;
- Competitiveness of the production system and employment;
- Competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and urban systems;
- Society and public administration
- International openness and attraction of investment, consumption and resources;
- Governance, institutional capacity and market efficiency.

Furthermore, the document identifies specific ‘horizontal principles’ (namely equal opportunities and sustainable development) and geographical macro-areas (i.e. centre-north and Mezzogiorno) to characterise the delineation of the ten priorities in the various regional contexts. The NSRF promotes an integrated approach, covering the whole gamut of Community and national regional development policy, and combining the interventions promoted under various financial sources – Structural Funds, national co-financing and FAS – on the areas concerned – CONV regions, RCE regions and Mezzogiorno. Rather than promoting a uniform application of the various priorities in these regions, the strategy calls for different types of measures and intensities to be used in their implementation interventions in relation to the specific regional disparities, gaps and potentials for development.

Coherence between the NSRF and the NRP

The NRP for Italy (PICO – Piano per l’Innovazione, la Crescita e l’Occupazione) was approved by the Council of Ministries in October 2005. In line with the Lisbon Strategy and with the Community Strategic Guidelines, the Programme graphs new measures for grafting knowledge and technology onto the work already carried out to implement the Lisbon Strategy. Following extensive consultation and discussion, the Community Strategic guidelines were grouped into five operating categories, taken as priority goals for the Italian NPR: 1) extending the area of free choice for citizens and companies; 2) granting incentives for scientific research and technological innovation; 3) strengthening education and training for human capital; 4) upgrading tangible and intangible infrastructure; 5) protecting the environment. The NRP indicates the strategy of the Italian government to improve the conditions of the country’s economic and social organisational structure in order to stimulate growth and employment.

The NSRF states explicitly how the priorities for regional policy are underpinned by the priorities of the NRP. The governance system promoted by the NSRF clearly highlights the importance of its coherence with the NRP, and the document dedicates a specific paragraph to this issue, i.e. the promotion of synergies between economic and regional policy, mainly concerning:

- Enlargement of the free choice area for citizens and enterprises
- Diversification of energy sources and the promotion of renewable energy
- Research and innovation
- Employment policy, education and social inclusion
- Material and immaterial infrastructure and
- Environmental protection

Coherence between the NSRF and the NSDS

The Italian NSDS (Strategia d'azione ambientale per lo sviluppo sostenibile in Italia) was approved in August 2002 via CIPE Resolution. The process was launched in 2000, with the purpose of drawing up a preliminary document identifying the main intervention areas, instruments and objectives to be pursued. In this phase the Strategy was planned around four thematic areas of the Sixth Environment Action Plan of the European Community Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice adopted by the EU in 2001, focusing mainly on sustainable development. The strategy, sent to the CIPE for approval before the Johannesburg World Summit on sustainable development in 2002, presented various strategic priorities and instruments, establishing the sustainability policy of the strategy on three basic principles:

- the progressive dematerialisation of the economic system;
- the reduction of risks connected to specific forms of pollution or environmental degradation and
- the responsive participation in all the planning and implementation phases of the programme of all the parties involved.

The strategy also included the four thematic areas in line with the four priorities of the Sixth Environment Action Programme:

- Climate and atmosphere;
- Nature and biodiversity;
- Environment quality and quality of life in urban contexts;
- Sustainable use of natural resources and waste management.

Each thematic area includes general objectives, specific objectives, targets and indicators, arranged at the end of each chapter in synoptic tables.

Although no explicit reference is made to the NSDS or to the Gothenburg objectives, the principle of sustainable development permeates the NSRF, explicitly aiming to strengthen the synergies between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of regional policy through the integration of the envi-

ronmental aspects in the definition and implementation of regional policy itself. Thus energy, water resources, soil and air protection, risk prevention and wise management and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage are some of the document's main priorities. Furthermore, two specific priorities of the NSRF ('Energy and environment' and 'Valorisation of national and cultural resources for development') directly target environmental matters.

Addressing Lisbon and Gothenburg at the regional level

Addressing challenges in the OPs

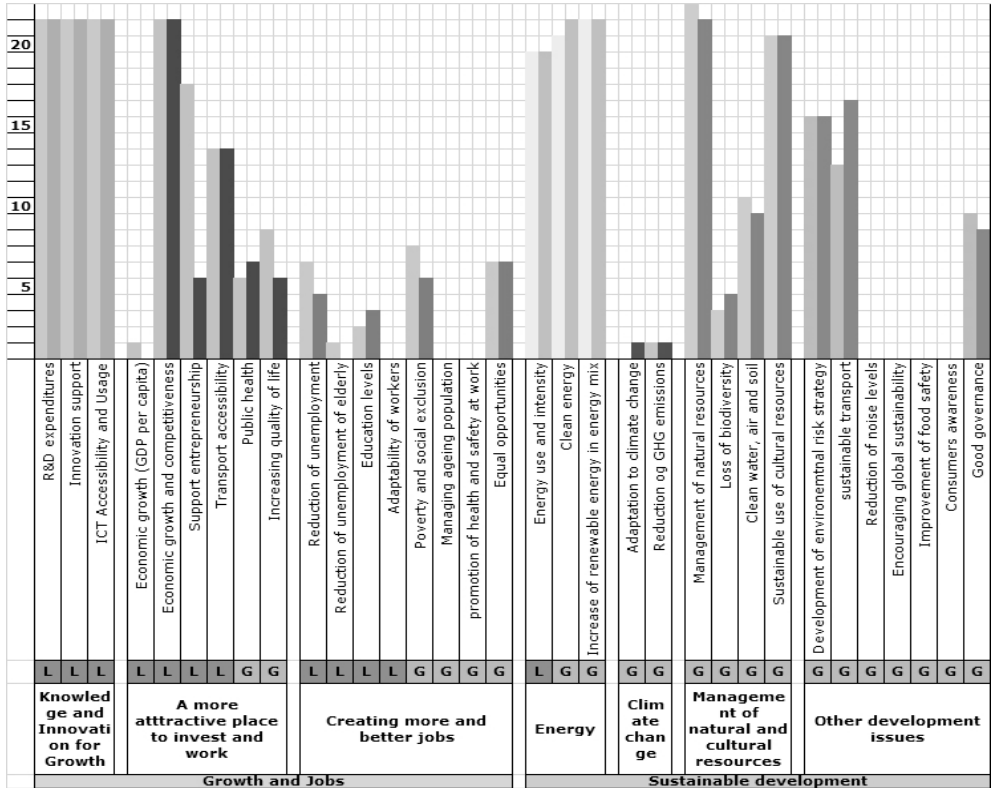
The level of development of the Italian economy is historically characterised by significant imbalances, and within the country it is possible to find some of the richest regions of the EU, as well as some of the poorest. As said, development disparities are mainly present in southern CONV regions, but several difficulties also characterise the RCE Mezzogiorno regions. The main challenges to be faced during the 2007–13 programming period by the majority of the regions of the centre-north are the promotion of the R&D and innovation rate, the rationalisation of the energy systems and the introduction of renewable energy and energy saving processes, the reduction of pollution and the promotion of sustainable transport. The reduction of internal disparities is perceived in many cases as an important challenge, especially regarding the promotion of development opportunities in marginal areas. On the other hand, the challenges faced by the southern part of the country relate more to structural deficiencies in the economic and production systems, and for the majority of these regions identified challenges such as low levels of employment and GDP per capita, the low degree of internationalisation of the regional economy, deficiencies in the modernisation of waste management systems, the widespread risk of water emergencies, the poor diversification and integration of tourism provision, the low support provided to R&D activities and innovation in the business sector, the continuing digital divide and insufficient ICT diffusion, the overall inadequacy of the health care and transport systems and, last but not least, the continuing prevalence of organised crime and of the 'black market' culture.

The 21 ERDF Regional OPs and the 7 ERDF National/Interregional OPs represent as many attempts to reflect and intervene on the above challenges within the various regional contexts. The OPs collectively displayed a relatively high potential to deliver on the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas, or at least the majority of the priorities composing them, thanks to the high level of earmarking that characterises the various strategies (with the Emilia Romagna OP presenting the highest rate of over 90%).

Figure 2

Lisbon & Gothenburg themes within Regional OPs

(for each theme, the light column represent the number of OPs including it as an objectives, and the dark one the number of OPs that developed specific actions)



Source: Author’s construction on the basis of LisGo methodology.

The OPs take up many challenges related to achieving Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities (Figure 2). For instance, increasing the competitiveness of the regional economic system is an important objective for the majority of the OPs both in CONV and RCE regions. Priorities aiming at the promotion of knowledge and innovation for growth, namely R&D expenditures, innovation support and ICT accessibility and usage are viewed as main objectives by all 21 regional ERDF OPs, each of which dedicates at least a specific axis to them. In addition, support to enterprise development is considered a crucial priority in all the strategies, in both general and detailed terms (i.e. through the definition of multiple detailed interventions). Improvement in transport accessibility is included in the majority of

the documents, often within specific accessibility/transport actions and also including intervention in the promotion of sustainable transport. Issues related to social inclusion, as in the case of the reduction of unemployment and education levels, are included in the majority of CONV regions OPs and, in some cases, also in the RCE Mezzogiorno programmes. All but a few programmes present a specific axis devoted to energy issues, including interventions to pursue both the Lisbon goal of reduced energy intensity and the Gothenburg goals of clean energy promotion and increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix.

In addition to energy issues, among most often highlighted Gothenburg priorities are the management and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, the development of an environmental risk strategy and the promotion of sustainable transport. Good governance and equal opportunities are also considered to be important issues, especially for southern regions. Improvements in public health and social inclusion appear among the goals of the CONV regions (and in those of the other Mezzogiorno regions). Management of an ageing population, consumer awareness, improvements in food safety and in the promotion of health and safety at work are however themes with little weight within the ERDF OPs' agendas. The same could be said for adaptation to Climate change and for the reduction of GHG emissions, the latter is mentioned as a priority only in the Friuli Venezia Giulia programme. Nevertheless, although not explicitly proposed as a pivotal goal, adaptation to climate change through the reduction of GHG emission is directly affected by the interventions focusing on renewable energy, energy efficiency and on the promotion of sustainable transport which appear in the majority of the strategies.

In general terms, when Lisbon issues are included in the programmes as goals and priorities, they are then delineated in specific intervention lines and actions, allowing for a future impact to be gauged on the main Lisbon goals during the implementation phase. This is also true, in general, for the Gothenburg goals, although the inclusion of some environmental goals (e.g. the protection of biodiversity, the improvement of the quality of life and promotion of even opportunities) were not translated into specific actions, leaving them at a more rhetorical level.

Coherence of the OPs with the Community Strategic Guidelines

The National and Regional ERDF OPs are highly coherent with the Community Strategic Guidelines. The need to strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth, to increase and improve investment in R&D, and to facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship are the elements that appear most frequently within the OPs. Strategies also make reference to the promotion of the information society for all, the expansion and improvement of transport infra-

structure and the attempt to address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy resources

In addition other specific priorities have been included in the OPs, which are not directly related to Lisbon and Gothenburg goals. Among the programmes (17 out of 28) devoting specific attention to international cooperation initiatives, the Veneto region – and to a lesser extent the Piedmont and the Friuli Venezia Giulia regions – foresee a specific priority on international cooperation, and on the improvement of the international position of the regional economy from a Lisbon-oriented perspective. Additionally, Campania, Basilicata and, in part, Sicilia OPs paid significant attention to marketing the international image of their region in order to promote regional development (the Basilicata region devoting its first axis to this priority).

The specific characteristics of the organised crime situation in the southern part of the country led all the CONV regions (as well as the RCE phasing-in region of Sardegna) to include the objective of crime prevention and the promotion of a 'legality culture' in their strategies, even though this is not a Lisbon or Gothenburg priority. Nevertheless, such goals are presented by all the affected programmes as highly connected to the strategy to increase growth and competitiveness (as criminal activity represents a heavy burden on free market mechanisms) as well as on environmental sustainability (due to interference of the organised crime sector in the waste and water management systems and in illegal building procedures).

Sustainable development in the OPs

The Lisbon/Gothenburg strategy has strong emphasis on delivering sustainable development. The majority of the OPs present a clear understanding of this concept, developing interesting links and connections with the broader framework of European and national documents and policies, as well as trying to mainstream the concept through references to the specificities of the regional contexts. All the ERDF OPs include sustainable development as a horizontal or cross cutting theme, as witnessed by the ad hoc paragraphs both on strategic directions (Chapter 3) and on implementation (Chapter 5). However, various interpretations of the concept exist as different regional emphases on priorities such as the preservation of environmental and cultural heritage, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable transport etc can be discerned. It is also worth noting how climate change mitigation has been mainstreamed in the programmes through the introduction of GHG reduction impact indicators for 27 out of the 28 OPs (with the exception of the NOP Safety for Development).

The three sustainability pillars are predominant in the strategies of the various programmes; the environmental and economic pillars are by far the most prominent

and entwined, as the protection and valorisation of environmental resources is seen as one of the pivotal elements in the pursuit of long term economic growth. The reverse argument is also found in the programmes, as economic growth, R&D and innovation are seen as indispensable factors in the promotion of a more respectful environmental culture. This leads to the definition of objectives, goals and actions centred on both economic growth and environmental protection, in the fields of energy, tourism, development of the production system, transport and infrastructures, etc. Almost the entire set of Regional OPs include at least two axes referring to environmental and economic sustainability, i.e. one devoted to energy interventions and another focused on environmental protection and management (or, in certain cases, explicitly on tourism). In both types of axes the environmental and economic pillars assume almost equal importance, indicating the potential for the fuller integration of environmental and economic issues within regional policy. Specific axes on transport and/or territorial valorisation are also present in many programmes, and contribute to strengthening the above impression. Although less prominent in comparison with the other two, the social pillar also plays an important role in the analysed strategies. Several programmes include references to social cohesion, inter- and intra-generational equity and improvement in the quality of life. This happens not only within CONV regions, where specific interventions are to be devoted to education, social infrastructures, employment and social inclusion in general, but also in many RCE regions, including specific axes on territorial valorisation or regeneration, promoting actions on the urban regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, the promotion of intra-regional territorial cohesion, employment initiatives for remote and/or disadvantaged areas etc.

So-called 'sustainable development principles' have been taken into account in several of the analysed programmes, including the polluter pays principle and the precautionary and prevention principles. The polluter pays principle largely concerns brownfield regeneration in the RCE regions, and is referred to in the interventions on water and waste management in the CONV regions. Furthermore, the promotion and diffusion of environmentally friendly management systems and certifications characterise many of the examined programmes (EMAS, ISO 14001 and Ecolabel being the most recurrent). The targets here are mainly enterprises devoted to tourist activities but targets can also be found within the production system and, in some cases, the public administration.

Overall, few examples exist of structural differentiation between long term and short term interventions and actions. The main differentiation lies within the time perspective of the goals promoted by the programmes, mainly identified in the long term promotion of sustainable economic growth, and the short term orientation of specific interventions. All of the strategies have been prepared following an estimation of the environmental cost of the proposed interventions. In the majority of cases this happened through the adoption and internalisation of the recommen-

datations and advice from the Strategic Environmental Assessment, which was usually undertaken concurrently or slightly after the drafting process. This led to a process of progressive adjustment to the strategies.

Territorial cohesion in the Ops

As mentioned above, one of the main challenges for the NSRF and the OPs is to address the economic imbalances between the centre-north region and the Mezzogiorno. Yet the concept of territorial cohesion is not explicitly addressed by the seven National and Interregional OPs focusing on the CONV regions. Nevertheless, within the overall strategy for the whole Mezzogiorno, the pursuit of specific sectoral priorities targeted by some of the programmes may contribute to the enhancement of territorial cohesion through interventions in strategic spheres of national relevance. In general, the overall strategy for CONV regions aims at the promotion of local potentials in order to reduce development disparities and to support the process of convergence by stimulating growth potentials. In this respect, the introduction of the concept of 'Touristic Pole' and of 'Network of Touristic Poles' by the INOP 'Cultural and Natural Attractions and Tourism' may contribute to focus territorial development on better exploiting regional potentials and territorial capital. At the same time, also the NOP 'Network and Mobility', insisting on the development of logistic and transport infrastructures and on the strengthening of the connections between the local and the supra-local infrastructural systems, potentially contributes to a better connectivity and territorial integration of Italian CONV regions within the national and European framework.

As far as the Regional OPs are concerned, not every programme mentions the concept of territorial cohesion explicitly, but all address the conceptualisations of territorial cohesion either at the level of strategy, or in one (or more) priorities. This may include specific focus on actions within less developed and/or peripheral areas within the region as well as the 'spatialisation' of certain priorities. Among the regions explicitly addressing the issue of territorial cohesion, interesting examples may be observed in the Abruzzo and Molise OPs, which explicitly address the aim of a more cohesive development of the regional territory, the reduction of territorial disequilibria and the improvement of the quality of life in urban and mountain areas (the former within the priorities 'Territorial Development' and 'Information Society', the latter through the priority 'Territorial Dimension'). In addition, the Friuli Venezia Giulia OP's axis 4 'Territorial development' explicitly aims to promote territorial cohesion and balanced territorial growth, therefore reducing existing territorial disequilibria and mitigating those that may derive from future development. The same is true for Umbria OP's axis 4 'Accessibility of Urban areas', where one of the main goals is explicitly the promotion of a higher territo-

rial cohesion and urban quality, in order to increase the competitiveness of cities and territory. The Sardegna programme also focuses on the disparities of the regional economic structure, aiming at avoiding the further decline of marginal area and the promotion and valorisation of endogenous potentials. Actions in this direction are mainly foreseen under the priority 'Urban development'.

Among the CONV regions, priority 7 'Cities, Urban Areas and Territorial Systems' of the OP Calabria focuses on the improvement of the quality of life and the competitiveness of non-urban areas through a valorisation of endogenous potentials, in order to combat the further decline of marginal areas. The Basilicata programme mentions territorial cohesion explicitly under the Priority 'Territorial Attractiveness'. Within the same context, the OP Puglia assigns a key role in its implementation to the development of a macro-area strategic planning that will act against territorial fragmentation and in favour of higher territorial cohesion. A specific case is constituted by the RCE Lombardia, where the attention devoted to territorial cohesion in the overall strategy was seen as a way complement the high emphasis on Lisbon goals.

Conclusions

In general terms, Italian European regional policy appears highly coherent with Lisbon and Gothenburg goals. The affirmed coherence between the NRP and the NSDS – the main 'weapon' of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies at the national level – and the NSRF potentially ensures the effective transposition of the main Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities within the OPs. The NSRFs do not operate only as a rhetorical appendage of the Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities in order to satisfy Community requirements, instead making the effort to transfer and define the various aims in response to the complex socioeconomic and territorial reality of the country. This guarantees a high level of 'digestion' of Lisbon and Gothenburg themes *vis-à-vis* the specific characteristics of the national context, therefore allowing for their easier transposition in the various regional programmes. Acknowledging the disparities between CONV and RCE regions at the EU level and the real conditions of the national socioeconomic structure, the NSRF devotes 85% of the FAS to finance interventions in the regions of the southern part of the country, allowing for both for an 'extension' of six out of the seven National and Interregional OPs to the whole Mezzogiorno as well as for the widening of the field of intervention. In this way, the National and Interregional OPs play an important role in the inclusion of Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities within the agendas of those regions across the whole of the Mezzogiorno area.

Similarly, the analysis performed on the Regional OPs showed a high level of potential in respect of the delivery of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda during the

2007–2013 programming period. With regard to the Lisbon goals, priorities aiming at the promotion of knowledge and innovation for growth, namely R&D expenditures, Innovation support and ICT accessibility and usage are considered the main objectives. Themes more related to social inclusion, while explicitly addressed by the majority of CONV ERDF OPs are rarely viewed as pivotal goals in the ERDF OPs of the RCE regions, since social inclusion is mainly addressed by the ESF. As regards the reduction of unemployment, in specific cases this is related to the full employment conditions of some of the RCE regions and autonomous provinces. Nevertheless, although seldom explicitly mentioned as a priority, employment creation is quantified by a specific impact indicator in every Regional OP, and results in the employment field are potentially pursued through other interventions – e.g. those supporting entrepreneurship as well as increasing the activity rate and production.

Among the Gothenburg goals, some issues seem to be seen as being more crucial than others, i.e. those related to renewable energy, management and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, development of an environmental risk strategy and promotion of sustainable transport systems. The mainstreaming of measures addressing climate change, although not explicitly listed among the specific priorities of the OPs, is tackled through those investments devoted to sustainable transport, renewable energy and energy efficiency and GHG reduction, altogether benefiting from 22% of the national ERDF allocation. Improvements in public health and social inclusion instead find their way into the goals of CONV regions while the management of an ageing population, consumer awareness, improvements in food safety remain virtually absent among the main priorities of the programmes.

Finally, it is interesting to say a few words on how Italian regional policy is positioned within the broader EU framework. While in many respects all of the Members States could be considered to be on the same road leading towards Lisbon and Gothenburg, the approach taken may vary depending on their stage of development, the challenges they face, their future potential and the scale of EU programmes relative to national action. As stated by the Final report of the project LisGo ‘The potential for regional policy instruments 2007–2013 to contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives for growth, jobs and sustainable development’, whereas all 246 OPs active in the EU contribute in some way to the Lisbon objectives of growth and jobs at the same time referring to the importance of the Gothenburg goal of sustainable development as a complementary destination, the routes taken by the various Member States vary. In this light, the LisGo project prepared a typology classification of the Member States roads to Lisbon and Gothenburg, characterised by two different approaches, each of them subdivided into three specific ‘roads’ (Nordregio, 2009: 95–107. See *figure 3*):

- 1 Innovation and knowledge paths (EU15 and RCE regions with a strong focus on innovation, knowledge, R&D, ICT and entrepreneurship):
 - Niche focus on innovation, knowledge, ICT and entrepreneurship
 - Exploiting specific territorial challenges and potentials
 - Developing environmental and economic synergies
- 2 Infrastructure, accessibility and innovation paths (EU12 and the former Cohesion countries of Greece and Portugal also focussing on innovation, knowledge, R&D, ICT and entrepreneurship, in addition giving greater emphasis to infrastructure development and accessibility):
 - Growth and jobs infrastructure
 - Human and institutional capacity
 - Addressing settlement patterns and territorial cohesion.

Figure 3

EU Member states and their different 'Roads to Lisbon'

	GDP/head	R&D	Energy Intensity	Competitiveness	
Innovation	Luxembourg	278	1,57	190	Focus on innovation and entrepreneurship to address globalisation challenges -economic priorities- large national programmes.
	Ireland	146	1,32	144	
	Denmark	126	2,43	114	
	Netherlands	131	2,45	196	
Territorial potential	Belgium	120	1,83	205	Addressing regional challenges and potential in relation to globalisation - often an innovation & entrepreneurship focus
	Sweden	125	3,82	204	
	Finland	117	3,45	242	
	Germany	114	2,51	157	
Environmental synergy	Austria	128	2,45	149	Focus on growth but also looking for environmental synergies - often with an innovation component e.g. renewable energy
	UK	118	1,76	203	
	France	111	2,12	186	
	Italy	103	1,1	191	
Growth/jobs infrastructure	Spain	105	1,15	219	Convergence
	Portugal	75	0,81	241	
	Greece	98	0,57	237	
	Malta	77	0,55	270	
Human capacity	Cyprus	92	0,42	245	Using infrastructure to boost growth and jobs, recognising environmental trade-offs - links to innovation and entrepreneurship
	Czech Rep.	79	1,54	823	
	Slovenia	88	1,59	320	
	Hungary	65	1	544	
Cohesion infrastructure	Estonia	69	1,14	967	Building and realising human and institutional capacity (often linked to innovation and entrepreneurship) to improve job quality
	Lithuania	56	0,8	949	
	Latvia	54	0,69	645	
	Poland	52	0,56	585	
	Slovakia	64	0,49	869	Using infrastructure to bridge urban/rural gap (links to innovation and entrepreneurship), economic development priority
	Bulgaria	38	0,48	1582	
	Romania	39	0,46	1165	

Source: Nordregio 2009, 97.

According to this typology, Italy's road to Lisbon is pivoted on 'Developing environmental and economic synergies'. Countries are characterised by both CONV and RCE regions, hence presenting significant territorial diversity. Beside the strong focus on innovation, R&D, entrepreneurship and economic growth and employment, they take a road that complements the focus on the knowledge economy aspects of the Lisbon agenda by focusing on the intersection between sustainable development and environmental protection to develop synergies between environmental and economic priorities. They have a strong focus on energy provision (particularly renewable energy), environmental themes, as well as urban or rural development and natural and cultural heritage. The potential for this approach to contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives is high based on the integration of innovation and knowledge, with job creation and environmental opportunities (eco-innovation). Programmes on this 'road' emphasise in particular the delivery mechanisms of sustainable development, such as environmental management practices. Here a potential bottleneck could be the insufficient distinction made between the different conditions and needs in CONV and RCE regions. The focus on the link between innovation, energy and economic development may not fit for all regions, particularly those that also highlight more traditional infrastructure and environmental management issues for cohesion policy attention.

Overall, it is clear that in delivering the Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda objectives through regional policy instruments a 'one-size-fits-all' solution is neither possible, nor recommendable. Rather, there are a number of approaches that are being taken within the same overall direction of travel. This is not surprising; as each Member State starts its policy and programme development from a different place depending on its development history and future potential this diversity makes sense. The fact that a number of different routes to Lisbon and Gothenburg at a national level can be observed in Operational Programmes indicates that an important step in the national implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas is occurring. This national interpretation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas is a first step to ensuring that Regional policy instruments will be co-ordinated in national policy and adapted into a sub-national setting.

Acknowledgement

This contribution is based on a report prepared by the author and two colleagues (Prof. Umberto Janin Rivolin and Dr. Marco Santangelo, EU-POLIS, Inter-university Department of Territorial Studies and Planning, Politecnico di Torino, Torino – Italy) within the framework of the project commissioned by DG Regio on 'The potential for regional policy instruments 2007–2013 to contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives for growth, jobs and sustainable development'

(Lead Partner: Nordregio, Stockholm – Sweden), and summarises the information gathered through desk research and supplemented by telephone interviews with the various stakeholders during the period April-October 2008.

References

- CEC – Commission of the European Communities 2005a: *Working Together for Growth and Jobs – A New Start for the Lisbon Strategy*. Communication to the Spring European Council, COM (2005) 24, 2.2.2005.
- CEC 2005b: *Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005–2008)*, COM(2005) 141, 12 April 2005.
- CEC 2006: *Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) – Renewed Strategy*. Note from general Secretariat to Delegations, 10117/06. Brussels, 9, June 2006.
- CEC 2007: *Member States and Regions Delivering the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs Through EU Cohesion Policy, 2007–2013*. Brussels.
- EC – European Council 2000: *Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council*, 23–24 March 2000, Council documents Nr. 100/1/00.
- EC 2001: *Presidency Conclusions of the Gothenburg European Council*, 15–16 June 2001, Council of the European Union, Brussels, SN 200/1/01 REV 1
- Kok, W. 2004: *Facing the Challenge. The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment*. Commission of the European Communities.
- Nordregio 2009: *LisGo: The Potential for Regional Policy Instruments 2007–2013 to Contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg Objectives for Growth, Jobs and Sustainable Development. Final Report*. Stockholm, Nordregio.
- Salone, C. 1999: Towards European integration. In: Dematteis, G. – Bonavero, P. – Sforzi, F. (eds.): *The Italian Urban System Towards European integration*. Ashgate, Aldershot. pp. 161–178.