

## Interview Report

### Basic information

Name of the interviewer	Caterina Salvo
Name of the expert	anonymized
Affiliation of the expert	University of Pavia
Position/Job description	Adjunct Professor
Gender	Male
Years of experience	8
Area of expertise	Administrative law, regional government law
Rural and/or urban focus	both

## Part A: Introduction and General Questions

### Rural Areas

1	Would you say that population decline, and economic stagnation are, in fact, producing challenges for local governments in rural areas?
	Yes
1.1	What kinds of challenges are particularly significant?
	<p>A first dynamic related to depopulation trends is the decrease of residing population, which entails a constant ageing process of those who remain. A consequence of the ageing process is that local governments must increase the social services they provide. Providing more and complex services in scattered municipalities is a major challenge they have to face, especially in terms of costs. Moreover, there is another challenge at administrative level: the Italian law regulates the fundamental functions each local government has to fulfil disregarding their size and localisation. Therefore, lots of small municipalities have to carry out unneeded functions (for instance having at least one policeman) while other much more needed services (social services) are lacking and difficult to implement.</p> <p>The envisioned solution to these challenges has been to impose an associated management of key functions among different municipalities. Such logic is detached from the local reality: in scattered municipalities to manage a service together instead of saving costs could turn out to be even more expensive.</p> <p>Ultimately, without the provision of services these localities become unattractive.</p>
2	In general, how effectively are local governments in rural areas coping with the challenges you have just discussed?
Rated	No rate
Other remarks	As an overall judgment, local governments have demonstrated to successfully cope with these challenges fulfilling the need of their communities
3	Do the higher-level government(s) that are responsible for local government matters recognize the unique challenges faced by rural local governments in Italy, and support them in responding?
3.1	If so, how? If not, why not?

### Urban Areas

4	What are some of the main growth-related challenges that urban local governments in Italy face?
	<p>The main challenges are, on the one hand, the increasing population density, and, on the other the phenomenon of commuting. These two intertwined dynamics can generate social inequalities also in terms of taxation.</p> <p>If for urban areas we do consider the metropolitan city (città metropolitana), few more challenge has to be considered. First, the problem of the adequacy (adeguatezza), namely the ability of the administration to carry out the tasks and functions entrusted to it by law. Secondly, the reform incompleteness which entails a third challenge as for the democratic representation. The mayor of the chief city is automatically the mayor of the metropolitan city, a condition that does not protect the interests of other smaller municipalities.</p>
4.1	To what extent are the dynamics of rural decline and urban growth related in Italy, in your view?

5	In general, how effectively are urban local governments coping with the growth-related challenges you have mentioned?
Rated	No rate
Other remarks	As an overall judgment, local governments have demonstrated to successfully cope with these challenges fulfilling the need of their communities.
6	Do the higher-level government(s) that are responsible for local government matters recognize the unique challenges faced by large urban local governments in Italy, and support them in responding?
6.1	If so, how? If not, why not?

## Part B: Questions on Specific Practices

	Specify practice			
	Mergers of Municipalities – A Comparison of Procedures and Their Implications			
7	In your view, what specific problem or challenge does this practice attempt to respond to?			
	Depends on the local challenges each territory has to face. Being an instrument made available by the law it is neutral by nature.			
7.1	What are the objectives?			
	Reduce the territorial fragmentation.			
8	Have these objectives been achieved?			
Choose	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Entirely</td> <td>Partly</td> <td>Not at all</td> </tr> </table>	Entirely	Partly	Not at all
Entirely	Partly	Not at all		
Other remarks	Each context is peculiar and has historical legacies that make this instrument more or less successful. To give an overall judgment is impossible.			
8.1	Why or why not?			
	The State has invested conspicuously in this instrument over the past years and, back then, it achieved good results especially in financial terms. Since the State decided not to endow the merging of municipalities, the instrument has been progressively abandoned			
9	Can you think of other significant practices that have been developed in Italy to help local governments cope with distinct rural and urban challenges?			
	I suggested in a short article I wrote that a good starting point could be to allow the regions to distribute the national funds for the municipalities' mergers. The regions are already doing that for the union of municipalities and the mountain communities. Of course, such reasoning entails various difficulties on the juridical level, but it could be a starting point to differentiate these instruments according to the territory.			

	Specify practice
	Unions of municipalities in Emilia-Romagna
7	In your view, what specific problem or challenge does this practice attempt to respond to?
7.1	What are the objectives?
	The goal is to administer the land in the best possible way doing a territorial planning of its administrative action.
8	Have these objectives been achieved?

Choose	Entirely	Partly	Not at all
Other remarks	It is a best practice and a lab of innovations.		
8.1	Why or why not?		
	One reason for this success is the size of the local entities included in the Unions that in Emilia Romagna often have the rank of cities.		
9	Can you think of other significant practices that have been developed in Italy to help local governments cope with distinct rural and urban challenges?		
	It could be interesting to compare the Union of municipalities in Emilia-Romagna with the Mountain Communities in Lombardy.		

	Specify practice		
	The Inclusion of Local Governments in Italy's Multilevel Conference System of Intergovernmental Relations		
7	In your view, what specific problem or challenge does this practice attempt to respond to?		
7.1	What are the objectives?		
	Mediate different interests among urban and rural contexts municipalities.		
8	Have these objectives been achieved?		
Choose	Entirely	Partly	Not at all
Other remarks			
8.1	Why or why not?		
	It is still not efficient as instrument. The timing of mediation does not correspond to the time of politics.		
9	Can you think of other significant practices that have been developed in Italy to help local governments cope with distinct rural and urban challenges?		

### Part C: Additional Country-Specific Questions

10	What do you wish for the future of Italian municipalities?
	I wish municipalities to continue to be an essential level of the local government, investing in their human capital also on monetary terms. Municipalities are the foundation of our institutional architecture and therefore they must be solid.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation Programme under the grant agreement No 82296