



CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA
Direzione Affari generali e Gestione del servizio idrico

Attestazione documenti allegati

Decreto del Sindaco/Deliberazione N.91/2026

OGGETTO: [COLLABORAZIONI INTERNAZIONALI] EUROPEAN METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES (EMA). ADESIONE DELLA CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA ALLA DICHIARAZIONE POLITICA EMA 2026 "GOVERNING THE METROPOLITAN FUTURE: POLICIES, FUNDS AND CLIMATE-DRIVEN WATER RISKS" E PARTECIPAZIONE ALL'EMA FORUM 2026 DI ISTANBUL

Si dichiara che all'atto in oggetto sono allegati i seguenti documenti, per i quali si riportano il titolo e l'hash code

Allegati:

Nome file allegato: DEL_DETSINDM_91_2026.pdf.p7m

Hash:

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Nome file allegato: EMA Forum 2026_concept note.pdf

Hash:

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Nome file allegato: EMA 2026 political declaration.pdf.p7m

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II SEGRETARIO GENERALE
Marco
Mordacci
con firma digitale



CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA

Decreto della Sindaca metropolitana

Direzione Affari generali e Gestione del servizio idrico

N. 91/2026 del registro degli Atti della Sindaca metropolitana

OGGETTO: [COLLABORAZIONI INTERNAZIONALI] EUROPEAN METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES (EMA). ADESIONE DELLA CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA ALLA DICHIARAZIONE POLITICA EMA 2026 "GOVERNING THE METROPOLITAN FUTURE: POLICIES, FUNDS AND CLIMATE-DRIVEN WATER RISKS" E PARTECIPAZIONE ALL'EMA FORUM 2026 DI ISTANBUL

In data 11/09/2026 presso la sede della Città metropolitana di Genova

IL VICE SINDACO METROPOLITANO

ha adottato il seguente provvedimento.

Vista la legge 7 aprile 2014, n. 56 e s.m.i., recante "Disposizioni sulle città metropolitane, sulle province, sulle unioni e fusioni di comuni" ed in particolare l'articolo 1, comma 2, che dispone per le Città metropolitane la cura delle relazioni istituzionali afferenti al proprio livello, ivi comprese quelle con le città e le aree metropolitane europee;

Visto il d.lgs. 267/2000 "Testo unico delle leggi sull'ordinamento degli enti locali" e s.m.i.;

Visto il vigente Statuto della Città Metropolitana di Genova ed in particolare l'articolo 7, relativo ai rapporti europei e internazionali, con particolare riferimento alle forme di coordinamento tra le città e le aree metropolitane dell'Unione;

Considerata l'assenza per impedimento temporaneo della Sindaca metropolitana e la sua sostituzione da parte del Vice Sindaco metropolitano ai sensi dell'articolo 53 del d.lgs. 267/2000 e dell'articolo 15 dello Statuto della Città metropolitana;

Premesso che

- la Città Metropolitana di Genova, in attuazione delle proprie funzioni istituzionali, cura lo sviluppo dell'area metropolitana e promuove forme di collaborazione con le altre città e aree metropolitane europee, favorendo l'integrazione europea e la partecipazione ad attività di cooperazione con gli enti territoriali dell'Unione;
- l'Amministrazione metropolitana è attivamente impegnata nella costruzione e nel rafforzamento di reti di relazione a livello europeo e internazionale, riconoscendo nella governance metropolitana uno strumento fondamentale per assicurare coesione territoriale e per concorrere alla definizione e all'attuazione delle politiche e dei programmi europei;
- la Città Metropolitana di Genova partecipa alle reti METREX – The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas ed EMA – European Metropolitan Authorities, impegnate nella valorizzazione della dimensione metropolitana e nella promozione del confronto e della cooperazione tra le aree metropolitane europee;
- con Decreto della Sindaca Metropolitana n. 87 del 18 settembre 2025 la Città Metropolitana di Genova ha approvato l'adesione alla Dichiarazione di Barcellona dei Sindaci europei



CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA

Decreto della Sindaca metropolitana

Direzione Affari generali e Gestione del servizio idrico

“Metropolitan future beyond 2030”, proseguendo il proprio impegno per il rafforzamento del ruolo delle aree metropolitane nelle politiche europee e internazionali;

Considerato che

- nei giorni 7 e 8 ottobre 2026 si svolgerà a Istanbul l'undicesima edizione dell'EMA Forum, dedicata al tema “Governing the Metropolitan Future: Policies, Funds and Climate-Driven Water Risks”, con particolare riferimento al Quadro Finanziario Pluriennale 2028–2034, alla futura Politica di Coesione, all'Agenda europea per le città e alla governance dei rischi climatici connessi all'acqua;
- nell'ambito del Forum sarà sottoposta alla sottoscrizione delle autorità metropolitane partecipanti una nuova Dichiarazione politica, che richiama la necessità di rafforzare il riconoscimento delle autorità metropolitane quali attori strategici delle politiche europee, promuovendo una governance multilivello e strumenti finanziari maggiormente accessibili, diretti e territorialmente mirati;
- la Dichiarazione individua inoltre, tra le priorità per la resilienza metropolitana, l'integrazione tra gestione delle risorse idriche, adattamento climatico, pianificazione territoriale e investimenti infrastrutturali, il ricorso a soluzioni basate sulla natura, nonché l'utilizzo di dati, intelligenza artificiale, digital twin, open data e sistemi interoperabili a supporto della prevenzione e della gestione dei rischi;
- tali indirizzi risultano coerenti con le funzioni istituzionali e le attività sviluppate dalla Città Metropolitana di Genova nei settori dello sviluppo del territorio, della transizione digitale, della resilienza, della programmazione europea e della cooperazione internazionale;

Considerato inoltre che

- la Città Metropolitana di Genova è Lead Partner del progetto europeo METRO CASE, finanziato nell'ambito del Programma Interreg Europe;
- il programma dell'EMA Forum 2026 prevede una specifica tavola rotonda dedicata al progetto METRO CASE, finalizzata al confronto sul ruolo delle aree metropolitane nel rafforzamento della governance e nella definizione delle politiche europee;
- la partecipazione al Forum riveste pertanto interesse per l'Ente anche in relazione alle attività del progetto METRO CASE.

Ritenuto opportuno

- aderire alla Dichiarazione politica EMA Forum 2026, condividendone gli indirizzi volti al rafforzamento del ruolo delle aree metropolitane nella governance e nella futura programmazione europea;
- assicurare la partecipazione della Città Metropolitana di Genova all'EMA Forum 2026 quale occasione di confronto con le altre autorità metropolitane e le istituzioni europee;



CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA

Decreto della Sindaca metropolitana

Direzione Affari generali e Gestione del servizio idrico

- consolidare la partecipazione dell'Ente alle reti di cooperazione europea e internazionale e contribuire alla costruzione di una posizione comune delle aree metropolitane sulle politiche europee successive al 2027;

Dato atto che

- l'istruttoria del presente atto è stata svolta da Laura Papaleo, Dirigente del Servizio Strategie Digitali, ICT e Finanziamenti Europei e responsabile del procedimento, che ha attestato la regolarità e correttezza dell'azione amministrativa per quanto di competenza ai sensi dell'articolo 147 bis del decreto legislativo n. 267/2000 e che è incaricata di ogni ulteriore atto necessario per dare esecuzione al presente provvedimento.
- l'eventuale partecipazione in missione dei rappresentanti dell'Ente sarà disciplinata attraverso i conseguenti adempimenti amministrativi e contabili, con imputazione delle relative spese, ove ne ricorrano le condizioni di ammissibilità, alle risorse del progetto INTERREG METRO CASE ovvero alle pertinenti disponibilità di bilancio;

Dato atto infine che dal presente provvedimento non discendono riflessi finanziari o patrimoniali ai sensi dell'articolo 49 del decreto legislativo n. 267/2000;

Acquisito il parere di regolarità tecnica attestante anche la regolarità e la correttezza dell'azione amministrativa espresso ai sensi degli articoli 49 e 147 bis primo comma del decreto legislativo n. 267/2000, allegato alla proposta di deliberazione.

DECRETA

1. di aderire alla Dichiarazione politica dell'EMA Forum 2026 "Governing the Metropolitan Future: Policies, Funds and Climate-Driven Water Risks", allegata quale parte integrante e sostanziale del presente provvedimento, mediante la sottoscrizione della già menzionata Dichiarazione;
2. di assegnare al Servizio Strategie Digitali, ICT e Finanziamenti Europei, incardinato nella Direzione Affari Generali e Gestione del Servizio Idrico, il coordinamento degli adempimenti conseguenti al presente Decreto, tra cui l'organizzazione della delegazione tecnica dell'Ente che parteciperà all'EMA Forum 2026 nonché il raccordo operativo con EMA e con le altre reti e organizzazioni internazionali coinvolte.

Approvato e sottoscritto
IL VICE SINDACO METROPOLITANO
Simone Franceschi
con firma digitale



EMA FORUM 2026
DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION
Istanbul, Türkiye | 7–8 October 2026

The mayors, presidents and political representatives of the European Metropolitan Authorities gathered in Istanbul for the 11th EMA Forum, hosted by Marmara Municipalities Union with the support of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.

Governing the metropolitan future: policies, funds, and climate-driven water risks

The EMA network brings together major metropolitan territories across Europe, representing more than 120 million inhabitants, and serves as a platform for political dialogue between metropolitan authorities, European institutions and national governments.

At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, economic transformation and accelerating climate change, metropolitan areas continue to play a decisive role in Europe's future. They concentrate a large percentage of the population, economic activity, innovation and infrastructure, while also facing the most pressing challenges related to climate risks, water stress, affordable housing, energy consumption, commuting and social inequality.

Because these challenges extend beyond municipal borders, they require coordinated and integrated responses at the metropolitan scale. Metropolitan authorities are therefore essential actors in delivering effective, place-based and cross-sector solutions.

I. A European framework in transformation

Europe is entering a new political and financial cycle that will shape its development for the coming decade. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, the evolution of EU Cohesion Policy, national and regional partnership plans, the European Affordable Housing Plan and the EU Agenda for Cities will define future investment priorities and governance structures. This represents a key opportunity to strengthen the role of metropolitan areas.

However, current trends towards centralisation risk limiting their contribution. Without stronger involvement on the part of metropolitan authorities, European policies may lose territorial relevance, efficiency and long-term impact. Despite their ability to translate EU priorities into concrete results and to connect urban, suburban and rural areas, metropolitan authorities are still not systematically involved in policy design and execution. This weakens the impact of European investments at a crucial moment for Europe's competitiveness.

In the European context, we also want to express our unwavering support for our Ukrainian partners under attack. Ukrainian metropolitan areas are taking on critical security and civil protection responsibilities while providing essential services such as transport, water and waste management. We reaffirm our solidarity and commitment to strengthening cooperation, which includes enhanced bilateral support and knowledge exchange, as well as coordinated approaches to hosting displaced populations, restoring public services and fostering social resilience.

II. The strategic role of metropolitan authorities

Metropolitan areas play a key role in implementing European policies and programmes. They are a hub for knowledge, infrastructure, research and human capital, and enable integrated approaches across mobility, housing, energy and environmental protection.

Their governance scale, through diverse institutional arrangements, allows them to coordinate policies, investments and risks across sectors and administrative levels. From flexible and voluntary models of cooperation to more institutionalised systems, they enable municipalities to coordinate strategic planning and key services while maintaining their autonomy. This makes them essential drivers of sustainability, resilience and economic transformation. At the same time, increasing climate challenges, particularly in water management and infrastructure, require stronger coordination between European institutions, national governments, regions and metropolitan authorities.

Water governance clearly shows the importance of this coordination. Water systems extend across river basins and administrative boundaries and cannot be managed effectively through fragmented approaches. Metropolitan frameworks facilitate cooperation between municipalities and levels of government, support knowledge exchange and help translate European objectives into locally adapted solutions.

At a time when climate-related challenges risk receiving less attention in international debates, we want to highlight the importance of addressing climate-driven water risks from a metropolitan perspective. This is a clear and specific example of the added value of metropolitan governance, as it requires coordination across administrative borders and cooperation between different levels of government.

III. Climate-driven water risks as a metropolitan challenge

Climate-driven water risks have emerged as one of the most critical and systemic challenges of our time. The rising frequency of droughts, floods and water stress is no longer merely an environmental concern; it is a structural risk affecting economic stability, food systems, public health and social well-being. Water is therefore not an issue limited to one sector or another, but rather a cross-cutting dimension of metropolitan resilience and sustainable territorial development.

Today, 34% of EU territory is affected by water scarcity, and water stress impacts 38% of the EU population and key economic sectors. The European Commission's strategic plan for 2025–2029 recognises water resilience, climate adaptation and territorial competitiveness as central pillars of Europe's future prosperity.

Metropolitan areas across Europe are increasingly exposed to interconnected water-related challenges, including droughts, flooding, extreme weather events, pollution and ecosystem degradation. These risks are amplified by population concentration, infrastructure dependency and growing pressures on natural resources, creating cascading impacts across mobility, energy systems, economic activity and public services.

Because water systems, infrastructure networks and ecological systems extend beyond administrative boundaries, effective responses require coordinated action at the metropolitan scale. Metropolitan authorities are therefore well positioned to connect water management, spatial planning, infrastructure investment and climate adaptation, while supporting more integrated and resilient territorial development.

IV. Metropolitan priorities for climate resilience and water-related risks

In the coming decade, metropolitan authorities will play a decisive role in strengthening Europe's resilience, competitiveness and sustainability. We therefore call upon European institutions, national governments and relevant stakeholders to cooperate with metropolitan authorities in advancing the following priorities:

- 1. Integrated water resilience and climate adaptation:** Climate-driven water risks increasingly transcend administrative boundaries. Water management, climate adaptation, anti-flooding measures, spatial planning and infrastructure investment should therefore be coordinated across metropolitan territories, ensuring greater policy coherence across levels of government and sectors.
- 2. Investment in resilient and future-proof infrastructure:** European and national funding frameworks should support metropolitan-scale investments addressing water-related risks that cut across municipal boundaries, both in urban and rural areas. Dedicated and place-based funding should enable integrated projects on drought resilience, flood protection, water supply and efficiency, ecosystem restoration, digital monitoring systems and critical infrastructure adaptation.
- 3. Nature-based and hybrid solutions:** Public policies and funding programmes should accelerate the implementation of nature-based and hybrid solutions at the metropolitan scale, including wetland restoration, sustainable urban drainage systems, urban forests, green-blue infrastructure and ecosystem-based adaptation measures that strengthen resilience while generating environmental and social co-benefits.
- 4. Data, innovation and preparedness:** Decision-making on climate-driven water risks at the metropolitan level should be supported by strong data systems, digital technologies, early warning mechanisms and integrated monitoring tools. To achieve this, European and national programmes should strengthen metropolitan capabilities in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital twins, open data platforms and interoperable data systems, while fostering cooperation between public authorities, research institutions and service providers to improve preparedness, risk management and the efficiency of public services.
- 5. Water justice and inclusive resilience:** Climate-related water risks disproportionately affect vulnerable groups and communities. Policies and investments should therefore promote equitable access to water services, strengthen social resilience and ensure that adaptation

measures contribute to greater social inclusion and territorial cohesion across metropolitan areas.

6. **Resilient housing and land-use planning:** Housing and land-use policies in metropolitan areas should reduce exposure to water-related disaster risks by integrating flood risk, drought vulnerability and long-term climate projections into spatial development decisions. They should also promote water-smart and circular solutions, such as greywater reuse, rainwater harvesting, permeable surfaces and smart building technologies.

V. A call for stronger partnership with European institutions

Building on a decade of collective advocacy and the momentum of the Barcelona Metropolitan Declaration (2025), we reaffirm metropolitan areas' central role in shaping European and global agendas beyond 2030. Metropolitan authorities are not only implementers but also essential political actors, operating at the scale needed to address complex, cross-sector challenges, particularly climate-driven water risks.

Effective governance requires integrated, multilevel and place-based approaches with strong metropolitan leadership. Unlocking Europe's full potential depends on fully engaging metropolitan territories.

Metropolitan authorities stand ready to contribute to Europe's future. However, addressing global issues such as climate change, water risks and territorial inequalities requires stronger cooperation across all levels of governance.

We therefore call upon the European Commission, European Parliament, European Council and European Committee of the Regions to:

- Recognise metropolitan authorities as strategic actors in European policymaking, ensuring their meaningful involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes, – particularly in the MFF 2028–2034 and related Cohesion Policy instruments – *to include dedicated, place-based metropolitan funding windows that enable large-scale, integrated housing strategies, urban regeneration, sustainable mobility, digital transition, social services, and access to essential services, such as water supply or waste management.*
- Strengthen multilevel governance frameworks that reflect metropolitan realities and mobilise public and private investments for green, digital and resilient transitions.
- Improve access to European funding through more direct, simplified and place-based instruments.
- Support metropolitan innovation, especially in climate adaptation and water management through integrated and nature-based approaches.

Only through stronger cooperation between European, national, regional and metropolitan levels can Europe respond effectively to present and future challenges.

We, the members of the European Metropolitan Authorities, reaffirm our commitment to working together towards a resilient, inclusive and sustainable future, and call for the political recognition, governance frameworks and financial instruments needed to make this vision a reality.

October 8, 2026 – ISTANBUL

Signatories

Metropolitan Area	Name, surname and position	Signature
Marmara Municipalities Union	Ahmet AKIN President of the Marmara Municipalities Union and Mayor of Balıkesir	
Barcelona Metropolitan Area	Jordi Castellana i Gamisans Vice-president for international relations and digital metropolis	
City of Vienna	Omar AL-RAWI Member of the City Council	
Torino Meropolitan City Strambino	Sonia CAMBURSANO Councilwoman Mayor	
Verband Region Stuttgart	Rainer GESSLER Deputy Chairman	
Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot Sopot	Magdalena CZARZYŃSKA- JACHIM President Mayor	
Milan Metropolitan City METREX	Marco GRIGUOLO Vice-president President	
Florence Metropolitan City	Alessandra INNOCENTI Metropolitan Councillor	
Poznan Metropolitan Area	Jacek JASKOWIAK Mayor	

Genova Metropolitan City

Rome Metropolitan City

Pierluigi SANNA
Deputy Metropolitan Mayor

Akershus County

Anette Marie SOLLI
Governing Mayor

Riga

Māris SPRINDŽUKS
Deputy Chairman of the Riga City
Council

Sofia

Vassil TERZIEV
Mayor

Bratislava Region

Thomas TELEKY
Head of Representation

Krakov Metropolitan Area

Daniel WRZOSZCZYK
Director

**Metropolitan Region
Amsterdam**

**Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska
Metropolia**

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

CONCEPT NOTE

European Metropolitan Authorities Forum 2026

Marmara Municipalities Union will organize the EMA Forum 2026 in collaboration with the Barcelona Metropolitan Area on 7-8 October 2026 in Istanbul, Türkiye.

This edition follows the tenth anniversary of the EMA Forum, celebrated in Barcelona in October 2025 alongside the World Metropolitan Summit. That milestone marked a decade of joint advocacy to strengthen the metropolitan voice in European policies and programmes and to promote structured cooperation among metropolitan authorities at the international level.

The EMA Forum 2026 will focus on the critical role of metropolitan areas in shaping and governing global and European agendas beyond 2030. It will examine how metropolises are central to achieving EU goals, emphasizing their strategic role in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034, Cohesion Policy, and the EU agenda for cities.

Moreover, at a time when international debates have increasingly shifted away from the climate emergency, a key theme of the Forum will be climate-driven water risks. This will highlight the urgent need for metropolitan-scale governance to effectively manage water scarcity, flooding, and related socio-environmental vulnerabilities.

Overall, the Forum's theme will be **"Governing the Metropolitan Future: Policies, Funds, and Climate-Driven Water Risks."** It aims to reaffirm metropolitan authorities as active partners in policy design, implementation, and governance, ensuring that metropolises are equipped to deliver resilient, inclusive, and effective solutions to global challenges.

Metropolitan Perspective Beyond 2030

International and European agendas are currently being reshaped in response to a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex global context. Issues that only a few years ago were at the forefront of multilateral debate, such as climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and the green and digital transitions, have progressively lost political visibility, despite the fact that their impacts are becoming more severe and tangible across the globe.

Over recent decades, nations, regions, local authorities, civil society and international organisations reached a certain consensus around shared priorities, mainly defined by the Agenda 2030: tackling climate change, reducing poverty and hunger, promoting education, ensuring access to water and basic services, social and economic development, strengthening multilateralism and governance, and building cooperation and peace.

Today, these common objectives risk being overshadowed by short-term geopolitical aspirations. Geopolitical instability, armed conflicts, security concerns, and macroeconomic pressures have come to dominate public and institutional narratives. This shift in priorities risks narrowing the strategic involvement of local authorities and diverting attention from long-term structural challenges that remain critical for sustainable and inclusive development.

On the other hand, periods of instability can also open opportunities for political and institutional reform. Local and regional governments have long advocated for being recognized not merely as implementers of global agendas, but as political actors in their own right in international decision-making. This demand has become particularly relevant in the debates on the future of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Pact for the Future and the post-2030 frameworks, where local and regional governments are seeking to consolidate a unified political voice in global decision-making.

Our focus remains on the added value of metropolitan areas, where the effects of global instability have a strong impact. Our territories and citizens absorb the social, economic and environmental consequences of global crises. Rising living costs, housing shortages, growing inequalities, migration pressures and increasing demands on public services are experienced first and most intensely in urban areas. Metropolitan areas are where global challenges become local realities – but also where solutions are tested, implemented and scaled up. They concentrate innovation, economic activity, infrastructure, knowledge and social diversity. For this reason, they are not only directly affected by global challenges; they are essential actors in delivering effective, practical and innovative solutions to achieve global goals.

The EMA Forum 2026 will therefore come at a crucial moment to reaffirm the metropolitan perspective in shaping global agendas beyond 2030. European metropolitan areas will continue to raise their voice in defence of the metropolitan dimension, multilateral cooperation, sustainable development, equity, and inclusive social and economic development for present and future generations worldwide. Metropolitan authorities are ready not only to adapt to change, but also to actively help shape it.

A Crucial Moment for the European Framework 2028-2034: Policies and Funds

The coming years will be decisive for Europe. Beyond the geopolitical context, Europe's future capacity to compete and innovate globally will depend on how it structures its territorial development and empowers its key economic and innovation engines to drive sustainable growth and reinforce the continent's resilience and competitiveness.

The preparation of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034, the new Cohesion Policy, the European Affordable Housing Plan and the definition of the EU Agenda for Cities will be decisive for our metropolitan areas and will determine investment priorities and governance models for the next decade. These frameworks will shape how Europe addresses competitiveness, sustainability, energy transition, housing, mobility and social inclusion.

This represents a critical opportunity to strengthen the role of metropolitan areas within the European project. Metropolitan areas concentrate a significant share of Europe's population, GDP, innovation capacity and strategic infrastructure. They are key drivers of competitiveness, social cohesion and the green and digital transitions. At the same time, they face the most complex and interconnected challenges, from housing affordability and water scarcity to security and economic transformation.

For these reasons, metropolitan authorities must not be treated solely as beneficiaries or implementing bodies of European funds. They must be recognised as strategic actors in the design, implementation and evaluation of European policies and programmes.

The next MFF and the future Cohesion Policy should therefore guarantee stronger and more direct involvement of metropolitan areas, through governance mechanisms that allow structural participation, not dependent exclusively on national or regional intermediaries. This includes direct access to dedicated metropolitan funding instruments, binding consultation in programme design, and a clear institutional role in monitoring and evaluation processes.

However, current signals from European institutions suggest that local, and especially metropolitan authorities, may not have a sufficiently relevant role in shaping the next generation of programmes and funds. Early indications regarding the future Cohesion Policy, the Global Gateway strategy and the new EU Agenda for Cities point towards governance models in which metropolitan involvement remains conditional on the willingness of national or regional governments.

On 16 July 2025, the European Commission presented its proposal for the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework, described as an EU budget “for a stronger Europe”. The proposed seven-year budget amounts to almost €2 trillion and is expected to come into force in January 2028, following negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. This negotiation period will be crucial for advocating metropolitan priorities and ensuring that metropolitan areas are meaningfully reflected in the next generation of EU programmes and funding instruments.



EMA meeting with the Executive VP Raffaele Fitto

Strategic programmes, including cohesion-related funds, would be integrated into 27 National and Regional Partnership Plans, reinforcing Member States' role in programming and implementation. This restructuring risks reducing local and regional negotiating power and limiting funding for local development. The Cohesion Alliance, an initiative of the European Committee of the Regions that gathers over 12,000 local and regional representatives and partners, advocates for Cohesion Policy as the EU's main long-term decentralized investment tool.

The EMA network has also published a study gathering information about the role of metropolitan areas in Cohesion Policy during the period 2021-2027. The EMA's analysis on "[The impact of cohesion policy on metropolitan areas during the period 2021-2027](#)" examines the role of metropolitan areas in Cohesion Policy (2021-2027), highlighting the impact of European funding through key projects identified by the metropolises themselves. Data from 23 metropolitan areas across 12 EU countries show that even with limited resources, they deliver significant results. Recognizing their role more explicitly and improving access to Cohesion Policy instruments could substantially increase EU-wide impact. Strengthening metropolitan authorities is not a selfish request but a strategic investment in Europe's competitiveness, resilience, and social cohesion.

In the case of the new EU Agenda for Cities, there is a clear recognition of the importance of metropolitan areas, with references to initiatives such as Italy's Metro Plus programme, Portugal's integrated intermunicipal strategies, and Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) support to metropolitan areas. However, when it comes to implementation, the strategy again leaves the final decision largely in the hands of national and regional authorities. As the Commission states, "When addressing the challenges facing urban areas in national and regional partnership plans, Member States should provide the opportunities for cities and other urban authorities to shape programmes of reforms and investments tailored to their specific needs" (European Commission, 2025).

In parallel, the European Affordable Housing Plan offers a key opportunity to tackle growing housing challenges. Metropolitan areas are at the centre of affordability and supply pressures, with direct implications for competitiveness and social cohesion. These initiatives should therefore provide concrete tools, funding and coordination mechanisms, while ensuring that metropolitan authorities are fully involved as strategic actors in designing and implementing solutions adapted to their realities. The European Housing Alliance can play a key role in fostering coordination between European, national, regional and local actors, promoting best practices and reinforcing a shared strategic vision. However, for these initiatives to be effective, metropolitan authorities must be integrated as core partners, with a direct role in shaping priorities, accessing relevant funding instruments and implementing solutions adapted to their specific realities.

Many of Europe's most pressing challenges have a clear metropolitan dimension. Ignoring this reality risks limiting the effectiveness of European programmes and preventing Europe from unlocking the full potential of its metropolitan areas to deliver tangible results. Europe will not be able to compete in this new global context if its metropolises are unable to unleash their full potential.

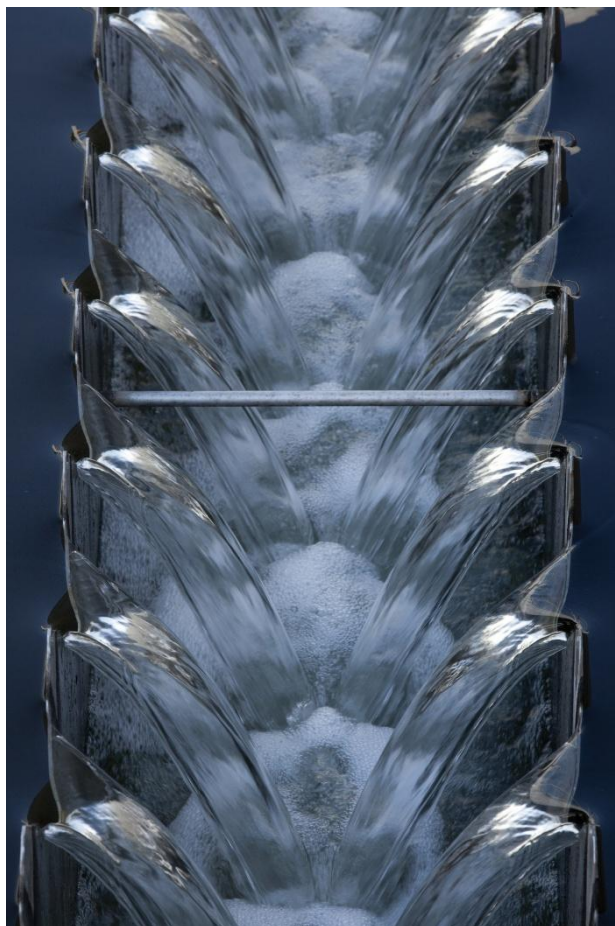
The EMA Forum 2026 will therefore call for a renewed partnership between European institutions and metropolitan authorities – a partnership based on trust, shared responsibility and direct dialogue. If Europe is serious about its ambitions for competitiveness, sustainability and social cohesion, it must fully and structurally integrate metropolitan areas into the governance of European policies and programmes.

Climate-Driven Water Risks

While international attention increasingly turns towards geopolitical strategies focused on security, trade and global power dynamics, the accelerating consequences of climate change continue to intensify, and this dimension appears to have lost visibility in global discussions. Among the effects, water scarcity stands out as one of the most urgent and destabilising consequences of climate change. The Forum therefore will also place a particular emphasis on addressing climate-driven water risks, recognising their profound implications for metropolitan areas.

Climate-driven water risks arise from the close link between climate change and the hydrologic cycle, where rising temperatures disrupt precipitation patterns and exacerbate both water scarcity and water-related hazards. According to UNEP, over 90% of natural disasters worldwide are weather- and water-related. Many regions in the world are facing a dual water challenge: growing water scarcity on the one hand, and more frequent and severe floods and storms on the other. UN-Water states that roughly half of the global population now experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year, a figure projected to rise with further warming and population growth. UNCCD estimates that droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050, while the number of people at risk of floods is projected to increase from 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion by the same year.

Today, climate-driven water risks are no longer limited to environmental degradation. They increasingly translate into humanitarian risks, food insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability, as more frequent and severe droughts, floods and storms affect social well-being. These water-related extremes increasingly trigger public health threats through the spread of water-borne and climate-sensitive diseases, while simultaneously undermining agricultural production and disrupting food supply chains. These risks are particularly pronounced in urban areas. The international consensus on sustainable urbanisation, epitomised by the New Urban Agenda adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (*Habitat III*), directly embraces water and sanitation as core components of resilient and inclusive cities. Cities concentrate population, economic activity and critical infrastructure, while at the same time transforming natural hydrological systems through land sealing, altered drainage patterns, and intensive water demand. Climate change is therefore reshaping urban water systems in ways that directly translate into rising disaster risks, including more frequent and severe droughts, pluvial and fluvial flooding, and urban heat-water interactions.



At the same time, climate-driven water risks are inseparable from questions of inequality and social vulnerability. According to the Joint Monitoring Programme of the World Health Organization and UNICEF, 2.2 billion people worldwide (around one in three) lacked access to safely managed drinking water services in 2017, while 4.2 billion people (more than half of the global population) lacked access to safely managed sanitation services. These deficits are highly unevenly distributed and disproportionately affect women and girls, low-income households, and marginalized ethnic or cultural communities, who face both persistent service gaps and heightened exposure to climate-related hazards such as droughts, floods and urban flooding.

Inequality is particularly acute in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, where around 420 million children, nearly one in five globally, live in areas affected by armed conflict and fragility, a figure that could rise significantly by 2030 if preventive action is not taken. According to UNICEF, in countries affected by protracted conflict, children under the age of 15 are, on average, almost three times more likely to die from diarrhoeal diseases caused by a lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene than from direct violence.

Global and European Policy Frameworks

The global policy debate increasingly frames climate-driven water risk as a core development and governance challenge. At the centre of the global agenda stands the water and sanitation framework adopted under the auspices of the United Nations. SDG 6 establishes a holistic vision to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and translates this ambition into a set of interlinked targets covering access, quality, efficiency, ecosystem protection and governance across the entire water cycle.

Within this framework, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) constitutes the operational backbone of the governance target and provides a common logic for addressing climate-driven water risks in an integrated manner. By promoting coordination across domestic supply, agriculture, industry, energy and ecosystem protection, and by strengthening cooperation across administrative boundaries, this approach explicitly recognises that water scarcity, pollution and flood risks are interconnected outcomes of development pathways, land-use decisions and institutional arrangements rather than isolated sectoral problems. For metropolitan areas in particular, where water systems, infrastructure networks and land-use dynamics extend far beyond municipal borders, this integrated governance logic is especially relevant. Metropolitan governance arrangements offer a critical scale for aligning climate adaptation, spatial planning and infrastructure investment, and for translating global commitments on water and climate into territorially coherent action.

At the European level, climate-driven water risks have similarly become a strategic concern, as reflected in the European Commission's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Water resources across the EU are under growing and multi-dimensional pressure, and water resilience is now positioned as a central pillar of quality of life, economic competitiveness and strategic autonomy by the European Commission. Increasing floods, prolonged droughts and structural water scarcity are already constraining key economic sectors and causing large-scale damage across the EU. According to the European Environment Agency, water scarcity affected around 34% of EU territory during at least one season in 2022, while Water Europe notes that water scarcity already affects 38% of the EU population and jeopardizes key industries valued at €192 billion, with water demand projected to increase significantly by 2030.

The dual exposure to scarcity and flooding has reinforced the need to move beyond fragmented, sector-based responses and to embed water considerations into spatial planning, urban development

and infrastructure strategies. The EU's legal and policy architecture is anchored in the Water Framework Directive, complemented by the Floods Directive and the Nature Restoration Regulation, which together provide the backbone of European water governance. In parallel, the recently adopted EU Water Resilience Strategy (2025) defines a renewed policy direction focused on restoring and protecting the water cycle, building a water-smart and competitive economy, and securing clean and affordable water and sanitation for all, while setting concrete efficiency and demand-management objectives for the coming decade. The strategy sets a minimum target of a 10% improvement in water efficiency by 2030 and stresses the need to limit additional water demand stemming from the clean industrial and digital transition, while reinforcing agricultural resilience. For metropolitan areas, where economic activity, population growth and climate exposure are most concentrated, these European frameworks highlight both the scale of risk and the opportunity to act as frontrunners in integrated, climate-resilient water and land-use planning.

Metropolitan Governance and Implementation

Against this global and European policy background, metropolitan areas emerge as key actors in governing climate-driven water risks. Metropolises operate as functional territories where water systems, mobility networks, food and energy supply chains, labour markets and ecological systems intersect across municipal boundaries. Their scale and institutional complexity create significant governance challenges, but also unique opportunities to integrate climate adaptation, water management, spatial planning, infrastructure investment and social policy within a united strategic framework.

In these high-density urban systems, disruptions to water availability or quality can rapidly cascade across supply chains, service provision and local economies, generating impacts that extend far beyond municipal boundaries. This systemic exposure is particularly pronounced in coastal and delta metropolises, where sea-level rise and groundwater salinisation create long-term and potentially irreversible risks for drinking water systems, housing, transport infrastructure and urban livelihoods. Metropolitan authorities are therefore well positioned to reduce risk by coordinating policies across sectors and jurisdictions, mobilising finance for resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions, strengthening early-warning and preparedness systems, and aligning local action with national and international climate and water agendas.

From the current policy perspective, while water management must be planned and coordinated at river basin and functional urban area scale, EU funding continues to be predominantly programmed at NUTS-2 level rather than at the metropolitan scale. This creates a persistent scale mismatch for climate-driven water risks, which materialise across shared catchments, interconnected infrastructure networks and regional land-use systems that extend well beyond individual municipalities. Metropolitan areas, therefore, remain structurally positioned between regional and local policy levels, despite operating as functional urban areas (FUAs) where water demand, flood exposure, pollution pressures and climate vulnerability are generated and managed in an integrated way.

Recognising metropolitan areas as formal policy actors in climate adaptation and water governance would allow them to assume a legitimate coordinating role across municipalities, utilities and sectoral authorities, and to participate directly in programming, governance and funding decisions. This recognition should be operationalised through the systematic use and expansion of metropolitan-level Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) for water infrastructure and nature-based solutions, enabling coherent, cross-boundary investment packages under a single territorial strategy. In parallel, the introduction of dedicated Policy Objectives (POs) for the European Cohesion Policy or

budget envelopes for metropolitan areas would allow direct and targeted financing of complex urban water risks, such as drought resilience, flood protection, water quality and ecosystem restoration, at the scale where these risks can be most effectively addressed. Empowering metropolitan areas in this way would transform them into the main coordinators of climate-driven water risk management, capable of aligning basin-scale planning with urban development, infrastructure investment and social priorities across Europe's most exposed and strategically important territories.

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CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI GENOVA

Direzione Affari generali e Gestione del servizio idrico

PARERE DI REGOLARITA' TECNICA E CORRETTEZZA AMMINISTRATIVA

Sulla sopracitata proposta si esprime, ai sensi degli articoli 49 e 147 bis primo comma del decreto legislativo n.267/2000, parere FAVOREVOLE in ordine al parere di regolarità tecnica attestante anche la regolarità e la correttezza dell'azione amministrativa.

Genova li, 11/09/2026

**Sottoscritto dal Dirigente
(VALENTINA MANZONE)
con firma digitale**