

Title: **The importance of urban regeneration actions: European and Italian legislative framework analysis.**
 Authors: **Annamaria Felli¹** and **Francesco Zullo¹**
 Affiliation: **¹University of L'Aquila (Italy), Department of Civil, Construction-Architectural and Environmental Engineering**



The essence of Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration plays a central role in renewing urban spaces without exacerbating land degradation. Urban regeneration and sustainable development are two key and intertwined issues on the policy agenda as well as in planning practices and research. To “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”, the **Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 No. 11** focuses on the urban environment, and the New Urban Agenda supports this objective by promoting urban planning as an influential instrument for sustainable development.

Best practices show that urban regeneration has the power to transform obsolete areas into liveable, vibrant, sustainable, comfortable, and thriving spaces. In this way, urban regeneration is used as an effective tool to prepare urban areas to face changes in urban population.



Urban Regeneration idea by Juan Tur, Alexandra Delgado and Daniel Cortizo (HUCAMP Architects)

European Approaches to Urban Regeneration

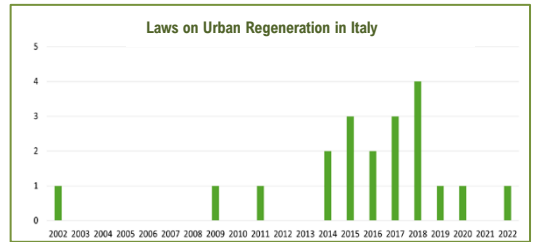
GERMANY Current urban renewal initiatives in major German cities prioritize energy-efficient refurbishment and the reassessment of urban morphology. The foundation for such efforts was laid with the **Urban Development Promotion Act** in 1971, facilitating area-specific measures through special laws in the Building Code, along with statutory regulations and financial support from federal and state grants. Recent legislation, including the **German Strategy for Sustainable Development** (2021) and the **Federal Action Plan for Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity** (2023), underscores the commitment to sustainability and climate awareness in ongoing urban redevelopment programs.

FRANCE The French aim for 2050 is to achieve zero artificial development, transforming existing urbanized areas instead of encroaching on untouched spaces. To support this goal, the government has allocated a 750 million euro fund for brownfield redevelopment, especially in former industrial regions. The **Biodiversity Plan** (2018) and the **ÉLAN Act** (2018) emphasize limiting new land consumption, promoting local urban intensification, and encouraging a return of equivalent value to nature for any consumed land. The **Climate and Resilience Act** (2021) sets the target of **Zero Net Artificialization** (ZAN) by 2050, with an interim goal of halving land consumption from 2021 to 2031, while ensuring continued construction in harmony with housing revival.

SPAIN In recent decades, urban rehabilitation and regeneration have been key priorities for the Spanish government at all levels, as highlighted by the **Ley de Rehabilitación, Regeneración y Renovación Urbanas** (2013). This framework law emphasizes interventions in existing areas, aiming to create favorable environmental, social, and economic conditions for sustainable development and quality of life. The **Agenda Urbana Española** (2019) complements these efforts with ten strategic objectives, providing a detailed and adaptable approach to promoting and enhancing urban spaces in Spain. This agenda not only guides urban change but also encourages active participation from local authorities and stakeholders, reinforcing the effectiveness and sustainability of the initiatives.

Italian Regulatory Landscape

In Italy, the absence of a national law governing land use reduction and urban regeneration has resulted in significant variation in regional laws, lacking a unified approach. Urban regeneration is sometimes misinterpreted solely as redeveloping built heritage, with current laws prioritizing physical-spatial and urban-building planning rather than comprehensive planning. Regional laws often neglect land consumption within urbanized areas, impeding efforts to align with European targets of reducing undeveloped land by 2050. The disparities in regional interpretations highlight the need for a coherent national strategy.



Laws on Urban Regeneration in Italy in the last 22 years. (Elaboration through the study of Italian legislation)

Nature Restoration Law

The European Parliament adopted the **Nature Restoration Law** in July 2023, a regulation requiring nature and environmental restoration measures on 20% of the EU's marine and terrestrial territory by 2030. By 2050, the law aims to restore all damaged ecosystems. Notably, the law addresses urban areas by halting the loss of green spaces by 2030, increasing their area by 5% by 2050, establishing a minimum 10% tree cover in every city, municipality, and urban periphery, and introducing an obligation to reclaim integrated green spaces in buildings and infrastructure.



Conclusions

The presented overview underscores the significance of urban regeneration and sustainable development across European Nations. While Germany focuses on energy-efficient refurbishment and reshaping peripheral districts, France pursues an ambitious goal of achieving zero artificial development by 2050. Spain prioritizes urban rehabilitation, and its Agenda Urbana Española encourages active local participation. However, the lack of a unified national approach in Italy hinders effective urban regeneration, emphasizing the need for a coherent strategy. The recently adopted Nature Restoration Law aims to address environmental concerns, setting targets for ecosystem restoration and emphasizing the importance of preserving urban green spaces. Overall, these diverse approaches highlight the importance of coordinated efforts in achieving sustainable urban development in line with European goals.

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