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## Urban policies in Cosenza Giovanni Soda\*

The fact that Calabria has few towns is strange considering its origins as the centre of the Magna Grecia urban civilisation. The recurring image of Calabria is that of scattered settlements with little binding infrastructure. That image hides a number of dynamic changes and does not take into account of the polarisation and diffusion of settlements along the principal arteries, among which the valley of the river Crati is the one which, in recent years, has not only shown the liveliest and most dynamic growth but also offer the best prospects for development. At the head of the valley, in a site inhabited since earliest times, lies Cosenza, an inland Calabrian town. Cosenza offers an excellent contrast to the stereotypes. It is, in fact, an evolving town, a node of a complex, polycentric and dynamic urban system. The Cosenza urban area contains 120,000 inhabitants (Cosenza, Rende, Castrolibero), but that number can be doubled with a wider interpretation (Cosenza, Rende, Castrolibero and other hinterland districts often physically attached to each other or the three main areas). It constitutes the most evolved urban system in the region. This urban concentration, clustered around the two major centres, Cosenza and Rende, has now fused into a single urban core stretching from the historic centre of Cosenza at one end, to the University of Calabria in Rende at the other. Over the last 20 years, it has undergone considerable change both from the physical and social point of view. Cosenza and Rende together have become the motor of

development and centre of intellectual and human resources for the whole area thanks to the location of the largest university in the region. For all these reasons, Cosenza appears to have the greatest potential for growth of high tech and tertiary industries in the region. To sum up, Cosenza is an urban system (1) whose concentrated population like other metropolitan areas is made up of a fluctuating mixture of residents, commuters, consumers and businessmen (2); it acts as a service point for local productive subsystems and a focus for a network of relations with the surrounding area. Cosenza is open to the outside world and possesses a good number of attractions (university, research centres, commercial system, culture and services). It is important to mention also the strong tradition of urban planning in Rende, the recent relaunching of the image of Cosenza, the balanced nature of its urban environment, the absence of largescale phenomena of abusivismo, the cultural and historic treasures housed in the old part of Cosenza (Cosenza Vecchia), and the potential for development connected with Cosenza's historic traditions as well as those of Rende and other minor centres. All these factors place Cosenza in an excellent position to compete or cooperate with other urban areas in southern Italy. Finally, if a comparison is made between Cosenza and other urban centres in the region, it is clear that Cosenza is a better place to live as it is better organised, has strong artistic and historical roots and offers a variety of social activities and cultural diversity. Of course, it would be overstating the case to say that Cosenza is an idyllic

island in the centre of a region depressed both socially and economically. Indeed the area's economic and productive base is still weak, unemployment is high and social deprivation and marginalisation is on the increase. From an urban planning perspective, the urban core of Cosenza-Rende gives the impression of being incomplete and there is an evident lack of services and green spaces in the part of Cosenza built in the period of rapid expansion in the 1970s. Furthermore, from the urban and social point of view, as well as from the perspective of environmental harmony, there is a stark contrast between areas of great quality and potential, and crisis areas. Moreover as a result of the high demand for building in certain areas (and neglect in others) parts of the territorial system (historic centre, river ecosystems, rural, hillside and plain landscapes) have suffered damage. What is striking, however, is the widespread processes of dynamic change over recent years (spanning out from the urban core to the system of satellite communes). In this sense, to understand the Cosenza urban area means we have to consider the context in which significant morphogenetic urban processes are at work. This is not all. In recent urban and regional policy developments financed through public and community funding, there a process has emerged, though not without difficulties and contradictions, of cooperation between different institutions that could form the basis of local intercommunal networks that could become the community governance of the future.

## History of urban planning and paradigms

Cosenza has an unusual urban structure, which is reminiscent, if the analogy is not too farfetched, of the Colonial town in French north Africa. In these places, the *ville nouvelle*, with its straight wide boulevards flanked by cafés and shops, is the modern antithesis of the medieval city with its maze of winding lanes of tall houses and crumbling palaces. A visitor to Cosenza cannot help being struck by the almost metaphysical contrast between the nineteenth century design (viale Trieste, corso Umberto and adjacent streets, parts of the Carmine and Lungo Busento quarters), which seem to have been designed by a surrealist artist, and the old town, which begins on the other side of the bridge over the Busento, almost suspended on the semicircle of hills that divide the long flat Crati valley from the buttresses of the Sila mountains. The Busento and Crati rivers are the frontier, the symbolic, physical and functional divide between the two completely different parts of the town. This separation has, in fact, quite a recent history. In the nineteenth century, the urban area was restricted to the hills and it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the population rose to over 20,000 that the city began to cross the rivers and move northwards transforming the countryside below into an urban milieu, until it at last converged with Rende to create the conurbation of today. This linear conurbation settled along the sides of natural (the Crati river and its tributaries) and manmade features (the railway, the Calabrian State Highway, via Popilia which was the ancient Roman road to Sicily). Between 1887 and 1972, this expansion was

governed by 5 planning acts as regards Cosenza, and, as regards Rende, by the 1971 PRG (town plan), which confirmed the north-south direction of settlement. Without entering into too much detail on the above mentioned planning instruments introduced by Cosenza (3), it should be pointed out that the polarisation between the old town on the hill and the new one across the rivers, already latent in the 1939 plan, became accentuated after the war as a result of a demographic increase, by a boom in construction and the exploitation of lowlying areas for building purposes. These dynamics were furthered by the 1959 plan, which, for the first time, envisaged the town's expansion up to the border with Rende. This was the period of unregulated intensive construction, in which new quarters without services (including a number of public housing projects) were being constantly erected along the main arterial routes in a northerly direction. The centre of gravity of the city, which doubled in population between 1951 and 1981 (4), also moved northwards. As a result, Cosenza became effectively joined with the new residential areas in Rende and the land on the west bank of the river Crati became saturated with construction. Rende, however, though building also along a single axis, albeit from the opposite direction, applied different and much higher standards with regard to housing density and the relation between residential development and public spaces. Being trapped in the logic of the time, in which Cosenza is seen as the node of the north-south infrastructure and the directional centre of the districts earmarked for agroindustrial development along the valley, not even

the planning regulations in 1972 were able to propose an alternative. This vision has many implications and anticipates a number of questions that are still relevant today but pays little attention to the real possibilities of the situation and is quite incapable of tackling the problems created by expansion along the valley. Foremost among these problems are the isolation of working class areas with a high percentage of public housing such as San Vito, Torrealta and via Popilia, the marginalisation of the *ville nouvelle* along the Busento and the decline of the old town, through depopulation, social exclusion and deprivation; the houses remain but there are no inhabitants and no community.

The linear model of expansion followed in Cosenza replicates the classical paradigm of urbanisation in southern Italy (5), dictated by the administrative needs of a united state, according to which small and medium sized towns in southern Italy are allocated a territorial role and selected as provincial capitals and city prefectures. Unlike the cities in the north of Italy, these new administrative centres are seen as places where wealth is collected and redistributed, rather than as places where wealth is created, i.e. centres of industry and production which will lead to growth over time. An 'administrative urbanism' (6), an administrative urban structure of this kind, is evident in the *nouvelle ville* and the quarters built during the 20 years of Fascism. Grafted onto this matrix was the post war construction boom, with the allocation of government funding. Unfortunately, the planning regulators of the time were unwilling, or did not have the tools to, challenge the

control of the politicians and the construction lobby (administrators, bureaucrats, mediators, designers and businessmen). The experience of Cosenza, however, was not marked by series cases of *abusivismo*. The limitations imposed physical or geographical features and the absence of catalysts such as ports, largescale industrial or commercial centres, spared the city, to a great extent, from the extremes of speculative building that happened in other towns in Southern Italy.

Nevertheless, the phase of unregulated expansion did have drastic effects on the town, when, as special funding dried up, Cosenza entered the final decade of the twentieth century with a number of unresolved problems and much uncertainty. Overbuilt in the north, without any productive base in a region already suffering from social and economic recession, its leading role threatened by more dynamic parts of the area, its population in decline, the town of Cosenza did not appear to be in any position to cope with the problems caused by decades of neglect. These included the abandonment of the old town, the isolation of outlying areas, traffic congestion, malfunctioning services, a poor quality of life and so on, all exacerbated by the city's linear morphology. A drastic change was needed in strategic thinking to come to grips with the vast urban sprawl that had grown up.

### **The urban transformation in the 1990s**

The turning point for Cosenza came half way through the 1990s with the election of Giacomo Mancini as mayor, an important figure in the history of Italian socialism. It was no

coincidence that urban planning headed his election manifesto and the first priority was the approval of the modification of the PRG. Attention was focused on physical and social regeneration of the old town and the realisation of a new north-south transport system as a means of reuniting the urban area. Other priorities concerned integrating the university with the city, realising the *Città dei Ragazzi* project and the construction of a new bridge over the river Crati. The purpose of this was to link the town itself with the zone to the east occupied by gypsies in a shanty town which was very much the symbol of urban decay, marginalisation and social exclusion. The idea was to knock down the bidonville and rehouse the gypsies in three new buildings. Underpinning all this was the vision of a new city: to make Cosenza a cultural centre and relaunch its role as the fulcrum of the urban network for the entire area, focal point for high quality services and functions, also through the transfer of parts of the university to the centre of Cosenza. The approval of the PRG in 1995 marked the end of a long phase of ungoverned growth, laying down the guidelines of Mancini's vision of the city of the future. At the same time, Cosenza joined the Urban Programme, which was to be for the following five years the financial motor for the administration's plan and the instrument for redefining the city's image. The Urban experience in Cosenza has been the object of various studies and there is no need to go into further detail here (7). One should point out, however, some basic elements starting with the choice of the two target areas, the old town and via Popilia. These areas

suffered from a number of serious problems: depopulation, lack of services, poor housing, physical, social and economic decay (old town), marginalisation, lack of services, high crime, social exclusion, squalor (via Popilia). The task of transforming the old town was very difficult. A place of legend, core of the city's identity, full of history and art, yet at the same time, in terminal decline, depopulated and without any economic basis. It still housed important city institutions (the Prefecture, Provincial administration offices, the civic theatre Rendano, the Liceo classico Telesio and the headquarters of the Cassa di Risparmio). The Urban Programme set itself a number of specific aims: rehabilitation of abandoned public buildings for social purposes, the utilisation of open spaces, and support for local business initiatives. By the time the Programme came to an end in 2001 there had been a remarkable change: over a hundred commercial and handcraft activities had started up or transferred to corso Telesio, the road that runs through the old town, which has once again become the heart of the city, attracting hundreds of people until late in the night. The restored building housing the Casa della cultura and the restoration of the former Albergo Bologna have become community centres incubating ideas and cultural projects, through cultural associations, which have taken advantage of the new spaces created. Other success stories included the children's library (3,000 members in the first few months) and the renovation and reutilisation of former railway station in piazza Matteotti, first headquarters of the *piano telematico calabrese* and, more

recently, a conference and exhibition (8) centre, as well as the headquarters of Info Point Europe.

There has been a turnaround. The renovation of the old town has led to the creation of a *milieu*, a new identity through the work of local groups, activists, voluntary associations and others, creating a renewed sense of civic pride and self confidence. This new civic identity is now expressed in the awareness of the need for commitment and concrete action. Of course, many problems remain both in the old town and other parts of the city. In the old town the Urban Programme determined conditions in which more effective strategies for regeneration could come to the fore, especially those to do with housing. In line with this, two initiatives (the Contratto di quartiere Santa Lucia and Urban Renovation Program) have been set up: the first focuses on housing renovation, and improvements in services and infrastructure in a difficult and run down section of the old town with a reputation as a red light area, while the PRU involves overall coordination of private and public works across the city, in particular in the Via Popilia and Torrealta areas.

#### **City as node, city as place: evolving ideas and images of new planning**

During the years of the Mancini administration between 1994 and 2002, Cosenza underwent a profound change. The relationship between the city and the old town was re-established. The latter became once again a focal point for the whole town, at least as regards Corso Telesio, where the first steps were taken by private initiatives to restore the buildings for housing. Among the most important

works carried out so far the following deserve special mention: the *Città dei ragazzi*, the river park along the banks of the Crati, a commercial and business centre in piazza Matteotti, foot bridges across the river, new housing projects for local gypsies. As regards future projects, the tram link from the centre of Cosenza to the university on the other side of town (a joint effort with Rende), the link road and bridge over the Crati river designed by Calatrava, and the construction of areas of parkland around the city. At the same time many problems remain unresolved. The prospect of linking the via Popilia area to the centre had not made much progress. The failure of the 'Crati valley' project to create a sort of Silicon valley near the university set up in the 1980s but abandoned a decade later. The difficulties of the industrial zone in Piano Largo, south of Cosenza, confirm the problem faced by the area as a whole as regards the inability of the local economy, which is basically based on consumption rather than production, to take off. Consequently, there remains a lack of resources and actors needed to come up with the right policy solutions. The real power in the decision making network has not devolved but resides mainly within the traditional circuit of people connected with the building industry. The role of the public sector funding and hence political intermediation in releasing funds remains crucial. On the planning level, the lines established by the Mancini administration need to be re-enforced but there is also a need for new policy instruments and resources, seeing as it has become clear that the ongoing projects can only partly solve the problems of

decades of neglect, problems such as interconnecting Rende and the university, with Cosenza, maintaining the hillsides, improving various outlying areas, the problem of the quality of life in areas built in the period of mono-directional expansion. Many of these problems require innovative solutions. For example, given the economic stagnation at local level and the inherited problems of past neglect e.g. urban sprawl, the only way forward is through an approach whereby all the different municipalities work together in order to take into account the area as a whole. Two aspects of Mancini's vision remain of fundamental importance: the rediscovery and restoration of Cosenza's artistic heritage, and second, the need to maintain the hillside settlement and the Viale-Parco project as a means of reuniting the central part of the town with its eastern periphery and call a halt to the mono-directional expansion northwards. It is not just the town of Cosenza but the whole urban area that is undergoing rapid changes: the spread of hinterland settlements towards the flat lands and hills along the valley, a multiplication of residential, tertiary and industrial areas; the growth of the university (9) which now has 30,000 students and the consequent expansion of Rende to accommodate the student population and people whose work is connected with the university; the development of the industrial zone in the northern part of Rende, which has now merged with that of Montalto; the dramatic changes brought about by the opening of the Centro Metropolis hypermarket in Rende and two other commercial centres on the outskirts of the urban area in Zumpano

and Montalto (10) (e.g. residential and traffic disruption). Given this situation, the need for strategic planning is long overdue. Unfortunately each municipalities continues to operate independently and there has been no successful attempt to act together or agree an overall plan (11). What happens instead is competition to increase the supply of residential housing. Hopeful signals, on the other hand, have come from the recent experience of the programming of the Structural Funds for 2000-06, which could become a model for public initiatives in the urban area, in which the themes of modernisation of the infrastructure, urban redevelopment are addressed in an innovative way.

The Integrated Territorial Project (PIT) that takes in Cosenza, Rende and 14 other hinterland municipalities is the most advanced experiment so far in using a joint approach to local development. The project proposes an exciting strategy to tackle the evolving problems of the area; it focuses on social policy, artistic restoration and the promotion of local industries (for example, through strengthening the connection between local businesses and the university). Besides its intrinsic merits, the project has the added virtue of promoting a partnership plan at institutional level between the mayors, local actors (PIT managers) and the university, which has taken on the role of constructing a public project for local development. Having said that, the setting up of such a body does not guarantee the creation of a real developmental coalition. Indeed, it could get bogged down by opportunism, selfinterest or mere tokenism. Notwithstanding these and

other risks (the threat the Regional will withdraw support from the PIT in order to cut costs), the process underway in Cosenza does seem to have introduced a new pattern of interaction at local level (12), and the participants appear to be taking their work seriously. The Urban Development Programme (PSU) for Cosenza-Rende is the most important planning tool for the two communes. Unlike the PIT, it is more orientated to giving the municipalities the responsibility for the construction and management of the programme. The PSU is not merely a programme of public investments, but above all a framework within which one can start to describe and construct a joint approach for the local government of the whole urban area of Cosenza and Rende. The programme is called 'COsenza-REnde - A City Project' sums up the basic idea in a slogan: building a city means further integration through the sharing of political and institutional responsibility and identifying together strategic aims, means of verification and evaluation of common projects. The strategic goal of the programme goes to the heart of the problem, not only because it involves the intercommunal dimension, but, above all, because the emerging conurbation is seen both as a place or *milieu* and a node for networks local and beyond. The programme sets out the following objectives: accelerate integration of the urban system, strengthen the economic base, invest in training, in the system of production, and seek points of contact outside the area. The perspective is to use public policy as a catalyst in order to further the reorganisation of urban space, the renovation of run-down areas, the

modernisation of the infrastructure and so on. In this sense the PSU is an umbrella framework for a whole array of local planning instruments (including the PIT), in which different segments of policy are brought together into an integrated whole. Moreover, it is also a possible blueprint for the construction of a 'strategic structural' (13) plan for the new city of Cosenza and Rende. Not surprisingly such an operation requires a considerable and complex financial organisation (14). As regards the strategic aspect, the PSU focuses on six priorities. The first is to re-enforce the process of integration between the two towns. It is one of the most important areas of the whole programme involving projects such as the extension of the Viale-Parco (a new road) towards Rende and the realisation of a Planetarium and Science Museum in the old railway station in piazza Matteotti in Cosenza. The station itself, which has already been restored through the Urban programme, is being converted into a new commercial centre through private funding; it is also the terminus for the projected tramline to the university. The second line of action involves action to resolve the crisis in the city's transport system, both organisationally and physically, through the building of a new bridge across the Crati and the above-mentioned tramline from the centre of Cosenza to the university. The third and fourth areas propose an integrated strategy for the regeneration of run-down areas along the lines of the Urban programme, through a variety of measures aimed especially at helping the elderly and disabled get access to goods and services (such as good neighbour schemes). The final two lines focus on the

city's attractions to help Cosenza-Rende, already a university town, become a tourist location and a place of cultural interest. Hence, a number of works aimed at restoring artistic and architectural treasures (Castello Svevo in Cosenza, Rende castle, the former Fratelli Bandiera barracks and many others) and environmental improvements (parks along the banks of the Crati river and the creation of other green spaces in the centre and on the periphery). To sum up the PSU for Cosenza and Rende is a blueprint for the future. That is not to say that there are no problems, there are, especially as regards public participation and co-ordination. Nevertheless, although still rather vague in certain of its specifications, it does provide an ambitious and imaginative approach. It first addresses the immediate problems created by Cosenza's recent history (old town, periphery, urban models, mono-directionality, integration with Rende). The time span being limited 2000-06, it offers a limited number of risky but important solutions, leaving it up to local actors to work out the details in the medium term. Underlying all this is the vision of a future city. The two symbolic landmarks are the old town on the one hand and the university on the other; between these points lies the space for action, the need to create new functions, unite the various parts, provide areas of green and so on. The Cosenza-Rende PSU is a hybrid. It cannot really be called a strategic plan because, although it tries to link political programme to a spatial model and expresses choices in general terms, as a model of spatial organisation is it still too generic. The same can be said, for reasons mentioned above, as

regards the phases of framing and networking. It cannot even be considered a mere practical tool, as it also contains an experimental and visionary side. What is important, however, is the space for public action that the PSU along with the PIT has opened up and the political implications accompanying this process. At least the programme in its intention of accelerating the dynamics of integration contains the double dimension (city as node, city as place) placing in the foreground the issue of the urban *milieu* as a strategic resource for reconnecting the urban area with both its immediate neighbourhood and the outside world (15). At the same time it poses the problem strengthening the bonds within the city as a means of promoting the *milieu*. Its vision offers a new representation of a city this: polycentric, incubator of research and development projects, centre of functions and services surrounded and connected by green belts and blue belts (rivers). The construction of a local project requires not just a break from traditional ways of planning and organisation of space but also a new language and semantics to describe the city. For its characteristics as a paradigm and as a multidimensional, multi-resourced and multi-sector tool, the action envisaged by the PSU is based on practical contracts, partnerships, strategic guidelines and management of institutional guidelines. In conclusion, the multiple construction of policies on an intermunicipal basis is the crucial theme by both the PSU and the PIT. The political difficulties, as have been seen recently from some of the reactions to the proposed regional legislation for the unification of the three municipalities of

Cosenza, Rende and Castrolibero, should concentrate minds round a search for common ground on certain important issues (mobility, environment, planning, etc.). Rather than abstract and institutions formulas, there is a need for an approach, which is both strategic and pragmatic, if we are to overcome practical and political obstacles. As regards the future of Cosenza and the urban area, the basic question is the identification of the concept of development and the role of the public sector. In this sense, the ongoing experiences described here portray the choices made by the administrations involved in their response to concrete situations. However, it is clear that what has been happening in Cosenza is not only an attempt to reorganise the area on an intermunicipal basis, but also a process of redefining space, the meaning and the nature of public action. It is not possible to predict what shape such events may take, as there are too many variables and uncertainties in the background, including the current difficulties in the negotiations with the region. The Cosenza-Rende PSU, by proposing a strong vision for the city and the embryo of a project on how to achieve it, requires a considerable sense of responsibility from the people involved, if they are to build a project that is both 'authoritative and effective' (16). This is the central theme of the public adventure on which the participants in the Cosenza laboratory will have to work.

\* Hanks to Leo Acri, Sandro Adriano, Mimmo Cersosimo, Filippo Ciccone and Laura Cipparrone for comments and proposals and to Sandro Adriano and Mario Tosti for the pictures.

## Notes

1. See the classification of the Cosenza urban area in the Itaten research (Clementi A., Dematteis G., Palermo P., *Le forme del territorio italiano*, Laterza, Bari, 1996) and the research promoted by the Dipartimento per il coordinamento delle politiche comunitarie della Presidenza del Consiglio and by the DG XVI of the European Commission (cfr. Bonavero P., Dematteis G., *Il sistema urbano italiano nello spazio unificato europeo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1996).
2. The reference is to the well known analysis of metropolitan populations by Guido Martinotti (*Metropoli. La nuova morfologia sociale della città*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1993).
3. The urban history of Cosenza are analysed under various point of view. For a systematic study see Mazza F. (ed.), *Cosenza. Storia, cultura, economia*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro), 1991, particularly the economic analysis by Cersosimo. See also Rubino G., Teti M.A., *Le città nella storia d'Italia. Cosenza*, Laterza, Bari, 1997. The events of urban planning are well analysed in two volumes edited by Giovanni Giannattasio (*Cosenza al di là dei fiumi*, Edizioni 10/17, Salerno, 1986; *Cosenza. Dimensione urbana di una città meridionale*, Edizioni 10/17, Salerno, 1990), as well as in the more recent work of Domenico Passarelli (*Urbanistica a Cosenza*, Gangemi, Roma, 1999), and summarised in the report of the Programma di Sviluppo Urbano di Cosenza e Rende (POR Calabria 2000-06, *Asse V Città*, settembre 2002), where an analysis of urban planning in Rende can also be found.
4. Cosenza has had very high population densities in the past. Currently, because of declining numbers, demographic density is equal to roughly 1928 inhabitants/sqkm (71,300 inhabitants on an area of only 3.700 ha), the highest level in the region. The housing stock is roughly 28,000, around 7% of which was built between 1981 and 1991. The erosion of population in the provincial capital, Cosenza, in the last twenty years to the advantage of other councils in the urban area (Rende above all) is a very serious phenomenon which, according to official statistics, amounts to 35,000 units, in other terms a variation of -32,8% (-18,9% in the period 1981-91 and -17,2% in the decade 1991-01). On the contrary, the number of residents in Rende has risen by 9,230 units (+36,5% in relative terms), with a particularly notable increase between 1981-91 (+22,4%) and a slower, though still significant, increase between 1991-01 (+11,5%).
5. From this point of view, the contributions in the 1990s to the review *Meridiana* editor Donzelli are of great interest. These contributions, which remain essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the social and economic mechanisms underlying the development of the south of Italy in the Nineteenth century, began a season of works and discussions on the city and the Meridion (see numbers 5/1989 and 10/1990). Further information can be found in the recent works of Domenico Cersosimo and Carmine Donzelli (*Mezzo Giorno. Realtà, rappresentazioni e tendenze del cambiamento meridionale*, Donzelli, Roma, 2000; *Il territorio come risorsa*, Formez/Donzelli, Roma, 2000).
6. D. Cersosimo, C. Donzelli, *Mezzo Giorno...* cit., p. 173.

7. The research project was financed by the Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti and carried out by the Politecnico di Milano, Dipartimento di architettura e pianificazione, and by the Agenzia per la ricerca e la produzione avanzata of the University Federico II, Napoli under the leadership of Pier Carlo Palermo. This effort constitutes the most comprehensive and detailed work so far of the first Urban programme in Italy. It involved 16 towns of different sizes, Cosenza being the smallest. In 2002, the results were published by Franco Angeli/Diap in three volumes entitled *Il programma Urban e l'innovazione delle politiche urbane*, the first edited by Pier Carlo Palermo, the second by P.C. Palermo and Paola Savoldi, and the third by Gabriele Pasqui and Elena Valsecchi respectively. Inside these volumes one can find different specific contributions by the author; these were later used in a volume edited by Gianfranco Franz ("Urban stories: il caso di Cosenza", in *Trasformazione, innovazione, riqualificazione urbana in Italia*, Angeli, Milano, 2002). Prior to this, the Pic Urban was the subject of a Formez research project coordinated by Marco Cremaschi, the results of which are discussed in the review EuroPass, a. II, No. 22 (2000), as well as in number 172 of *Urbanistica Informazioni* (2000). Both reviews contain useful information on the events in Cosenza.

8. Among the most recent exhibitions was one entitled *Architetture e progetti di spazi pubblici, nuovi paesaggi contemporanei nelle città italiane. Quaranta progetti di 40 studi di architettura italiani*, organised by the local council in collaboration with the Dipartimento di

pianificazione territoriale at the Università della Calabria.

9. As can be seen from the annual league tables published by authoritative institutions the Università degli studi della Calabria is one of the major centres of research in Italy (cfr. *Rapporto annuale Censis-la Repubblica sull'università italiana*).

10. With reference to this see the research on large scale distribution network in Calabria undertaken by the Dipartimento di pianificazione territoriale at the Università della Calabria, summarised in Rossi F., *Pianificare il commercio. Che fare?*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro), 1998.

11. Added to this situation is the uncertainty surrounding the new PRG for Rende, which has been for months the centre of a legal and bureaucratic row between the council and the regional government.

12. The expression comes from Alessandro Balducci ("Il piano come riferimento per le politiche", *Atti del XXIII Congresso INU*, Napoli, 2000).

13. The expression 'strutturale strategico' is taken from recent experience of urban planning in Bologna.

14. For details on the PSU and the PIT see the sheet at the end of this article.

15. *Milieu*, networks and relationships are employed in the sense used by Giuseppe Dematteis ("L'ambiente come contingenza e il mondo come rete", *Urbanistica* n. 85, 1986), and subsequently developed in many later works.

16. Expression used by Palermo P.C., "Osservare Milano, laboratorio sperimentale di un futuro possibile", *Urbanistica* n. 119, 2002, p. 122.