

New Ways for New UCCN Governance— National Coordination and the New UCCN Rules: Two Experiences of Fabriano Creative City*

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Introduction

Fabriano, city of paper and of manufacturing production, and one of the most important industrial districts in Europe for applied mechanics, has been a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) since 2013. A few years before that, the town was faced with a profound production crisis associated with the global financial crisis that radically transformed its economic, social and urban stability. Fabriano, together with Turin, Genoa and few other Italian cities, experienced the epochal shift from an industrial economy to a different shape and to a different organisation. After this shift, the town focused on creativity and culture in order to define its new development pattern.

1. Creative Cities National Coordination Group

The 13 Italian Creative Cities, namely Alba, Bergamo, Biella, Bologna, Carrara, Como, Fabriano, Milano, Modena Parma, Pesaro, Rome and Turin, set up the National Coordination Group, driven by a protocol of intentions which was signed, at the beginning, in Fabriano by the Mayors of five cities

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in 2016, just before the Annual Meeting in Östersund, Sweden. In the initial phase, the Coordination Group was led by the town of Bologna.

Together with the other Italian cities, Fabriano expressed its wish to host the 2019 UCCN Annual Conference with the project “Creative Italy: La Città Ideale—the Ideal City.”

The vision of creative city that the Coordination Group is aiming to promote is the one described in the UCCN mission statement and, in particular, is focused on the strategic role that creativity itself plays in the sustainable development of cities: culture and innovation are key tools for economic, social and territorial development.

The objectives set by the National Coordination Group consist of reinforcing the role of the Italian UCCN cities inside the UCCN itself; strengthening the relationship with the Italian Government, the Italian National Commission for UNESCO and the Permanent Delegation of Italy to UNESCO; and encouraging the exchange of information on initiatives and emerging opportunities in the different UCCN thematic clusters.

Moreover, the National Coordination Group is pursuing the objective of increasing the visibility of Italian cities and encouraging the participation of cities in clusters that are different from those of the cities of the National Coordination Group, in addition to the objective of developing other forms of collaboration between the cities of the UCCN, building a hub for the creativity at a national level and setting up a platform for reflection on the interconnection between culture, development and tourism.

Finally, the National Coordination Group proposes collaboration initiatives between the member cities, as well as through other thematic networks, both on a national and on an international level, coordinating the activities inside the Creative Cities and the UNESCO sites in order to develop projects aimed at promoting our heritage and the creativity. The Coordination Group gives its support to the research “Culture for Sustainable City” in connection with the projects of the Italian Government for Habitat III, and to the “Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.”

2. The Research

The ISTAO (Institute Adriano Olivetti), the INU (Italian National Institute of Urban Planning), the Fondazione Aristide Merioni, many universities, the Polytechnic School UNIPA and the International Architecture Exhibition all participate in the research activities initiated by Fabriano and other Italian cities.

In particular, the Italian Stand at the two last edition of Biennale di Venezia, Architecture 2021 and Art 2022 centered the exhibition on a “vision of art and architecture to the service of the community” that is originated by “the idea of a city seen as a shared work of art.” In the near future, architects will have to endorse the mission of making architecture compatible with the principles of social inclusion, participation, health, integration, and legality. In this context, the concept of suburbs assumes a different value: it will have not only an urbanistic but also social and mental values, in regard to the cultural marginality of the idea of living in a place. In the advanced world, a new part of the town is being developed and this is a place which has been built by the new citizens that in the future will live there. This part of the town is the result of massive migration movements, deeply integrated to the existing urban centre. New tools, new languages and new relations are needed to build this part of the town. The “Incremental Urbanism,” at the same time, integrated the cities of origin to equip them with essential services and infrastructures in order to encourage the development and the settlement of its inhabitants.

Therefore, the ideal of “designing for the common goal” stands out: this is an imperative seen as urgent at a global level, as has been shown during the International Architecture Exhibition and the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture in Shenzhen, China (2015 UABB).

3. The Themes

We selected two goals out of the 17 “Sustainable Development Goals and

Targets” and the contribution of the Italian creative cities will be based on them.

1) Goal 8: *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.*

A new and important line of economic development of the territory and of Italian cities is the result of collaboration between the traditional manufacturing sector and the cultural and creative sector. It is well-known that the Italian industrialization is mainly based on manufacturing companies and the Marche Region, in particular, was the first in Italy and one of the first in Europe to have a high density of companies of this type.

In recent years, the evolution of markets has introduced profound changes in the regional production sector and therefore new analyses of the local economic development have been necessary. In addition to that, the typical structural weaknesses of the manufacturing sector are well-known. This sector is essentially made up of small and very small companies which operate in “mature” sectors and which are not really keen on investing in research and development. As they are not keen on developing business relations with other actors of the production chain, the few business relations they do have are based on strict subcontracting agreements.

Nevertheless, the companies that have overcome difficulties better than others in the market are those that have undergone a paradigm shift. Such a shift involves the activation of development paths based on their capability to innovate products, processes, and organisational structures. These companies are also focused on quality, innovation, and creativity as well as on the big potential offered by the ICT, while having close links with the region, promoting local knowledge and protecting the environment and the production sites. Thanks to the advanced technologies and to the makers, work has come back into the towns and also into the most beautiful historic villages in Italy.

Therefore, the question of the relationship between industry and creativity and between manufacturing and culture arises.

The innovation towards the creative driver and the development of

culture are not only encouraged by the patronage of a company, but also by the general awareness that “the company” is connected to the identity of a territory and its cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, which has been established over time. The companies that implemented this idea have been able to integrate these factors that make up the cultural capital of a territory into their design content, into a strong and recognisable brand name, and into their capabilities to incorporate their products with values, lifestyles, history and tradition.

In other words, these companies have been able to re-appropriate all of these competitive factors associated with the “Made in Italy” brand, which is in demand in the markets of both developed and emerging countries, according to the principle that the success of the entrepreneurial sector—and therefore the success of the economic sector—is simply impossible without the social progress of its community.

This theme is closely related to the main principles on which the UNESCO network is based.

2) Goal 11: *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*

It is essential to look at the elements that characterize the epochal shift from the post-industrial city to the creative city. Fabriano is an important case study in Italy of this phenomenon, also for the research “Culture for Sustainable City,” focused on how innovation affects new policies for sustainable urban development, in preparation for the Habitat III 2016 conference.

This is the case of Bologna Creative City with “IncrediBOL!,” a regional-level pilot project started in 2010 which concerns public and private partners that are given resources and places for free use for local creative and cultural initiatives. This project achieved the objective of promoting the development of jobs and local creative industries and, at the same time, reached the goal of transforming them into a driving force for development, urban regeneration and territorial marketing.

Moreover, Bologna is also a collaborative city, according to what has

been established in the “Regolamento sulla collaborazione tra la città e i cittadini per la cura e la rigenerazione di beni comuni urbani” (“Guidelines on the collaboration between the cities and the citizens for the protection and regeneration of urban common goods”) in 2014, which aimed at supporting and enhancing autonomous citizen initiatives to achieve the objectives of general interest. In light of this project, citizens and the administration share ideas and objectives, interventions of regeneration of urban, tangible, intangible and digital common goods that are considered functional to the individual and the collective well-being. Up to now, 220 interventions of this type have been completed.

In the Italian creative cities, new policies for sustainable urban development are implemented. They are more and more oriented to proactive and not only merely reactive initiatives.

The experiences of many creative cities that have already taken the generational leap from the first phase, purely aimed at attracting knowledge workers, to the second phase in which the town generates creativity, economic development and new partnerships between the public and the private sector, show that the creative economy is an active force for urban regeneration, acting upon the vital factors of the city, on its identity and human capital, and on new manufacturing and training structures.

This is the reason why the definition of “Creative fab city” and “Creative City 3.0” has been created as these cities are based on the 3 Cs: Culture, Communication and Cooperation.

The scenario of the global crisis and the changes in urban policies in the age of the transition force us to design and manage new cities and new, more creative life cycles, enabling cities to act as engines for new urban policies and making it possible for us to overcome the current crisis. We envision cities that make creative use of renewable energy and means of transport, that change the way public spaces are used, once again becoming manufacturing centres and not merely centres that provide services.

We want to become cities that encourage a new alliance between digital and physical dimensions, between informed decision-makers and active citizens.