

Polignano a Mare

promosso da



Città di
**Polignano
a Mare**



organizzato da



con la co-organizzazione di



con la collaborazione di



REPORT

English

PART 1- SITE VISIT

MORNING - link [YOUTUBE VIDEO](#)

Presenti

Angelo Focarelli, Deputy Mayor and Assessor for Urban Planning and Urban Regeneration;

Matteo Lorusso, Councillor and President of the Urban Planning Commission;

FS Sistemi Urbani, Asset Management Company of the FS Group: eng. **Tommaso Diomaiuta**, Head of Real Estate Development and Enhancement – Southern Italy and Islands Area; arch. **Fabio Petruzzi** Real Estate Development and Enhancement – Southern Italy and Islands Area; eng. **Marco Colucci** Head of UO Real estate, Expropriations and Authorisations Unit DOIT - Bari

Europan Italia: arch. **Rosalia Marilia Vesco**, National Secretary of European Italy and Coordinator of CSN; archs. **Margherita Ermani** e **Francesca Melissano**, Archibloom studio, expert team; **Giulia Valdinoci**, secretariat assistant; **Antonella Mari**, Architect, Member of the National Scientific Committee of European Italia Order of Architects PPC of the Province of Bari - co-organiser of the meeting; **Manuela Mazzealli**, Member of Council.



1. Departure from Viale Trieste – FS Polignano Railway Station

Angelo Focarelli: Good morning, everyone. With today's meeting, we officially enter the heart of the competition. This journey has been shaped by numerous strategic reflections, and we are proud to be part of this eighteenth edition.

This competition sends a strong message for our city—it embodies the spirit of engagement we want to foster among our citizens and the designers who will take on this challenge.

I would like to thank Councillor Matteo Lorusso, who introduced the European initiative to the local administration; the European organization; and FS Sistemi Urbani, who welcomed and supported this valuable proposal with the intention of promoting idea-driven projects.

I hope this marks the beginning of a transformative experience that will improve the quality of life in Polignano. There are many aspects of the city that need to be rethought. I trust that the young participants, those who will actively engage in this process, will bring innovation and contribute to the town's sustainable development—with as little concrete as possible.

Tommaso Diomaiuta: Good morning to all. We are working in close collaboration with the municipal administration, with whom we have a strong and cooperative relationship.

We share a common goal: regenerating and reconnecting urban areas. You, the designers, will play a vital role in this process, supported by European, which is coordinating this stage of the competition.

Participation is significant, so best of luck to all of you.

Marilia Vesco: Let's begin our site visit with the first area, referred to as the *Trieste Area*. It already serves, in an informal way, as a parking lot. However, this use needs to be properly integrated into a broader functional mix focused on mobility, to fully unlock the site's potential.

It's not enough to designate a space as a parking lot—it needs to become a structural element that supports mobility and sustainability. For example, note how physically uncomfortable it is to walk through this area under the sun, even in spring when temperatures are mild...

2. Final Section of the Trieste Area

Matteo Lorusso: Beyond this wall lies a series of private plots. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a detailed development plan that pushed the boundaries between the built area and the old freight yard to the minimum legal distance.

One idea could be to connect this area with the other part of the city, along Viale Kennedy—just beyond the current buildings—where there's a 30-meter buffer between the railway line and the urban fabric. This space could serve as a connection between the two parts of the city.

Marilia Vesco: This connection would help ease traffic on the parallel arterial road and link with Via Kennedy. However, a key constraint in any design intervention is the presence of regulations related to railway proximity. Via Basile, for example, is used every Thursday for the weekly market.

Matteo Lorusso: There's also a toll house in this area—currently abandoned—which could be converted into a valuable community service hub.

Marilia Vesco: The scale of the area calls for thoughtful and sustainable interventions that take into account soil permeability and ecological impact. These plots represent a rare opportunity to work within an urban fabric where available open space has almost completely disappeared. It's a chance to go beyond architecture—to develop a strategic urban vision, encourage sustainable behaviors, and experiment with new uses of space.

Matteo Lorusso: From here, you can also see the *Marconi* area. At the far end—something we'll explore later—is the FS project to eliminate the last level crossing. A new overpass will be constructed beyond State Road 16, linking the end of Via Kennedy to this area, further improving connectivity.

3. Along Viale Trieste, in Front of the Station Square toward Via Lepore

Matteo Lorusso: Stazioni Ferroviarie S.p.A. has developed a design for the station square, and an executive plan will be included in the competition documentation.

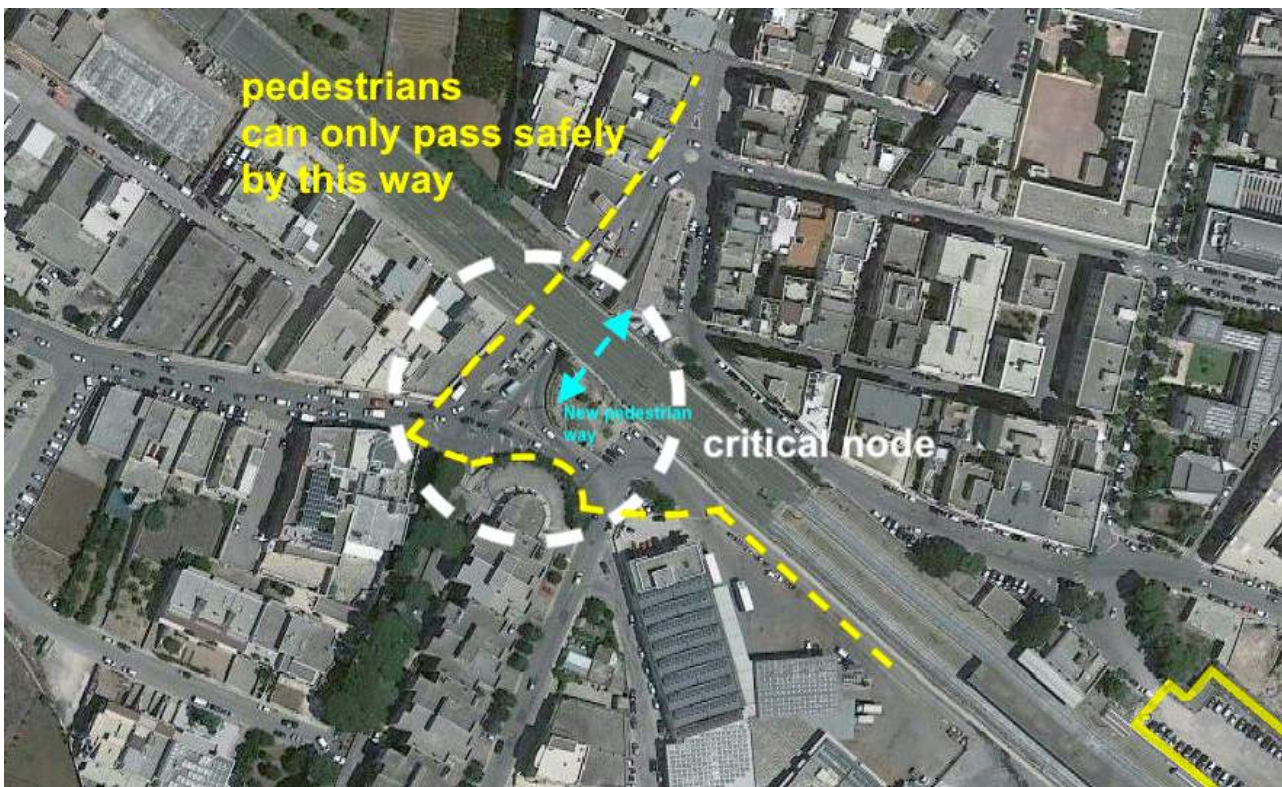
The trees you see along this stretch of Viale Trieste are red mulberries—very old and still bearing fruit. In Polignano, we have *Largo Gelso*, named for the mulberry (*gelso*) trees planted there by Marquis La Greca as part of a silkworm cultivation effort. After the square's renovation, only one of those ancient trees remains.

Here you see the *Cistern of the Aia*, known locally as *Uec'*. This area of Polignano was historically a high plateau, home to the *aia* (threshing floor) used for grain processing and livestock. This ancient cistern collected rainwater that flowed down from Via Castellana and eventually reached Lama Monachile.

Beyond the buildings here are the gardens of *Orto di Monsignore*, located in the *Lama di Sant'Oronzo*. Today, a lift pump system collects rainwater from the new underpass and channels it into the garden via an underground culvert that leads to the lama.

This low passage here is an old connection to the other side of the city—it could be reopened and repurposed as a pedestrian or cycling link, creating a safer, more accessible route to the eastern part of Polignano, in addition to the existing railway underpass. The only structural intervention needed would be to slightly lower the elevation on the far end, where there's an embankment.

The colored pipes you see along this path are part of a completed public works project from the previous administration, now awaiting final testing. It's a pneumatic waste collection system: refuse is compacted and conveyed to a central hub located near the overpass currently under construction.



4. Stassa Garden (Via Giuseppe Mallardi)

Matteo Lorusso: This is the Bishop's Garden, originally created by the Rodolovich family and later passed on to the Curia. Known as the *Stassa Garden*, it features an 18th-century-style fountain at its edge, with decorative pinnacles crowning each pilaster along the surrounding wall.

The garden is adjacent to the Church of Sant'Oronzo, and beneath this path—which divides the lot in two—runs the culvert I mentioned earlier. This culvert passes beneath the foundations of the church and channels water into Lama Monachile.

The area is historically protected and privately owned. However, since it falls within the boundaries of a detailed development plan that includes the adjacent parking lot, there is a possibility it may be transferred to public ownership through a planning agreement.

Behind the garden lies the San Francesco kindergarten and its associated parking lot. It's worth noting that just beyond the wall—where the church now stands—ran the old road to Conversano. This historic road started near the Church of San Cosimo, passed by Sant'Oronzo, descended into the lama, and connected with the ancient *Marinesca* road, once the main route to Conversano.

Underpass Toward Via Lepore

Matteo Lorusso: Returning to the topic of water management—most of the runoff is now handled via this drainage channel. In the past, however, water was collected and filtered through a cistern system. While today's water supply comes from the aqueduct, historically it was gathered from the streets and purified naturally through filtration and collection systems.

Marilia Vesco: This is a system we should consider reviving—at least to complement the existing water distribution network.

Via Lepore – On the Way to the Project Site

Marilia Vesco: This is Via Lepore. Along this route, you can observe a mix of uses: commercial businesses, artisanal workshops, the cemetery, and residential buildings. It's an important thoroughfare that becomes increasingly residential as you move along it. At the end of Via Lepore, where it becomes Viale Unità d'Italia, you'll reach European Site 1—an area that is now predominantly residential.

Matteo Lorusso: Polignano's productive zones are characterized by a high degree of functional mixing. This street, for example, once hosted wholesale fruit and vegetable markets. Agricultural produce was stored here before being transported to the freight yard.

Among Polignano's traditional crops, the most well-known are carrots, cucumbers, and potatoes. Tobacco and silk were also historically produced in this area.

Today, residential development has been added to this already diverse mix of uses.

In the Ripagnola area of Polignano, we also find the former *Cynar* factory—commissioned by Angelo Delle Molle, founder of the company behind the famous *Cynar* liqueur. The building is currently privately owned and unused, but it holds great potential for conversion into a museum or cultural center.



*La collezione delle varietà di carciofo coltivate nel mondo,
al Centro Studi Cynar di Polignano a Mare*

5. Project Area 1 – Via Lepore

Marilia Vesco: We are now within one of the sites owned by FS Sistemi Urbani. It is a fenced-off area that borders an external green strip owned by the municipality. This green area was created as part of a water management intervention and serves as part of a drainage system flowing into Lama Monachile.

Matteo Lorusso: We are standing at a key point in the hydrographic network that drains into the *Lama*. This site is officially classified as a flood-prone area with a high level of hydrological risk. During the water regulation works, the zoning constraint—designated as PG-3—was revised. Unfortunately, the drainage channel here was constructed in reinforced concrete, which impacts the natural landscape.

Marilia Vesco: It's important to consider this green strip as functionally connected to the FS Sistemi Urbani plot. The existing building on-site was not included in the survey because it holds no significant historical or cultural value and is therefore considered suitable for demolition—offering the opportunity to work on a completely vacant lot. The total surface area is approximately 6,200 square meters.

Running parallel to this plot, along Via Maringelli, is another interesting connecting feature: an access point to the natural trail of Lama Monachile. This highlights just how valuable this area is, both in terms of design potential and its strategic position within the urban fabric.

Fabio Petruzzi: This is a disused railway area. In the design phase, it will be necessary to consider construction setbacks and reference distances—both in relation to the existing road network and the active railway line. As you can see, we are within the railway buffer zone. Any interventions must comply with the regulations set out in Presidential Decree (DPR) 753 of 1980, and projects must clearly reference it.

Although we are in close proximity to the railway tracks, this does not pose a limitation to design possibilities. On the contrary, the area is spacious, well integrated into the existing consolidated urban fabric, and capable of supporting new functions that could revitalize this sector of Polignano.

It is also worth mentioning that this site is highly accessible—both by road and rail—and is not far from the train station. Additionally, this area is interconnected with the other project site on Via Marconi. The key is to remain aware of the regulatory distance constraints when designing in a railway context.

Marilia Vesco: Let's now move toward the railway boundary of the site, to observe not only the physical connections with the urban and natural landscape, but also the visual perspectives. The relationship between this area and the broader urban context is very compelling—even though it is technically in a peripheral zone. Moreover, this setting is ideal for testing strategies related to soil permeability and sustainable land use.

Matteo Lorusso: This canal was built over an older one. If you look at Google Maps, you can clearly see the trace of the old *Marinesca* canal. This new concrete structure is essentially a reconstruction, but it's actually a continuation of the Lama Monachile. To see the original course of the waterway, you'd have to follow the path for about one kilometer.



6. Underpass from Via Maringelli toward the San Francesco Parking Area – Gateway to the Lama Monachile Nature Trail

Marilia Vesco: We won't continue toward the *Lama* itself, since it is a well-known path, and we still need to visit the remaining two project areas. We've reached the San Francesco parking area to observe the pedestrian and vehicular connections with the Via Lepore area. This intersection also marks the entrance to the Lama Monachile nature trail and offers a pedestrian route toward the town center, which we'll follow to reach Project Area 3 on Via Marconi.

7. Project Area – Via Marconi (External View)

Matteo Lorusso: This is a primarily residential area that also includes artisanal and commercial activities. However, it lacks neighborhood-level and proximity services. A new nursery school is planned on Via Leonardo da Vinci, near a small square.

Currently, there is a medical testing lab, as well as blacksmiths, window and door fitters, mechanics, and auto electricians—but no real community services.

This part of town isn't well connected to the center; anyone needing basic goods or services must walk or drive through the railway underpass to get downtown.

What is urgently needed here are *proximity services*—facilities that directly support residential life, rather than just commercial or technical activities.

The Municipality is also considering transforming the project area into a parking lot, since the adjacent area—currently used as public parking—is actually FS property being used informally.

Project Area – Via Marconi (Internal View)

Marilia Vesco: Let's take a closer look at the boundaries of the European project site, which lies along the railway line.

Fabio Petrucci: Yes, exactly. We're in the Via Marconi area, owned by FS Sistemi Urbani. This is currently an RFI-managed railway construction site.

Despite this, the area is very well connected in terms of both public and rail transportation. It's located in a central urban zone with a well-defined, mixed-use fabric that includes residences, small businesses, and ongoing development.

A key consideration is the functional use of railway areas, which must be preserved for operational needs. The project perimeter was defined in full compliance with these constraints.

As with the Via Lepore site, we must observe specific setback distances here, particularly because the active rail line runs just behind me and is part of an ongoing RFI construction site. The design will need to carefully address and incorporate these parameters.

While this may seem like a limitation, it's actually an opportunity to explore solutions for coexistence—balancing railway infrastructure with new urban uses. This reflects FS Group priorities: rail functionality and mobility services are non-negotiable.

The European project aligns with broader urban regeneration goals that the Municipality of Polignano a Mare, together with FS Sistemi Urbani, is seeking to implement in this district. It represents an exciting challenge for designers.

Marilia Vesco: The two European sites—Via Marconi and Via Lepore—are separated by the railway tracks. Notice the elevation change: the residential area site is higher than where we're standing now. This topographical difference could be a valuable design asset to work with.

Via Trieste – In Front of the Velostation Construction Site (Related to Project Area 1)

Antonella Mari: We participated in a regional mobility initiative that supported the construction of 28 velostations. Three locations were selected in the Urban Mobility Plan (PUM) of Polignano a Mare. This site is the first and only one that we designed and submitted for approval.

The process took time due to coordination challenges: although the project was initiated by the municipality and funded by the Region, the land belonged to the Railways. Fortunately, FS supported us throughout and ultimately ceded part of this larger area—where your European interventions will also take place.

The velostation project consists of three small, separate structures, each functionally and architecturally independent. This area was formerly a freight yard in disrepair, and we were able to recover and repurpose it as a bicycle workshop space. The project promotes *soft mobility*, supporting the integration of cycling with both road and rail systems—across urban and rural contexts.

The bike station includes automated vending machines for spare parts and accessories, as well as food and drinks for immediate use. Restrooms will also be available, as the nearby train station lacks these facilities.

This wooden building is the bike station itself. Rather than designing a traditional building, the concept mimics the form and function of a bike rack—its flowing lines reflect the motion inherent to cycling.

The adjacent info point will offer maps and route information, charging stations for devices and e-bikes, and a digital system displaying available parking spaces. Surveillance and security systems will also be installed, with controlled access. Finally, a *corten* steel panel defines the rest area and signals the velostation's presence—an element recommended by the Region of Puglia. This small green space, along with an additional resting area behind it, will serve both travelers and locals alike.

9. Project Area – Villa Pinocchio

Resident of Polignano a Mare / Site Visit Participant: There aren't many areas equipped for children in the city. There's another space on the opposite side of town, but it only has two small swings. This is the only public space with proper facilities, which is why it's always crowded. It includes a skate ramp, cycling paths, and picnic tables. Kids come here to play and eat—this park sees constant use.

Matteo Lorusso: This park is also frequented by members of the Georgian community. At one point, there was even a plan to host the Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan closing) celebration here, organized by the local Bengali community, who have an underground mosque nearby. Unfortunately, it rained that day, so the event had to be canceled. Non-EU communities actively use this space as well.

This bar over here was awarded through a public tender three or four years ago, before the pandemic. The winning bidders were supposed to manage the playground and maintain the park, but the concession is now expiring. The area will be returned to the municipality, which will require the removal of any unauthorized additions.

Marilia Vesco: Reorganizing this park opens up possibilities for temporary structures, community gardens, and more flexible uses.

Matteo Lorusso: The space has previously been used for outdoor cinema screenings, particularly when the Vignola Arena was under renovation. About ten years ago, it also hosted open-air dance events organized by the former management.

This is a valuable and highly utilized public space—not only for the city in general but especially for this neighborhood. There are public restrooms, managed by the same contractor. For years, Legambiente, the only local association consistently active here, has taken care of cleaning the area. There was even a small outdoor reading corner, with books for children. When kids weren't playing or needed shade, they would sit and read. This old fence—likely 30 to 40 years old—should be reconsidered. Maybe it's time to remove it entirely. Behind the post office, there's the Mariano Sisto sports court, currently incomplete. The construction company went bankrupt and will not release the area unless payments are settled.

As a result, it has been closed off, but children still break in to use it, forcing us to spend more money on repairs and security.

Resident: There was a time when additional swings were added—thanks to a project done in collaboration with the Pascali Foundation—and the whole space became even more vibrant and enjoyable. Now, the only play equipment is in the open; there's nothing under the trees. But when the swings were there, both children and adults spent more time here.

Matteo Lorusso: This is really the only central space with community-focused infrastructure. It connects well to other key parts of town. On one side, there's Piazza della Minerva and Via delle Rimembranze. Further down, you reach the Pascali Foundation. Turning left from there, you find Piazza Trinità, with the Church of the Trinity—a 17th-century church that is now a chapel. Continuing along Via Recupero, you'll arrive at Piazza Sant'Antonio, where the city hospital is located.

These two churches—Trinity and Sant'Antonio—can be thought of as focal points on a historical axis. This path once formed part of the ancient road called *Minuccia Antica*, which connected the historic center to the San Salvatore quarry, passed by the Church of the Trinity, and reached the Church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli (now Sant'Antonio). From there, it continued toward Egnazia and Monopoli. Redeveloping this route is a priority.

10. Fondazione Pino Pascali

Antonella Mari: This project is particularly interesting from a regeneration standpoint. Originally, this area was entirely residential—no other public or cultural functions existed.

The Foundation was previously located in *Palazzo San Giuseppe*, a historic building in the old town, which will soon become the *Domenico Modugno Museum*, dedicated to music. As the Foundation grew—gaining national and international visibility—the original space proved insufficient.

They requested to relocate to this municipal building, which was originally a slaughterhouse. With funding obtained in 2006, the building was repurposed. Unfortunately, about half of it was demolished during the process—I have photos of how it used to be. It's unclear how the Superintendency allowed this, but only the section along Via Parco del Lauro, where the offices once were, was preserved.

The tender called for redevelopment and possible expansion of 19th-century buildings, so it excluded the parts of the structure related to industrial archaeology. That's why the actual slaughterhouse working areas were not preserved.

The building was reconstructed by a fellow architect who handled the redevelopment tied to the funding. With further funds, we adapted the building to better reflect its new cultural identity and function.

Today, it is home to the Pino Pascali Museum Foundation, a key cultural institution that also organizes off-site events.

Its presence has brought life and activity to this once-quiet neighborhood. Around it, we've seen new bars, restaurants, and shops emerge. This privately driven cultural initiative, repurposing a public building, was crucial to the area's revitalization.

The adjacent seafront promenade wouldn't likely have extended this far without the Foundation. Sidewalk and bike lane construction is still underway, but the area is clearly being re-integrated into the urban fabric.

Urban expansion is another factor to consider. Polignano is constrained by the state highway. New development is happening either along the coast or in satellite districts like Sant'Anna-Vagno—already isolated by the railway. Beyond the highway, you'll mostly find small villa clusters. Expansion along the coast faces serious limitations due to the *PPTR* (Regional Landscape Plan) and environmental factors like topography and hydrology.

Still, the restrictive planning has protected the coast: Polignano's shoreline has remained natural, with virtually no beach resorts. This is due to the steep cliffs and regulations preventing construction, except for infrastructure or stabilization works. Access to the sea remains open and free.

Marilia Vesco: Before we close the tour, I'd like to introduce Architect Manuela Mazzarelli, Councilor of the Bari Order of Architects.

Manuela Mazzarelli: Thank you. I'm very pleased to be here today. The spirit of collaboration and engagement is evident and continues from past initiatives.

Living just a few kilometers from Polignano myself, I'm familiar with the issues central to this competition. On behalf of the President and the entire Council, I bring greetings and express our full support for *Euroman*. Its international approach fosters critical reflection on territory, the built environment, regeneration, and development—making it an important tool for the future of our regions. Polignano provides fertile ground for these ideas, with full backing from the local government. I thank the organizers on behalf of my colleagues. Events like this are vital moments of design, dialogue, and opportunity. Puglia has a strong history of participation in *Euroman*, with real, built results. It's always a great opportunity for young professionals to engage with something tangible and impactful. The Order of the Architects PPC of Bari Province has consistently supported the initiative, encouraging young architects to participate and grow—locally and internationally.

PART 2 - MEETING LAB

AFTERNOON- [link](#) [YOUTUBE VIDEO](#)

Present

City of Polignano: **Vito Carrieri**, Mayor; **Angelo Focarelli**, Deputy Mayor and Councillor for Urban Planning and Urban Regeneration; **Matteo Lorusso**, City Councillor and Chair of the Urban Planning Committee; **Rossella Laviola**, Engineer, Officer at Area IV – Technical Area and RUP.

Apulia Region: **Stefano Lacatena**, Regional Councillor delegated to Urban Planning and Housing Policies – Apulia Region;

FS Sistemi Urbani, Asset Management Company of the FS Group: Eng. **Tommaso Diomaiuta**, Head of Real Estate Development and Enhancement – Southern Italy and Islands Area; **Giuseppe Macchia**, DOIT Bari

Directorate – RFI; Arch. **Fabio Petruzzi**, Real Estate Development and Enhancement – Southern Italy and Islands Area, FS Sistemi Urbani;

European Italy: Arch. **Rosalia Marilia Vesco**, National Secretary of European Italy and Coordinator of the National Scientific Committee (CSN); Arch. **Antonella Mari**, Member of the National Scientific Committee of European Italy; Eng. **Cosimo Bonasia**, Councillor of the City of Bitonto and Member of the National Scientific Committee of European Italy; Architects **Serafino Fioriello** and **Vincenzo Loiacono**, Special Mention E13 Molfetta and Designers of the Ponente Waterfront; Architects **Margherita Erbani** and **Franca Melissano**, Archibloom Studio, Expert Team; **Giulia Valdinoci**, Secretariat Assistant.

Order of Architects PPC of the Province of Bari, co-organizer of the event: Arch. **Manuela Mazzarelli**, Council Member.

INTERVENTIONS

Vito Carrieri, Mayor of the City of Polignano a Mare

With our participation in European, we aim to bring a new, fresher vision to an area of Polignano that is no longer on the outskirts, but part of the city's urban core.

We are talking about urban regeneration—about redefining and enhancing zones that today may seem marginal. These are areas which, despite being central, are not yet functional. This is also why we speak of circular economy: because to regenerate means to give new meaning and utility to what already exists, redesigning the territory in a sustainable way.

Polignano is currently experiencing a period of significant growth, both in tourism and productivity. We are confident that these projects will generate innovative ideas and visions. These railway areas, which now appear unused, can be transformed into public spaces for exchange—or into something we cannot yet imagine. This is why I extend an invitation to designers: this is the right moment to show how public administrations can be tools for change, and to propose new ideas—visions that we, as administrators, may not always be able to perceive. Often, those who design have a freer, more creative outlook and can reveal what is already before our eyes, yet still invisible.

This is our hope and our expectation as a municipality. We thank you for the opportunity to take part in this journey, and we look forward to wide, multidisciplinary participation. In the diversity of visions lies true richness. We hope this competition will be an opportunity to highlight those who are able to propose truly innovative ideas. Thank you to everyone who will contribute to bringing new ideas to life for Polignano.

Tommaso Diomaiuta, Head of Real Estate Development and Enhancement – Southern Italy and Islands, Asset Management Company of the FS Group

Participating in such an important initiative is a great source of pride for us at FS Sistemi Urbani. As many of you may know, we are the company within the FS Group responsible for regenerating spaces no longer functional for railway operations. The areas we are making available in Polignano, in agreement with the local Administration, are ideal for an urban regeneration project, and we hope they can find new life.

Polignano is an important city, with a strong, even international, tourist appeal. Personally, this is the third time I've come here, and I've always found a vibrant, diverse, and often international tourism scene, which clearly demonstrates the city's value and attractiveness.

We are fortunate to have access to strategic infrastructure corridors. We've worked closely with the local area, and Polignano is in a privileged position. The station, in particular, is integrated into the urban fabric and close to the town center, making it an ideal hub to promote sustainable mobility and new uses of public space.

We've discussed with the Administration the need to focus on intermodality—for example, the construction of a **bike station** to promote soft mobility and enhance these spaces.

For the design proposals, we rely on your competence and creativity. This initiative is part of a broader strategy aimed at transforming disused railway areas into vibrant, integrated, and community-serving spaces. We believe the future of these areas depends on the city's strategic vision, but also on the fundamental contribution that architects and engineers can provide.

Through this competition, we aim to receive not only concrete ideas but also inspiration. We will work together with the Administration to carry the project forward based on the competition results, hoping that this competitive process will generate meaningful and lasting insights.

Good luck and thank you for participating.

Manuela Mazzarelli, Council Member of the Order of Architects PPC, Province of Bari

I would like to thank the promoters of this important initiative, along with the entire Municipal Administration and FS Sistemi Urbani, for offering the territory—and therefore the professionals—a great opportunity.

I bring greetings from President Damiano Mastronardi and the entire Council of the Order.

We reaffirm with enthusiasm our support for the competition, as we have done on past EUROPAN initiatives, convinced that it represents a valuable opportunity to reflect on key themes such as architecture, participation, territorial growth, and development.

The competition is a highly desirable methodology in many contexts, as it allows for the collection of real insights and knowledge, based not only on technical surveys and design studies but also on interaction with the Administration and dialogue with the public. All of this helps produce high-quality proposals capable of interpreting the complexity and layers of the territory—elements we were able to perceive clearly during this morning's site visit.

It was a pleasure to accompany this visit and to gain a closer understanding of the aspects that will become part of the design process, as we await the results.

In conclusion, I thank the Administration, all the technicians, designers, and architects involved for their dedication to this important initiative.

Matteo Lorusso, Councilor and Chair of the Urban Planning Commission

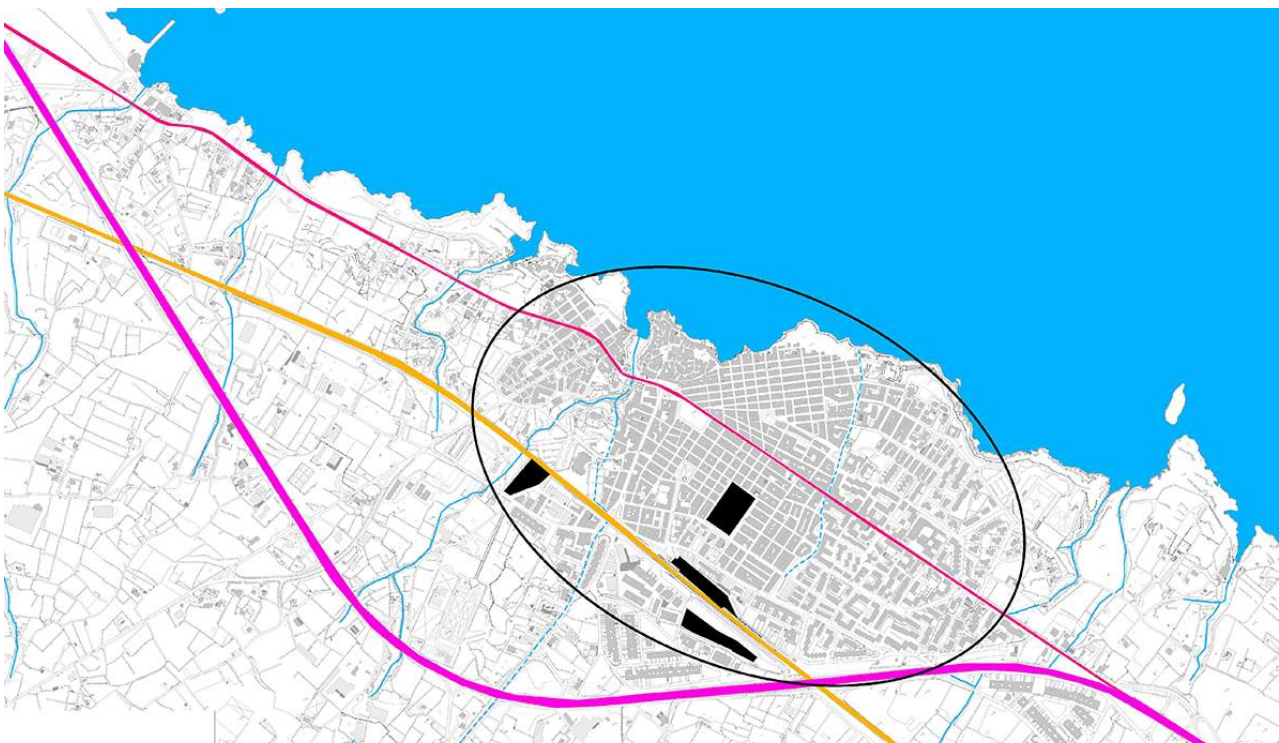
By reading the territory through the first slide of the Regional Technical Map, we can observe the hydrography and geomorphology, along with the main infrastructures, which can be divided into two categories:

- **Natural:** the coastal strip and the erosional gullies that run perpendicular to it.
- **Artificial:** road and railway infrastructures that run parallel to the coast.

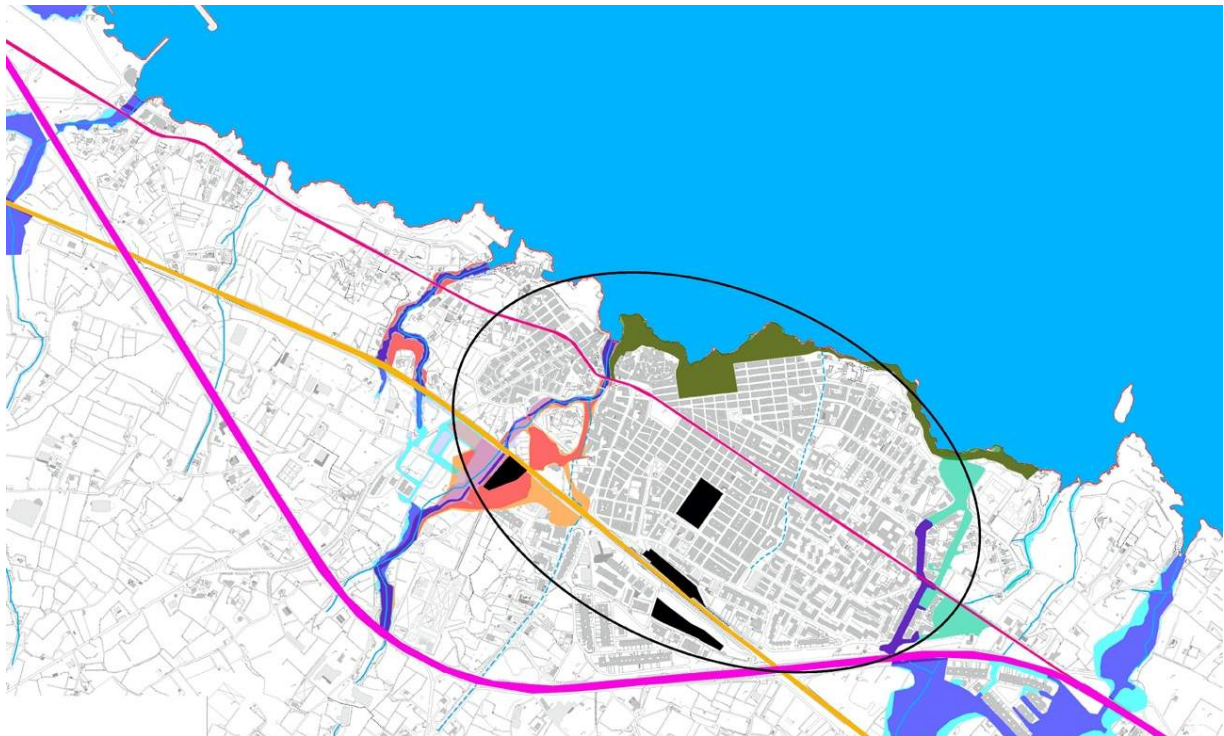
Looking at this system, we can identify:

- The *Consolare di Puglia*, built at the end of the 19th century by Giuseppe Gimma (thin line).
- The **railway network** (highlighted in yellow).
- The **four intervention areas** (marked in black).
- The **road infrastructure** (represented by a purple ribbon).

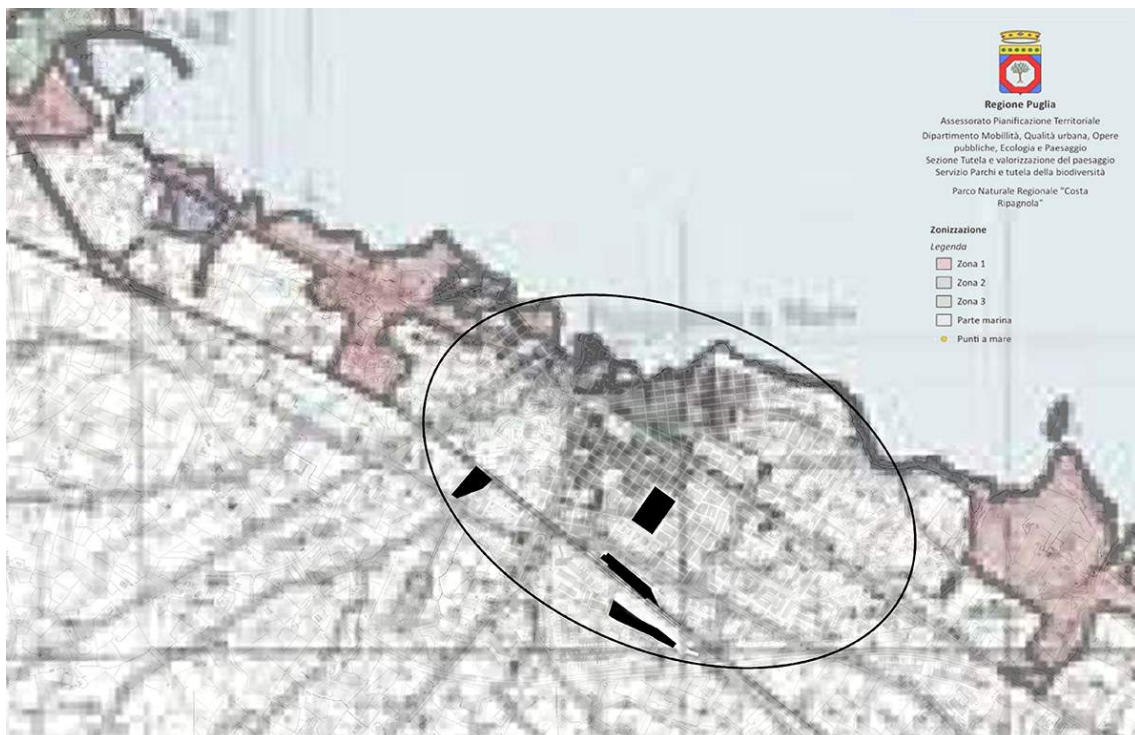
The **strategic European area** is highlighted with an **elliptical shape**.

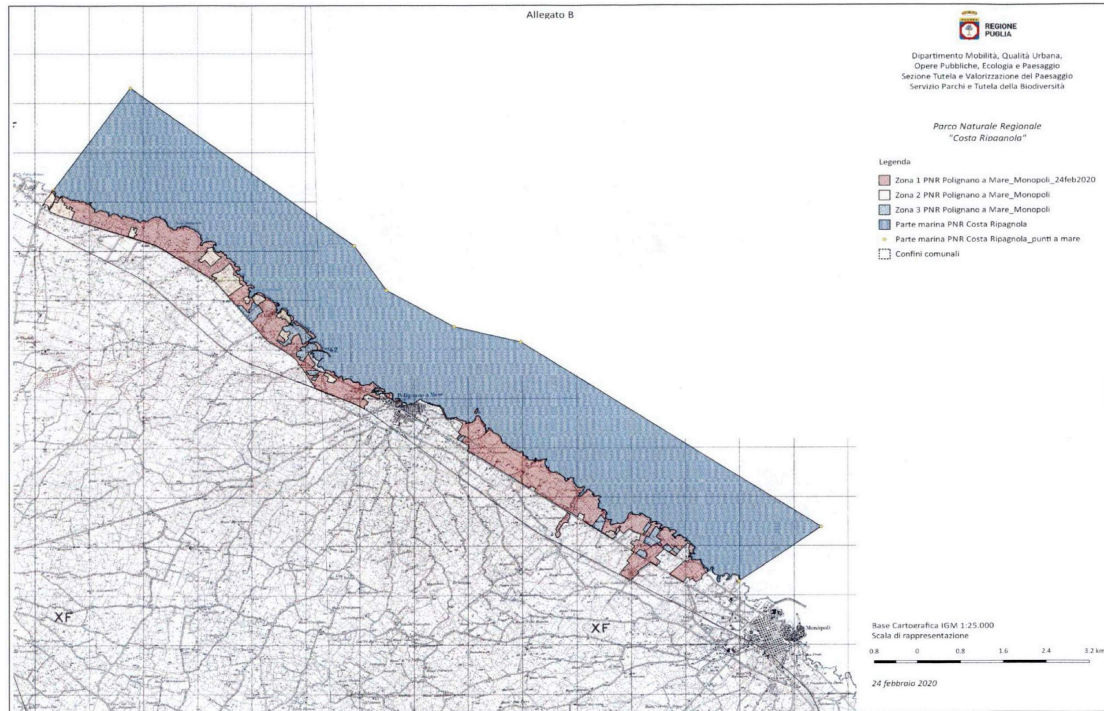


This overlap has caused issues, which are now also evident in the mapping of the **Geological Structure Plan (PAE)**, where areas of **geomorphological risk** are highlighted—especially at points where infrastructures intersect. The **green areas** indicate zones of geomorphological risk, including the **historic center** and the **Murattiano district**. The intersections between roads and the railway show areas of **high hydrogeological risk**, which have already been the subject of **mitigation and regulation interventions**, as we observed today.

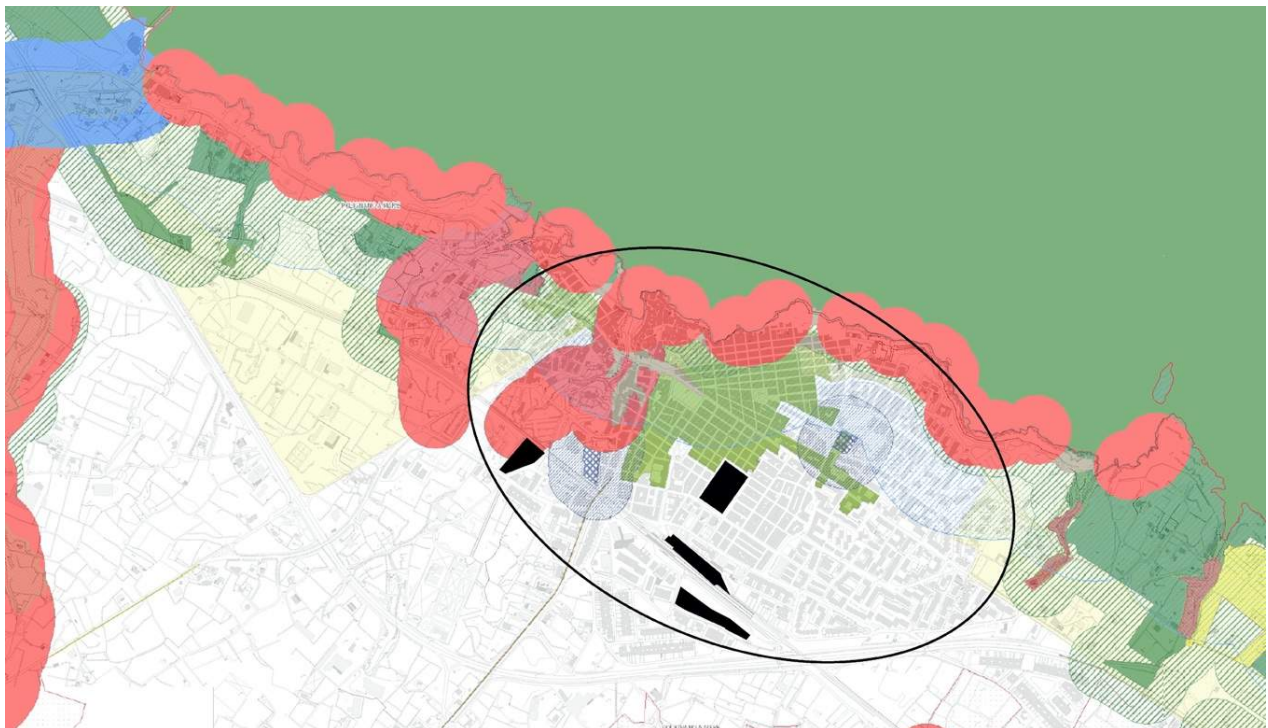


An important element to consider in the context of Re-Sourcing is the **Ripagnola Regional Natural Park**, defined by the establishing law. For the first time—along with the Park of the Two Seas in Taranto—this includes not only the coastline as a protected natural area, but also the **marine section**. This represents a significant innovation for Puglia and a major opportunity for Polignano. In the past, the area was frequented by **Mediterranean monk seals**, which have recently been sighted again in the Strait of Otranto. The hope is that, thanks to the protection of marine areas, they may return permanently.

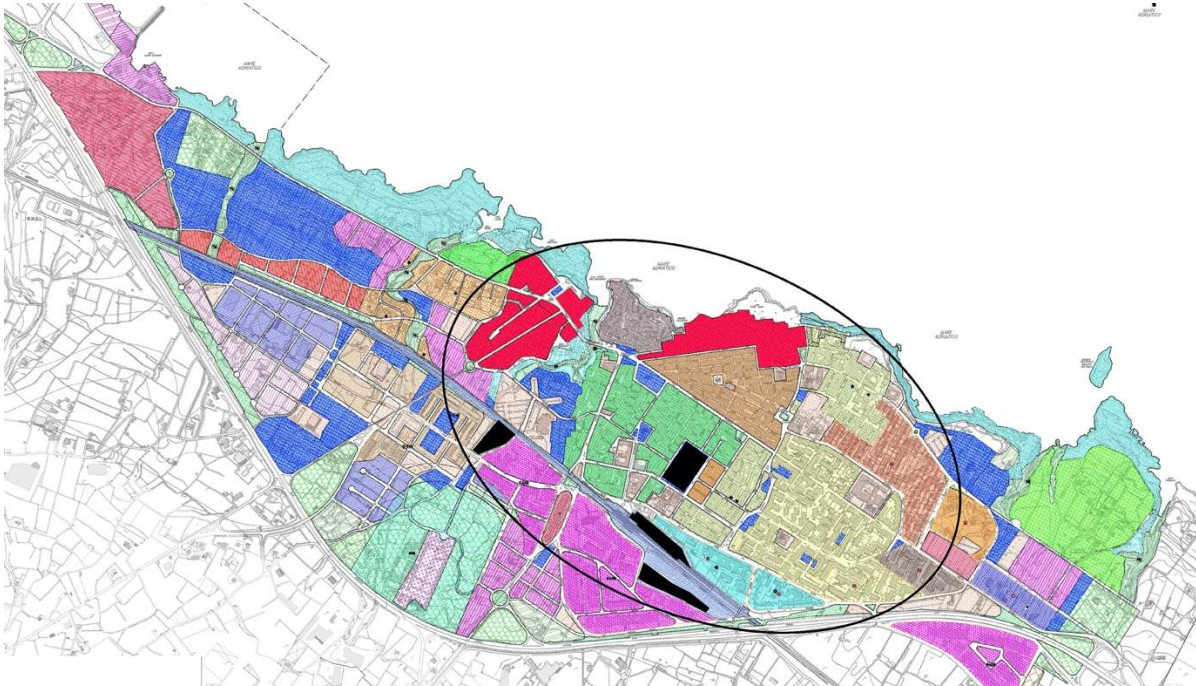




The **Regional Territorial Landscape Plan (PPTR)**, overlaid with the European strategic area, highlights: the **Regional Ecological Network (RER)**, consolidated urban fabrics, coastal territories, and architectural and landscape assets such as those we visited today (Lama Monachile, the Church of Sant'Antonio, and the Orto della Stassa). So always keep in mind, in your project, what are the **landscape invariants** present in the area and what are the guidelines defined by the landscape plan.



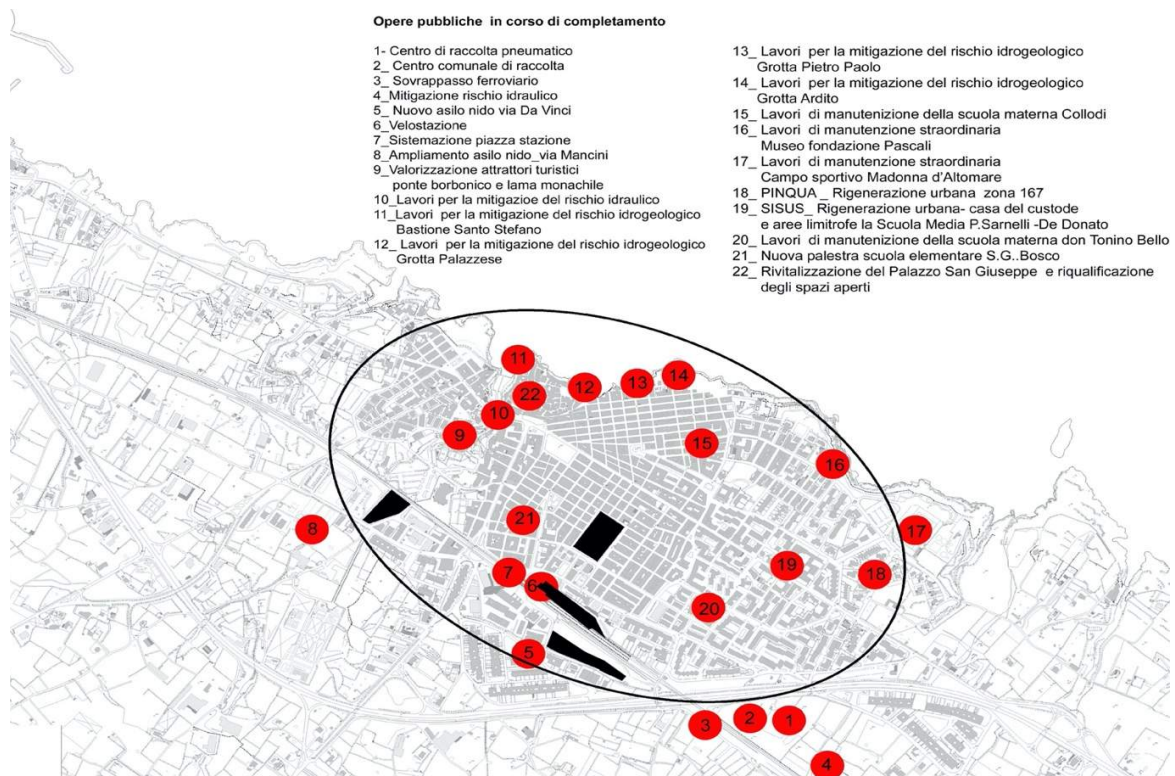
In the current **General Regulatory Plan (PRG)**, overlaid with the EUROPEAN area, the designated land uses are indicated. However, the PRG has **not yet been updated to align with the PPTR**, which is therefore **binding** with respect to the current urban planning tool. A new **General Town Plan (PUG)** is being drafted and has been assigned to the **MATE cooperative** in Bologna.



With **Regional Law No. 21/2008 on urban regeneration**, the local government has launched a number of urban regeneration projects in Polignano's urban center.

Currently, there are **21 public works** nearing completion. Among the most relevant for the strategic area are:

1. The **PINQUA Project** (intervention no. 18), for the regeneration of the Zona 167. It is funded but awaiting launch and must be completed by 2026.
2. The **SISUS Project**, related to the urban regeneration of the area around the caretaker's house and the middle school, including the hospitality school "Domenico Modugno."
3. Projects funded by the **PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan)**, including:
 - Construction of a **new nursery school** (no. 5, in Via Mancini)
 - **Renovation of existing schools**
4. A **waste collection center** and infrastructure for environmental sustainability
5. **Hydraulic risk mitigation projects**, such as the one carried out by **Asset Puglia** along State Road 16. Hydraulic risk in the area requires ongoing **research, monitoring, and planning**—the most recent funding of **2.5 million euros** is dedicated to the **Lama Monachile** and is currently in progress.



Polignano is a **small and compact city**, walkable in **8–15 minutes**. The administration is committed to promoting **soft mobility**, with cycling infrastructure and bike stations. The city is participating in a **PON call for proposals**, with a connection from the train station to become an **intermodal hub** linked to the **Adriatic cycle path**. The construction of the bike station is a key element.

Roads are narrow (average width 6–6.5 meters), and sidewalks often do not exceed 1 meter. This highlights the need to **rethink public spaces** to improve **accessibility and urban quality**.

The decision to take part in European was motivated by the desire to receive **new ideas from young designers**, capable of looking at Polignano with a fresh perspective.

Today, despite being a popular tourist destination, **Polignano risks losing its identity**. Tourism threatens to transform the historic center into a “**non-place**”, designed solely for visitors, pushing residents away.

I recommend watching the short film by director **Pierluigi Ferrandini**, *2030: Polis Nea*, one of the episodes of *Past Forward*, the web series produced by Apulia Film Commission. It's a visual story spanning nine decades in nine episodes, from 1970 to 2050, showcasing different authors and styles to explore the places of Puglia. Filmed in Polignano, it offers valuable insights on this issue: <https://video.repubblica.it/webseries/past-forward/episodio-7-2030-polis-nea/264881/265257?>

The goal is therefore to **return the city to its residents**, revitalizing **everyday urban life** without giving in entirely to tourism.

Stefano Lacatena, *Regional Councilor delegated to Urban Planning and Housing Policies – Apulia Region*:

The PPTR monitoring also highlighted the fragility of rural landscapes, alongside that of coastal areas and the impact of renewable energy sources.

Polignano is distinguishing itself through its commitment to enhancing its infrastructure heritage, integrating it into an urban vision consistent with the principles established by Regional Law 21/2008 on urban regeneration. That law was the result of a far-sighted intuition by Professor Barbanente. Even today, the national government lacks a comprehensive law on urban regeneration. This only confirms how forward-thinking that vision was—though unfortunately, it has only been partially implemented, and mostly just in the public sector.

But cities cannot be conceived solely in public terms: we need a strategy that unites public and private forces. For the past two years, I've been working on a new urban planning law for Puglia, inspired by the same principles of the 2008 model: not just physical regeneration, but also social and cultural.

To regenerate means to rewrite the public city—to create better, more livable, and safer spaces, especially in currently marginal areas. In my proposal, I highlighted a fundamental concept: urban regeneration inevitably includes social regeneration.

Think about the historic center of Monopoli, certain degraded neighborhoods in Bari, or other complex areas: even simple interventions like new sidewalks or public lighting have improved them significantly.

Now, imagine a coordinated development strategy around Polignano.

Three areas that today may seem marginal or forgotten could instead become valuable assets.

Technical and regulatory planning is not enough. What we need is political vision and long-term strategy. At the heart of everything must be people, and the development opportunities linked to them.

A city like Polignano cannot be designed only for residents—it must also consider visitors and tourists, who are a vital part of its identity.

Polignano is demonstrating courage by talking about the future, especially in a time when we often focus only on the short term.

This is a powerful message, and the Region stands alongside Polignano on this path.

There is a policy effort here that's addressing complex, often overlooked topics. But it is precisely by thinking ahead—by looking 15 years into the future—that good politics is done.

This makes me proud of the work we've accomplished so far and reinforces my commitment to ensuring the support of the Puglia Region for the city of Polignano.

As a citizen of Monopoli, and now also of Polignano, I firmly believe the two cities should grow together, collaborating on shared projects like the new park and the wastewater treatment plant.

These are examples of communities that are looking beyond their own boundaries.

I can only congratulate you and thank you for inviting me to represent these issues today.

DEBATE

The intervention by Regional Councilor Stefano Lacatena opened an important debate...

Vesco. We are addressing the situation of a city like Polignano, which in recent years has found itself balancing between two identities: on one side, a living community of citizens who recognize themselves in the authentic values of their territory; on the other, increasingly invasive tourism that risks radically transforming the city's identity.

Today, when we speak of *overtourism*, we usually think of large cities like Venice or Rome—but this phenomenon is becoming increasingly widespread. Even Mount Everest is suffering from tons of waste and overwhelming visitor numbers. This clearly shows that a change of approach is needed: we need an education in the quality of tourism. Not all territories can or should accommodate the same kind of visitors in the same way.

What's required is careful planning—planning that narrates the fragility of places. This morning we visited Via Lepore, where we saw a sea of concrete built next to the *lama* (a natural ravine), completely impermeable to water. Yet even small design interventions can make a difference—helping visitors understand the value and vulnerability of these spaces.

Lorusso. Today's site visit was extremely valuable: we moved slowly, on foot, speaking with each other, observing, and reflecting.

Polignano, thanks to its compact urban form and the quality of its public spaces, is in an exceptional position. It is a city that changes with the seasons, with tourist flows that vary throughout the year. This flexibility is a strength, but also a vulnerability—it can either lead to organic adaptation or to the crystallization and corruption of the urban fabric.

The city must know how **to** adapt and breathe, absorbing tourism while giving back space and vitality to its citizens.

Many areas considered “peripheral” today are in fact strategic and central. For example, the underpasses are not obstacles—they are assets. The Via Lepore area, in particular, connects directly to a large parking area and leads to the *lama* through a natural trail. If well-designed, this could become a valued itinerary even for tourists, who would recognize and respect its delicate nature.

Carrieri. I would like to add an important point. Together with FS Sistemi Urbani, we've held numerous discussions. When you look at the urban plan, it's evident that the so-called “yellow zone”—representing the railway corridor—acts as a physical barrier between the historic core of the city and the newer, less dense urban expansion.

At this stage, parking areas, public services, and mechanisms to manage tourist flows should be strategically placed beyond this barrier, or at least near the railway zones that are being targeted for regeneration. This is because the three main access roads to Polignano—from Bari, Conversano, and Castellana—all converge at this point.

Polignano is a small city, already served by several pedestrian paths. I challenge anyone to claim that, when visiting a charming destination like Bari, they wouldn't be willing to walk five minutes! That's why it's not only feasible, but also desirable, to clearly separate tourist zones from vehicle access and parking areas.

The underpasses should be designed as pedestrian pathways—they lend themselves perfectly to slow, safe movement.

On one side of the railway lies the residential city—home to people who live there every day. These residents need to be well connected, functionally and safely. That's the only way to avoid tourism becoming a harmful force—when in reality, it can be a positive and productive resource.

We must clearly distinguish between habitable space and space that is meant to regulate flows and encourage gentle mobility.

With this vision in mind, visitors could be guided to arrive via the back side of the station, which would act as a natural access hub.

Already in the Via Lepore area, several parking lots exist. These could be established as the main arrival points for tourists.

On the other side of the railway lies the residential heart of Polignano—an area we want to pedestrianize, make less polluted, and more accessible for locals. But it would also appeal to visitors seeking a different, more respectful, and sustainable kind of experience.

There is a growing demand for green, walkable cities **with** low environmental impact. Polignano has everything it needs to meet that demand.

Vesco. Polignano lends itself perfectly to slow, experiential tourism—a kind of tourism rooted in discovery and respect for place.

There is much more here than just *Lama Monachile*: there's a widespread culture, a beauty embedded in everyday life that deserves to be brought to light.

Today, through our journey, we showcased an unseen Polignano—a version of the city that must become its future. The areas we explored represent a unique opportunity, especially considering they are located within a consolidated urban fabric.

These are large spaces, ready to accommodate new functions, and potentially capable of transforming the city's destiny.

It is a complex, delicate challenge, one that carries great responsibility—but that should not be intimidating. On the contrary: we must be bold—dare, without fear!

Carrieri. Naturally, the conversation isn't only about parking.

The European competition areas are significant in size and offer the potential for a much broader integration of services and functions—not just as additions, but perhaps even as primary elements beyond parking infrastructure.

In short, we expect proposals that introduce quality public services that enrich and elevate the urban fabric.

Vesco. Exactly. In our competition program, we intentionally avoided assigning rigid functions to the sites—with the sole exception of Villa Pinocchio, which is already a well-established urban park. There, a reorganization is needed—perhaps even a provocative rethinking of its boundaries.

For the other sites, we opted to encourage a **functional mix**, allowing participants to express a design vision that responds organically to existing urban connections.

Imposing strict uses would have been reductive.

Instead, we identified predominant vocations for each area, without closing off possibilities. The matter of mobility and parking remains crucial: it is essential that citizens feel these new spaces are for them, a true extension of daily urban life—not just places designed for tourism.

This mindset helps prevent gentrification and supports a model of high-quality tourism, one that educates visitors to appreciate and respect the local reality.

Even though Polignano doesn't have the scale of cities like Venice or Rome, its tourist flows are significant and at times challenging to manage.

We are at a pivotal moment. We must reflect on how to make tourism and urban life coexist, avoiding irreversible damage.

Our natural landscape is a treasure—what we need now is the courage to integrate and enhance it as part of the contemporary city.

INTERVENTIONS

Intervento di Angelo Focarelli, Deputy Mayor Assessor for Urban Planning and Urban Redevelopment

I would like to draw attention to a theme that lies at the heart of Polignano's current reflections and actions: the town is undergoing a profound transformation due to the exponential growth in tourist numbers. In recent years, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of visitors, especially international tourists, drawn by the natural beauty of our territory.

Polignano is now firmly on the map of major tourist destinations, and this inevitably brings challenges—particularly in terms of the delicate balance between residents and visitors. It is a tension we feel on a daily basis, and it is a clear sign that we must act with determination and a strategic vision.

The local administration is already moving in this direction, focusing on the pedestrianization of central areas, the expansion of green spaces, and the enhancement of the landscape and environment. These three elements may seem to be in conflict, but if carefully integrated, they can become the foundation of a new urban equilibrium.

In this context, the European competition represents a real opportunity for us to explore effective solutions. We already have some ideas—perhaps simple, but fundamental—for improving the quality of life. For example, we are considering the pedestrianization of Viale della Rimembranza, Via Martiri di Dogali, and Viale Sarnelli: initiatives that could make public spaces safer and more livable.

This is not just about removing traffic, but about creating new spaces for social interaction. Villa Pinocchio park, for instance, should reinforce its role as a central gathering place for families and the wider community. We believe that parking should be located outside the city center. At present, the search for parking—often free—by the 70% of tourists who arrive by car has turned our streets into chaotic circuits, with cars spinning around like tops.

This competition is part of a broader planning effort. If it brings the desired results, it could become a real driver for Polignano's future. Of course, this will also require a commitment to securing funding and building partnerships with private actors and institutional stakeholders in order to activate sustainable, long-term economic tools.

We have high hopes. We trust that in the coming months, innovative ideas will emerge that can strengthen and celebrate the identity of our territory. Polignano is known worldwide for Lama Monachile, but in truth, it offers many other extraordinary areas—from the seafront to the countryside, and a historic center that deserves to be reimaged and revitalized.

In recent years—especially in the last two—a specific part of town has become the new beating heart of the city: the avenue near the train station. Today, the station brings at least 300 people into Polignano every half hour, amounting to nearly 20,000 people a day.

Some have even suggested introducing an entrance fee to the town. A paradox, perhaps, but it gives a sense of the pressure we are under.

In any case, redevelopment of the area between the railway and the town center will begin in October. Some of this area is already pedestrianized, such as Via Neapolis. With only modest changes, we are already seeing the first results—despite initial criticism. Residents are beginning to adapt, and to recognize the value of change.

EUROPAN CASE STUDIES

Since its earliest editions, EUROPAN in Italy has translated design experiences into tangible outcomes—initially through experimental residential projects. As the themes have grown more complex, it has evolved into a project/process methodology that includes a post-competition participatory workshop aimed at defining the tools and guidelines necessary to initiate implementation.

Today, we are presenting two case studies from the Puglia region: the first has already been completed, while the second is currently in the implementation phase.

1.

archh. **Serafino Fioriello e Vincenzo Loiacono**, special mention E13 Molfetta and designers of the construction of the Waterfront di Ponente

The part of the Molfetta waterfront project that we were asked to develop—because it was considered the most effective in that stretch—extends from the Church of the Madonna dei Martiri to the area known as *Secca dei Pali*. This area, also known to many as a venue for events and concerts, lacked any real urban form at the time of the competition. Our concept provided the foundation upon which the local administration later built its vision, implementing it in phases through the gradual acquisition of funding.

Due to the complexity of the project, we were entrusted with the detailed and executive design of the churchyard and the terrace area. The rear section, including *Secca dei Pali*, was assigned to other designers, who worked from our initial design guidelines. These guidelines, in fact, served as the basis for a multi-year urban plan that successive municipal administrations were able to carry forward.

This project was the result of an integrated and collaborative approach, combining various skills and experiences. Personally, I brought insights gained from a similar project on the Giovinazzo seafront, while other members of the team contributed different areas of expertise.

We wanted to present the project's original state and compare it to the final result. For example, a roundabout in front of the square was transformed into a public space, redesigned with one traffic lane in each direction and a large pedestrian zone. We restored dignity and sacredness to the churchyard of the Church of the

Madonna dei Martiri, which hosts the city's major religious celebration in September and serves as a symbolic and urban anchor.

The terraces have reconnected the city behind the waterfront through a long promenade culminating in the *Secca dei Pali* plaza. The project was carried out in close synergy with the Municipality, European Italia, and the Order of Architects, who strongly supported our vision.

Some of the interventions were initially met with criticism, but in the end, the consistency and sensitivity of the design prevailed. From the outset, we adhered to a fundamental principle: our project had to be feasible—not an abstract vision, but a concrete and economically viable plan.

We focused on simple yet powerful actions: eliminating degraded elements, removing physical barriers, creating functional green spaces, and improving visibility and safety. The green barrier that once blocked the sea view was removed, and the concept of the square as an open space was fully embraced. The green areas were reimagined—because it's not enough to just “add green,” it must be contextual and thoughtful.

We adopted a minimalist approach: removing poles, clutter, and unrelated elements to create an open, almost parade-ground-like space. A symbolic intervention was the relocation of a statue that had previously been placed in an insignificant spot. Its new position improved spatial use, although it was initially met with skepticism.

We also added a fountain and created a 50-meter area to accommodate crowds during key events like the feast day of the patron saint, while ensuring emergency access and public safety. The true test of the project was that day: thousands of people used the space, providing a real-world validation of its functionality.

We chose a permeable paving system to improve drainage and worked closely with the European Union, the Municipality, and, crucially, with the approval of the Superintendency. Although we were not the official works directors, the foresight of those managing the project led them to involve us consistently throughout all operational phases. They sought our input whenever critical issues arose, and we responded willingly—collaborating free of charge to resolve the problems, driven solely by the desire to see the project realized in the best possible way.

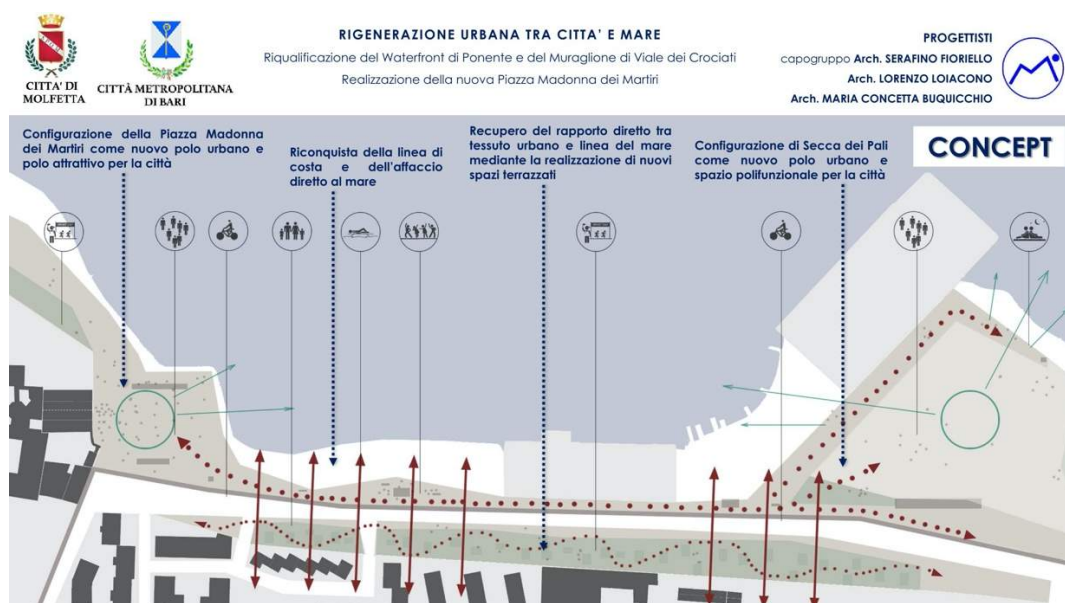
No one stayed locked away in their studio, nor were economic matters raised—what mattered was the quality and coherence of the work. This demonstrates that some professional boundaries can and should be crossed to elevate the outcome.

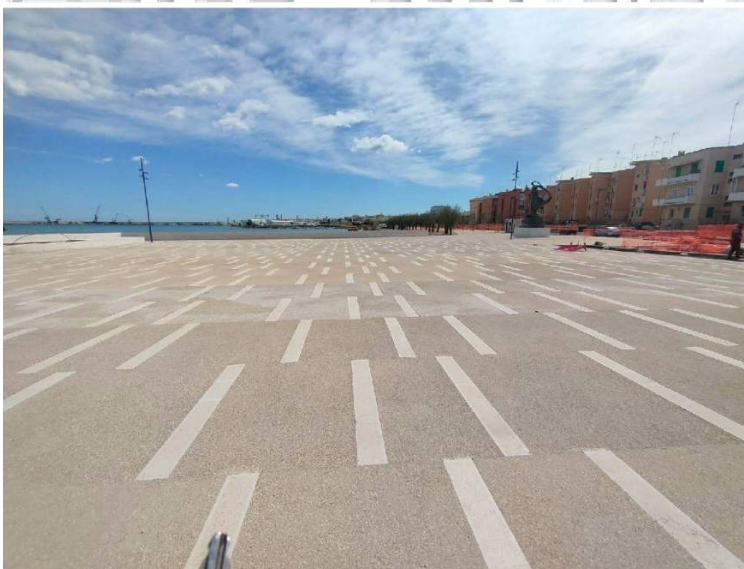
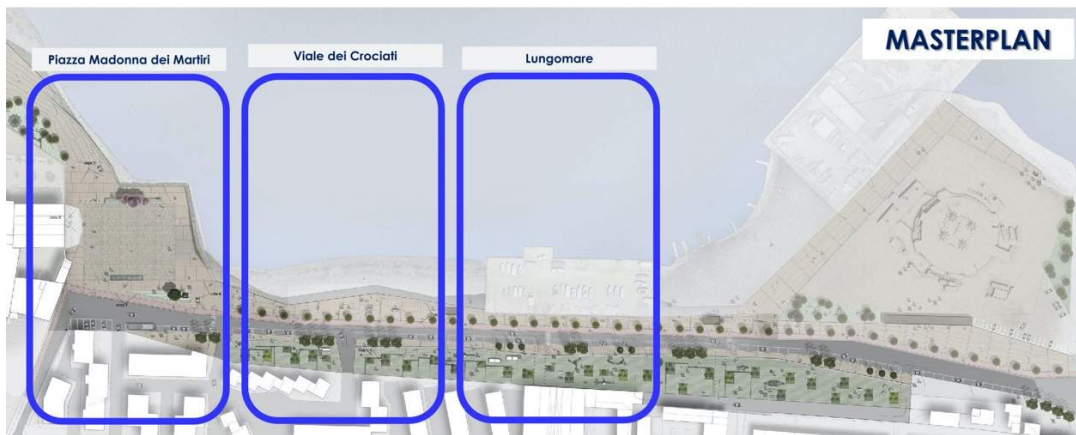
Today, the project stands as a true urban landmark, deeply appreciated by the community. During the construction phases, we were actively involved—from the demolition of outdated structures to the laying of new paving, the installation of the fountain, and the overall enhancement of the area.

The inauguration marked the symbolic conclusion of this journey: the square was returned to the city, transformed and fully embraced by the community.

The Church of the Madonna dei Martiri, historically built on hard and inaccessible rock to protect the Crusaders from attack, was given new symbolic and visual importance through our intervention. We restored the view toward San Corrado, a key element in reestablishing the urban landscape.

Thank you for the invitation—we are pleased to have had the opportunity to share our experience.





Cantiere

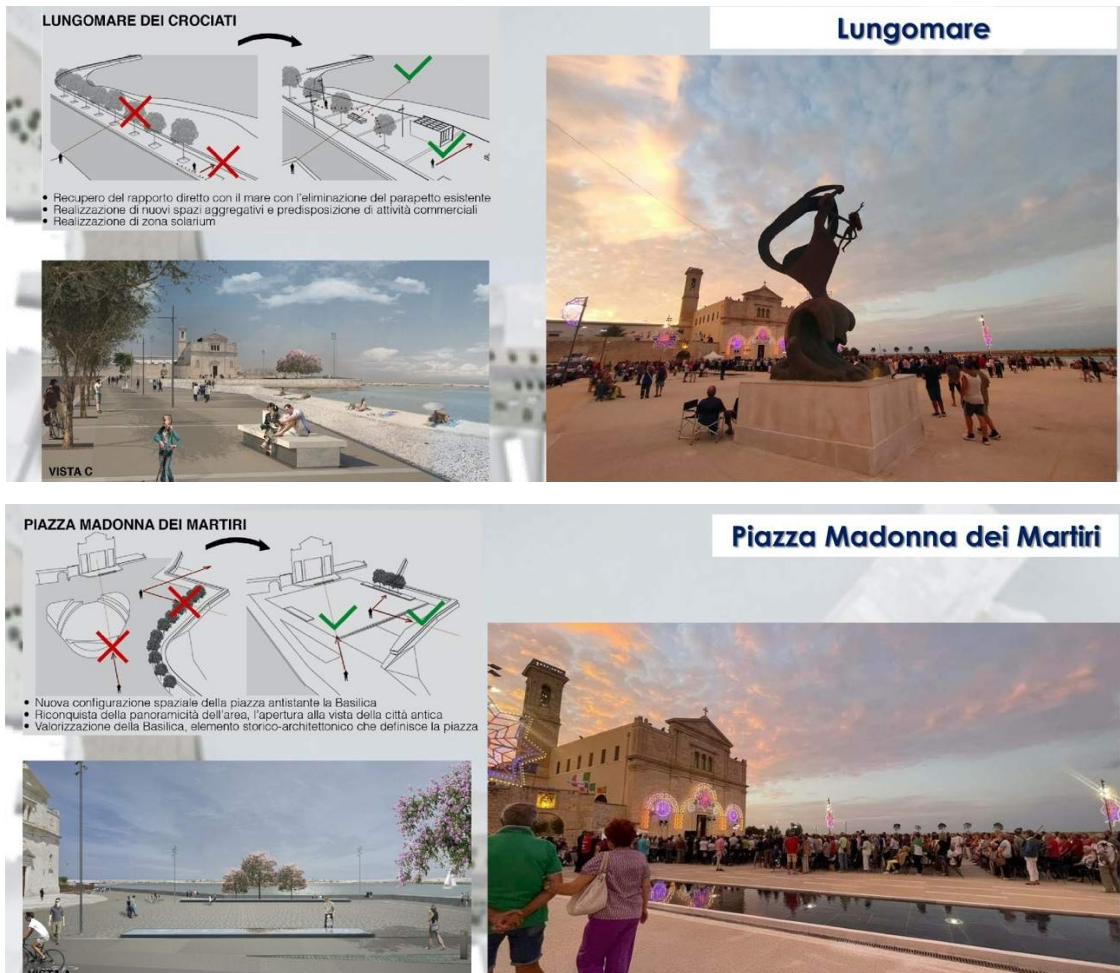


Esecuzione



Viale dei Crociati





Vesco: Thank you, and congratulations for the great professionalism with which you carried out the work. Moreover, the Molfetta project/process has been recognized among the 62 selected projects and processes at the European level.

As we continue with the implementation phases, we will contribute to enriching this repository of good practices, making the value of our shared experiences tangible and visible.

Each edition of European has its own characteristics and peculiarities, and its successes are often the result of the commitment of Administrators and Stakeholders—individuals who have visions to pursue, driven by perseverance and trust.

I would now like to introduce the case of **European 16 – Bitonto**, carried out under the leadership of then-Mayor Michele Abbaticchio, together with Councilor Cosimo Bonasia, who has continued to support and develop the project in recent years.

2.

Ing. **Cosimo Bonasia**, Councillor for Economic Promotion of the Territory, Local Police and Civil Protection at the City of Bitonto and member of the National Scientific Committee European Italia

Good evening everyone. First of all, I would like to express my congratulations to Mayor Carrieri, Urban Planning Councilor Focarelli, and Councilor Matteo Lorusso. Not all administrations have the courage to take the path of a design competition: it requires determination, even just to decide to invest resources—whether limited or substantial—into a quality call for tenders. And even more courage is needed to give concrete follow-up to the results that emerge from such a process.

To my fellow administrators, I want to offer a message of encouragement: approach this competition phase with enthusiasm, because it is precisely from here that new, unexpected scenarios often unfold—ones we cannot foresee from the outset.

I'd like to share our experience, which took place during a particularly challenging moment in history—the Covid pandemic.

We weren't able to hold in-person meetings, those moments where even a glance or spontaneous exchange between colleagues can lead to new ideas. We found ourselves working remotely, in isolation, with a necessarily different type of participation.

We embraced the European 16 project not as a formal exercise, but as a true tool for planning and, above all, for community engagement. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, we worked hard to foster a sense of shared ownership and belonging. Today, more than ever, we administrators must ensure that citizens are involved in and connected to our design choices.

Just today, Facebook reminded me that it's been three years since we presented the project materials in the Hall of Mirrors of the Bitonto Town Hall.

For that event, I invited local schoolchildren, including my son's class—he was in fourth grade at the time. One little girl sent me a voice message that evening, beautifully describing the project's meaning with the imagination only a child can bring. Her words captured the very essence of what we achieved during those three days of workshops with the designers—the heart of the European project and the European spirit of the city.

Bitonto is a vast municipality, spanning 173 km². Our candidacy was built around a dual vision: on the one hand, the redevelopment of the three central squares—Piazza Aldo Moro, Piazza Cavour, and Piazza Marconi; on the other, the extension of the project to the outlying districts of Palombaio and Mariotto, ensuring no one was left out.

The idea was to bring the same “three squares” concept to these areas too, specifically Piazza Milite Ignoto in Palombaio and Piazza Roma in Mariotto.

The winning proposal managed to weave these public spaces into a larger network, enhancing the natural and landscape features of the territory—such as the Lama, the Lama Balice Park, and the Alta Murgia Park, now a recognized UNESCO heritage site.

Today, four years later, we can confidently say that our vision was right.

Our real challenge was not to treat European as a collection of ideas to be shelved.

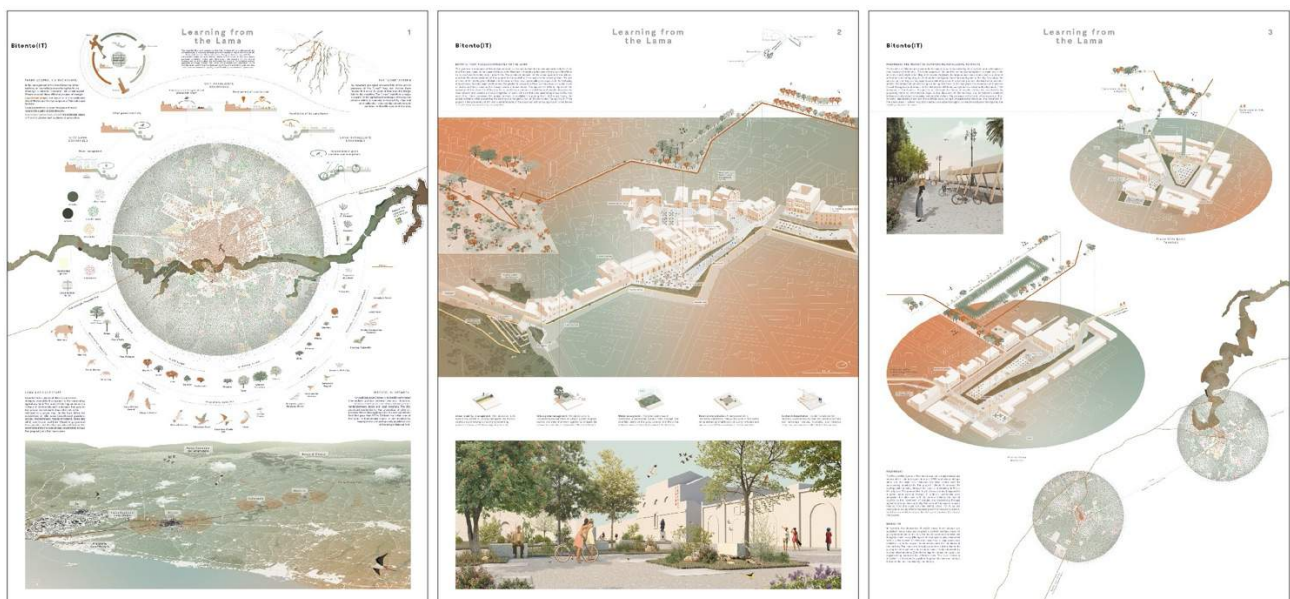
I made a personal commitment—and one shared by the administration—to ensure the winning project would be implemented.

And that's exactly what we did. We submitted the project under a National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) measure and secured €5.5 million in funding. The executive project was developed by the winning architects themselves, Luca Luini and Riccardo Masiero. It's possible that, during the execution phase—which is about to begin—they will also be involved in the construction management.

Additionally, through the new “Genera” strategy, we are exploring ways to include the two final squares of the project, completing the full vision. We may not realize them all immediately, but the goal is to incorporate them into the implementation process envisioned by the original project ideas.

This, in short, is the experience of the Municipality of Bitonto: a concrete example of how a competition can—and should—become a genuine planning tool, in service of the city.

Thank you for your attention.



Progetto Learning from the Lama – LLUMAA Architetti

Antonella Mari, architect, member of the National Scientific Committee European Italia

We are pleased to recall her Special Mention, as the Italian representative, out of 350 nominations and 1270 projects presented, at the “Prix des Femmes Architectes 2023” with the support of the Région Ile de France, the National Council of the Order of Architects, the Pavilion of the Arsenal and the City of Paris.

Today, I am pleased to present the two projects we visited this morning in the City of Polignano, both of which serve as strong examples of urban regeneration initiatives that have progressed from concept to realization.

The first project is the velo-station, initially conceived in 2018. After a period of inactivity, the executive plan was updated and re-submitted in 2021. Today, the project is in its final stages of completion. It was funded through the 2018–2019 European FESR program, which aimed to promote sustainable mobility in urban and suburban areas, particularly through the construction of velo-stations near railway hubs.

One of the key conditions of the funding call was that municipalities adopt a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS). Although Polignano had already developed a PUMC (Urban Mobility Plan for Cycling), it lacked designated locations for the velo-stations. These were later identified in three areas: the railway station, near the municipal sports field, and a third location near the tourist port or San Vito area.

The funding program covered a wide range of interventions, including urban renewal of stations, modernization of public transport, development of cycling infrastructure, and construction of new cycle paths. The total available budget was approximately €3 million, with about €300,000 allocated to each velo-station, alongside additional funds for associated cycling routes.

This initiative is part of the broader objectives set out in the 2015–2019 Regional Transport Plan, with particular focus on the Adriatic-Ionian corridor and the promotion of intermodality—the efficient integration between different modes of transportation such as rail, road, and bicycle. This approach supports the broader goal of reducing reliance on air travel in favor of more sustainable forms of mobility, even on a European scale.

Of course, for such a system to function effectively, the territory must be supported with appropriate infrastructure and services. This includes secure bicycle parking, cycle repair and maintenance workshops, and info-points offering guidance on cycle routes and the area's natural and cultural landmarks. The project carries significant implications not only for transport but also for urban planning, tourism, livability, and environmental awareness.

Polignano boasts extraordinary landscape potential, yet much of it remains underutilized—by both residents and tourists. Public transportation is limited, and the bicycle presents a practical and ecological solution to reconnect people with their environment, highlight the coastline, and promote slow tourism—a more sustainable, immersive approach to travel that honors local nature and history.

This idea is also one of the guiding principles of the Urban Redevelopment Program (PRU): to strengthen the city's relationship with the sea, a key resource for Polignano. The project also supports better connections between rural areas and the coast. Many international residents have purchased homes in the countryside, and a well-planned cycling network could improve their access to services and the seafront. From a cultural and educational standpoint, velo-stations can also become spaces for promoting sustainability, raising public awareness, and encouraging dialogue about new relationships between environment, mobility, and quality of life.

When I was first asked to design a velo-station in 2017, this type of facility was still relatively unknown in Italy—at best, people referred to it as a cycle station. But this concept is much more. In addition to providing secure bike parking, it incorporates a workshop, an info-point, and a dedicated space for promoting cycling culture. It is also envisioned as a community hub for discussions around sustainability.

The structures are modular and essential by design, making them easily adaptable to different contexts. The project also involved the rehabilitation of a pre-existing building that had been entirely unusable and shut down. The system is flexible enough to accommodate future expansions. A critical element was the signage—designed to encourage and facilitate usage. A large signage panel now clearly defines the area and helps reorganize the adjacent square.

One of the new structures was conceived to convey a sense of movement while also functioning as a bike rack. It can be used immediately without requiring additional equipment—the structure itself serves as a support.

The construction phase is now complete. Only a few final touches, such as books and catalogs, are pending, while we await the resolution of some remaining bureaucratic procedures before installing the final covering. All three velo-stations are aligned with the same vision: to ensure accessibility, operational efficiency, and seamless integration with the local landscape.

The second project we visited concerns the Pino Pascali Foundation, located in an area classified as 1P.

At the time of the approval of the DPRU, the project was already partially underway. The building originally functioned as the municipal slaughterhouse—a structure of significant historical and architectural value, emblematic of industrial archaeology. Ideally, it would have warranted a more rigorous conservation approach. However, in order to qualify for regional funding programs launched in 2006, the building was largely demolished. For years, it remained in an unfinished, construction-site state. The original objective was to transform it into a cultural facility.

Initially, the sea-facing front of the building was completely closed off—a configuration that would not have served the building's future cultural function. The introduction of large windows to reopen the visual and physical relationship with the landscape necessitated a substantial redesign of the façade.

Eventually, the building was completed and delivered in this modified form. Part of the original volume had been removed, and was later recovered in the reconfiguration. Yet, a critical issue remained: the interior layout was not suited to its new role as a contemporary art museum.

At this point, I became involved through the FESR Puglia 2007–2013 program, as part of a public call aimed at the redevelopment and enhancement of the regional museum system. Our intervention focused on completing and adapting the structure for its new function.

We preserved the 19th-century portion of the building, repurposed the open-air atrium, created neutral interior spaces suitable for exhibitions, and significantly improved the relationship between the museum and the sea. The structure now offers approximately 1,000 square meters of exhibition space and a 700-square-meter roof garden. At this stage, the surrounding outdoor spaces were also redeveloped, which helped activate and revitalize the neighborhood.

The building is situated in a residential area, which, thanks in part to the Foundation's work, has since become more vibrant, hosting a growing number of activities. The Foundation now operates at the local, regional, national, and international levels. This is a key insight into urban regeneration: it's not only about introducing new uses, but also about fostering long-term vibrancy and appeal.

The funding also enabled the reactivation of the roof garden, which now includes a public walkway. A ramp connects the seafront promenade (Lungomare) to the rooftop, integrating the museum into the urban and cycling networks. This access path, conceived as a public route, aligns with the guidelines of the PTPR (Territorial Landscape Plan of the Region), which encourages the development of scenic walkways and the adaptive reuse of existing structures.

In 2024, we participated in the PNRR – Next Generation EU call promoted by the Ministry of Culture, focused on eliminating architectural barriers in museums and cultural institutions. Our proposal targeted further improvements to the seafront, which today is the most dynamic and frequented part of the complex. Given the building's direct exposure to the sea, it requires continuous upkeep—almost like a ship. This is the flip side of a location that is as spectacular as it is demanding.

NOTE: The two projects presented will be inserted, together with further material of the day in the folder “0-New_Docs_after_Launch” in the download area for those registered for the competition.



FONDAZIONE MUSEO PINO PASCALI



