

# **Inter-municipal Coordination and Spatial Planning: A Cross-national Comparison Between Portugal, France and Italy**

**Carlos Oliveira, Isabel Breda-Vázquez**

CITTA – Research Centre for Territory, Transportation and the Environment

University of Porto, Engineering Faculty, carlosol@fe.up.pt; ivazquez@fe.up.pt

Phone/fax numbers: 00 351 225 081 903 - 00 351 225 081 486

**As a consequence of rising living standards, municipalities became “under-bounded” in most European countries. Thanks to increased mobility, an enlarged scale of production of public services and more complex inter-dependencies between and within urban areas, they need to deal with their neighbour’s decisions, beyond those of higher levels of government.**

**All these trends have obvious impacts on spatial planning systems. Some countries try to promote inter-municipal cooperative arrangements, even though this is hardly the preferred option at local level. Others introduced new scales of intervention between the municipal and the regional or national levels, or put in practice entirely new institutional contexts.**

**The paper is focused on the planning systems of Portugal, France and Italy, particularly their institutional arrangements. Despite having shared some common roots, these planning systems have been evolving in different ways over the last few decades. We aim to conclude about the potential achievements and drawbacks of these three different ways of articulating planning systems and their institutional settings, in relation to their effectiveness in tackling the most acute urban problems.**

**Keywords:** spatial planning, institutional settings, inter-municipal coordination