



PRESS RELEASE

Milan, a data centre capital: ProdAction carries out the first mapping in the area of the Metropolitan City

The study by a research group at the Politecnico di Milano shows that 33 of the 49 active data centres in Lombardy are located here in Milan, and the nominal power consumption for these facilities accounts for 68% of the power used for such centres throughout Italy

Milan, 27 February 2026 – The first mapping of data centres in the area of the Metropolitan City of Milan provides some clear data: most of those in Lombardy are located here. And Lombardy hosts almost half the data centres present on Italian soil. These and other data were presented this morning by the **ProdAction project, an initiative by CRAFT** – the Centre of Competence for Anti-fragile Territories – at the **Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DAStU)** of the Politecnico di Milano. The presentation took place during an international conference at the CRAFT centre, entitled *"Datascapes. Exploring the Spatiality of Digital Infrastructures"*. The project coordinator, **Professor Eugenio Morello, plus researcher Cristiana Mattioli and assistant Alice Franchina**, outlined the **initial results of their research for mapping data centres in the area of the Metropolitan City of Milan**. The research involved facilities that are either already active, under construction or being planned, and included their location, electrical power and land use, with reference to the current situation and the coming years.

This project was partly made necessary by a lack of public databases, and this also slowed down **ProdAction's efforts to build up a picture of the situation, especially from the viewpoint of its local impact** (at the regional, and particularly the metropolitan level) in relation to various aspects: the need for electricity, the use of land, and environmental and urban planning processes. **Many stakeholders** have been involved in this research, in various working groups: **the Municipalities and Metropolitan City of Milan, architectural firms and engineering companies, developers and operators of data centres**.

The Milan area is now home to **33 active data centres out of a total of 49 in Lombardy** (i.e. 67%), **spread over the 32 municipalities that form part of the Metropolitan City; another 10 are under construction** (with a view to opening between 2028 and 2029), while **another 23 are currently being assessed** by the relevant local bodies. These figures are of some importance, when we consider that there are about 200 data centres throughout Italy, and that **those in the Milan area account for 68% of the nominal power consumption for such facilities nationwide** (about 414 MegaWatts). In contrast to the active data centres with an average power capacity below 10 MW, those now under construction have a capacity of between 20 and 60 MW with an average of about 30 MW, while those undergoing assessment have a capacity of between 24 and 300 MW, with an average of about 80 MW. As **Eugenio Morello** explained: "This confirms a trend that is already evident on the international scene of building Campus Data Centres, large

complexes of many buildings with very high power capacity. And with regard to this capacity: if we take into account all the data centres currently being built and **due to open in 2028**, we're looking at **an increase of 318 MW, about double what we have at present** ".

And if we also consider those that are currently undergoing a ministerial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), these could create an additional power capacity of about 600 MW by 2030, resulting in a total of almost 1GW more than today. The result would be an increased concentration of these centres in and around Milan. As **Alice Franchina** pointed out: "Something is also changing around Rome, with the opening of about twenty data centres, but these are still much lower numbers than we have here. And more importantly, there are entire areas in the rest of the country that have almost none at all. This also highlights a certain **technological disparity at regional level**, with certain areas experiencing slower development".

With regard to land use: many data centres are either being planned or built on **disused land**, both throughout Italy and in particular in the Milan area, where **there are about twenty (6 under construction and 14 under assessment)**. However, there are still some plans for building centres on virgin land, i.e. land that has never been built on or used for agricultural purposes; there **are 13 projects under construction or assessment on greenfield sites (39% of the projects), but they occupy 53% of the total area** planned to be used for data centres, covering a total of 120 hectares (about 160 football fields). As **Cristiana Mattioli** pointed out: "This means that the larger centres are generally being built on greenfield sites. Most of these projects, because of their increasing size, are subject to EIAs, and because of their environmental impact they therefore result in major environmental compensation measures. However, the following have an important effect: an absence of coherent regulations about methods and quantifications, an imbalance in negotiations between individuals and local authorities, and the problems for local authorities in using the budgets allocated to them for projects with a supra-local and ecological-environmental value, which favour the reclamation of degraded areas".

The aim of ProdAction is also to develop, on the basis of scientific evidence and by listening to stakeholders, knowledge and **tools that can help legislators and local administrations** make future decisions in the public interest, and in a well-informed and fully aware manner. Indeed, **the research contains policy recommendations – aimed at policy makers – which are designed for the purpose of regulating the sector**, with more attention on the protection and development of local areas and a greater focus on efficiency and sustainability.

In addition to ProdAction, there are other working groups at DASTU that are already examining the issue of data centres, looking at it from different points of view; they have also taken part in discussions during the two-day event "*Datascapes. Exploring the Spatiality of Digital Infrastructures*", held yesterday and today at CRAFT, and organised in collaboration with the Datascapes Honours Programme, with a contribution by Techbau.

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