

# Subsidenza differenziale e rischio indotto sulle infrastrutture delle metropoli italiane: situazione attuale e scenari futuri

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*Enhancing our understanding of Subsidence RISK  
induced by groundwater exploitation towards sustainable  
urban development [2023-2026]*

Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR)'s "PRIN 2022 PNRR" Call to fund Research Projects of Significant National Interest (PRIN) in the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR)



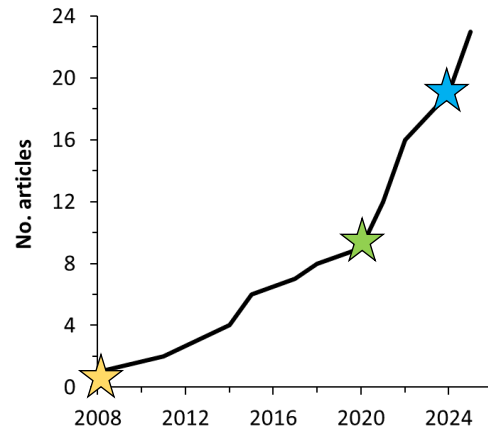
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## Trending topic in the InSAR literature

*\* transforming satellite observations into information layers on exposure, hazard and risk for urban infrastructure \**



- ★ Differential settlements and structural stress affecting buildings, to gather insights into surface faulting hazard
- ★ InSAR-based risk assessment workflows based on risk matrices
- ★ Exposure of communities and urban infrastructure to land subsidence and differential settlement

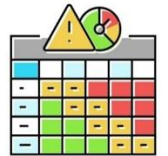


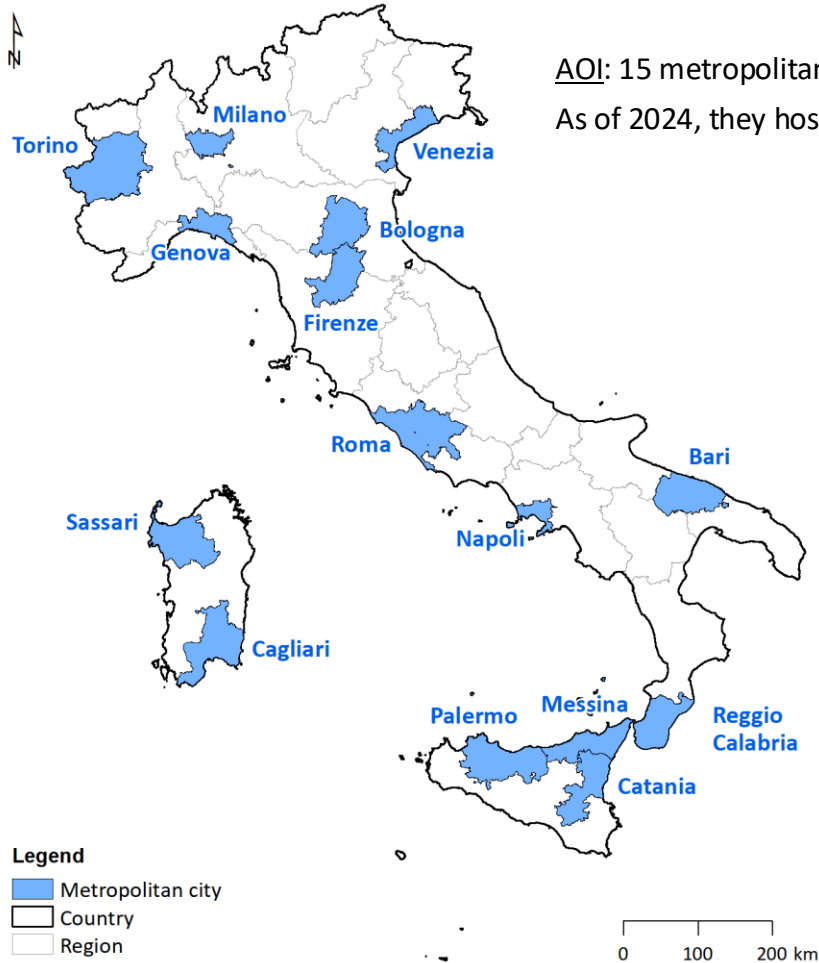
Adaptability to a variety of geographical contexts in the US, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia



### OUR GOALS

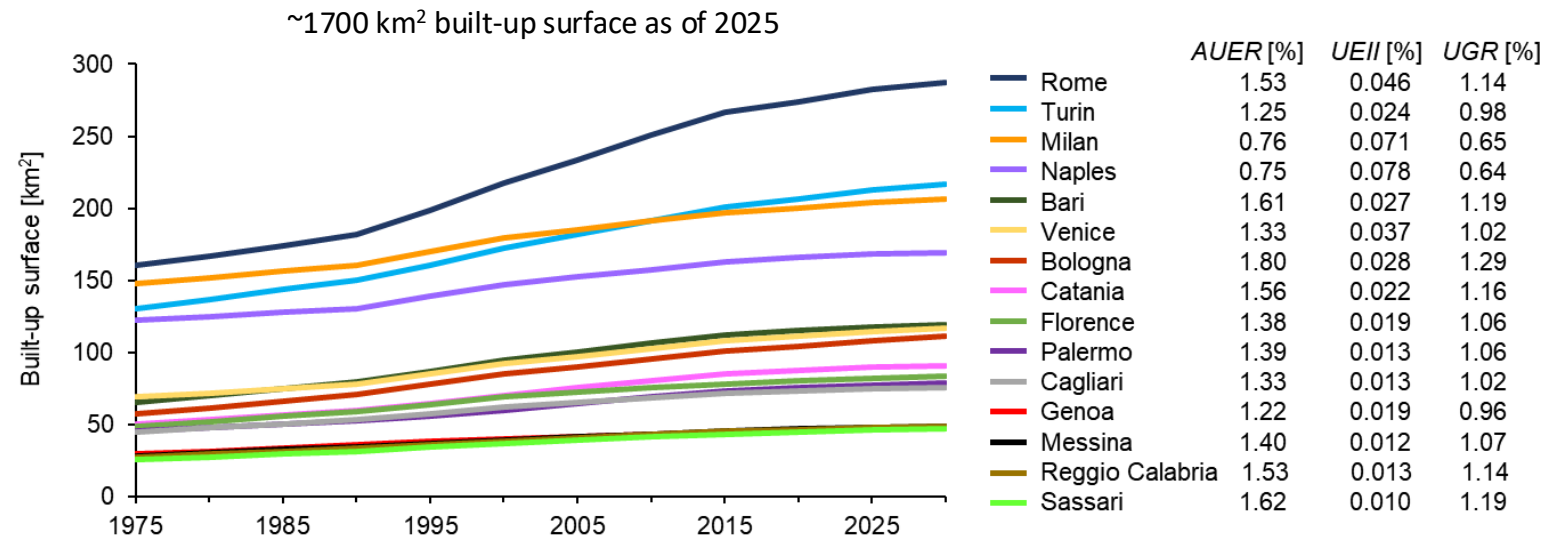
- Innovating the risk assessment workflow to enable exposure-vulnerability rating, hazard quantification and risk assessment by integrating InSAR-derived ground displacement, land cover and urban settlement characteristics
- Estimating present-day land subsidence-induced risk in Italy, one of the world countries most affected by ground deformation processes





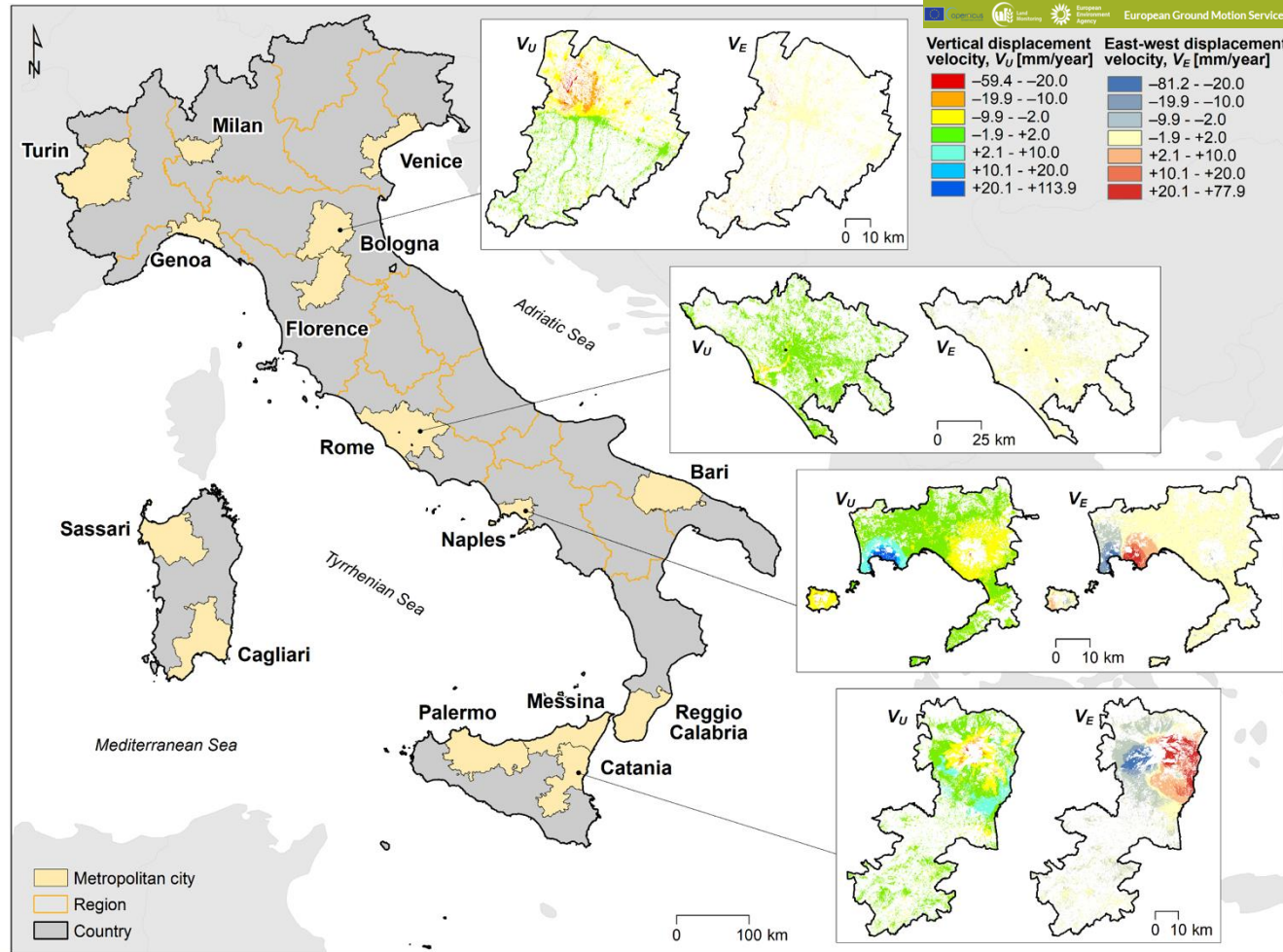
AOI: 15 metropolitan cities

As of 2024, they host > 21.7 M inhabitants across 54,380 km<sup>2</sup> (out of 59 M censed in the whole country)

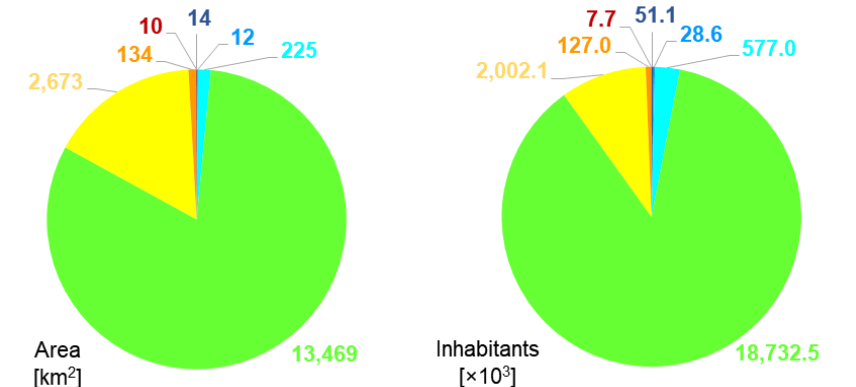
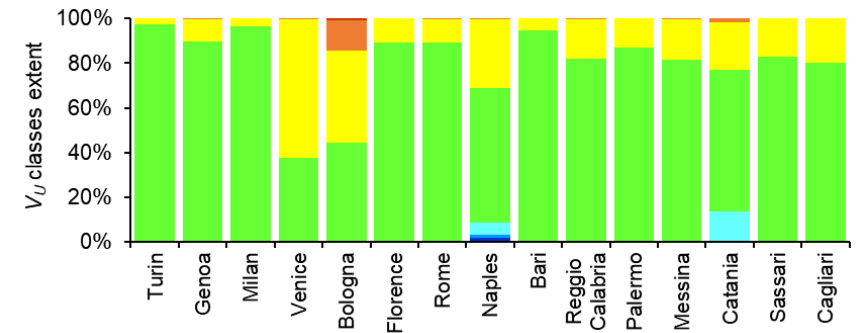


CIGNA et al. 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8

# Urban land and population exposed



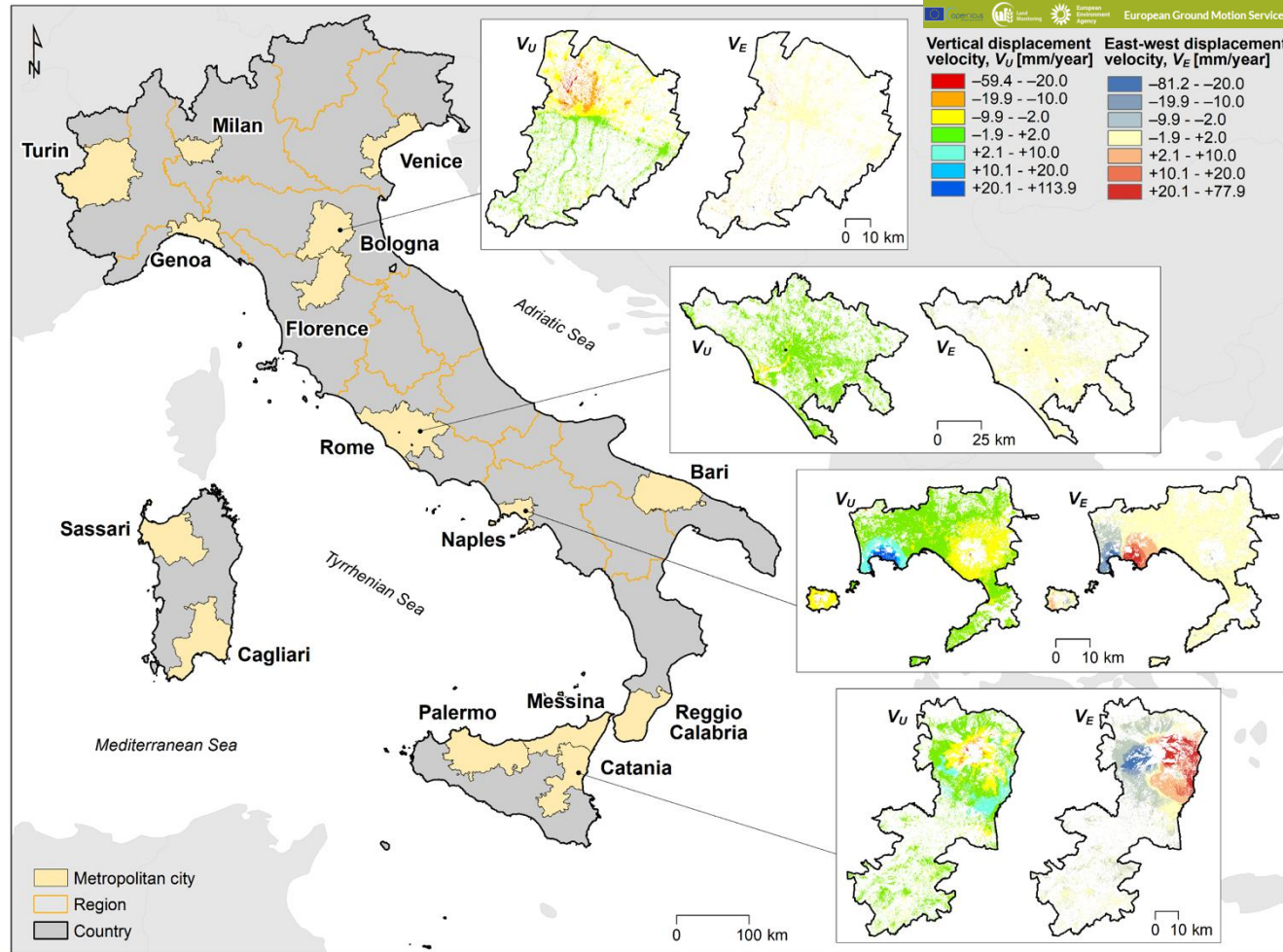
Built-up lands exposed to  $V_U > \pm 2.0$  mm/year (subsidence/uplift) span **~3070 km<sup>2</sup>** across the 15 cities (~19% of the InSAR data coverage), involving **2.8 million inhabitants** (~13%)



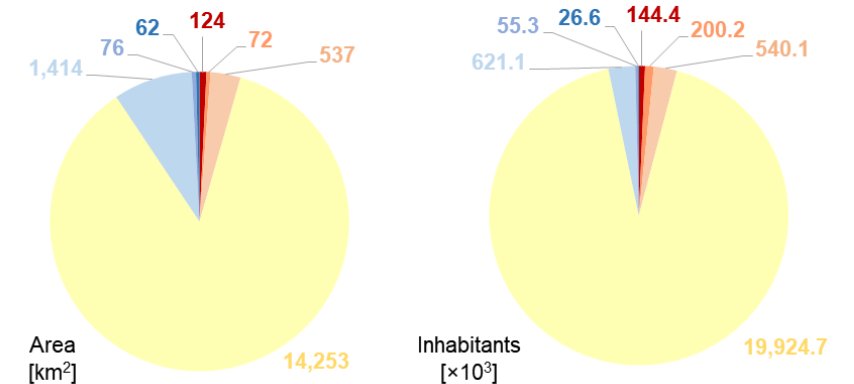
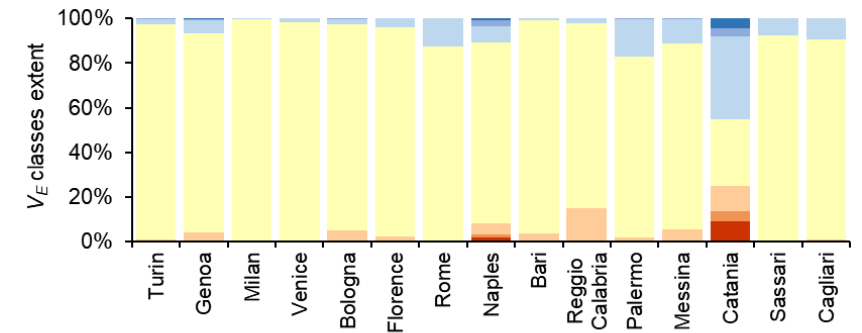
CIGNA et al. 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8



# Urban land and population exposed



Built-up lands exposed to  $V_E > \pm 2.0$  mm/year (eastward/westward) cover **~2285 km<sup>2</sup>** across the 15 cities (~14% of the InSAR data coverage), involving **1.6 million inhabitants** (~7%)



CIGNA et al. 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Exposure} \times \text{Vulnerability}$$

expected loss from a given natural hazard

**Hazard:** probability of occurrence of a potentially impacting phenomenon

**Exposure:** location, attributes and value of the assets that could be affected

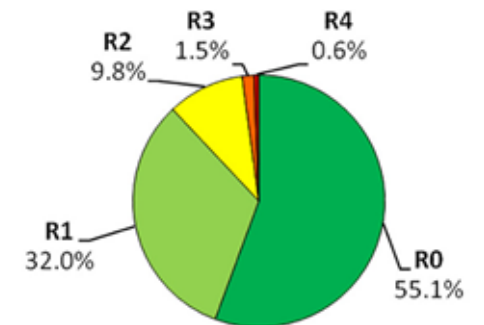
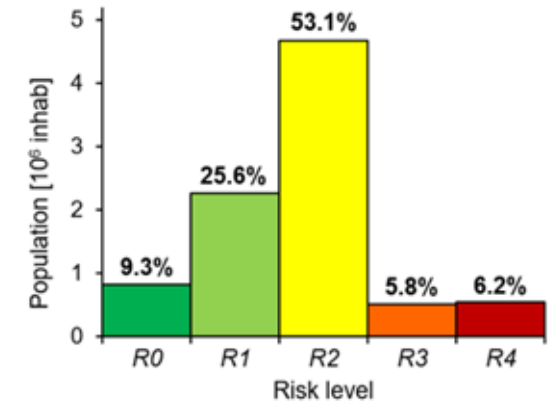
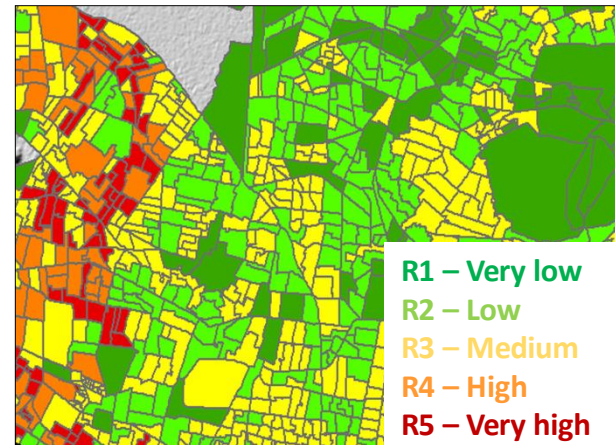
**Vulnerability:** likelihood that the assets will be affected when exposed to the hazard

Risk matrix

		Subsidence-induced hazard			
		low	medium	high	very high
Exposure-vulnerability	low	R1	R2	R3	R4
	medium	R2	R3	R4	R5
	high	R3	R4	R5	R5



Output risk maps  
& statistics



CIGNA & TAPETE 2021, doi:10.1016/j.rse.2020.112161



## Impacts of differential ground displacement Some examples from Central Mexico



Unlevel sinking and undulating rooflines  
(www.sciencemag.org)



House fissuring and cracking  
(FIGUEROA-MIRANDA et al. 2018)



Fissured and ramped roads and ground due to surface faulting  
(©INEGI 2020)

## A refined hazard assessment based on the quantification of structural stress induced by differential displacement

### Angular distortion ( $\beta$ )

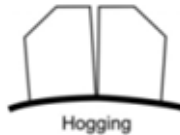


$$\beta = \frac{\Delta d_{Vi}}{l}$$

$\Delta d_{Vi}$  = Vertical differential displacement occurred between the two points  
 $l$  = distance between the two points

e.g.  $\beta = 0.22\%$  (1/450) refers to a total of 22 cm differential displacement over a 100 m distance

### Horizontal strain ( $\epsilon$ )

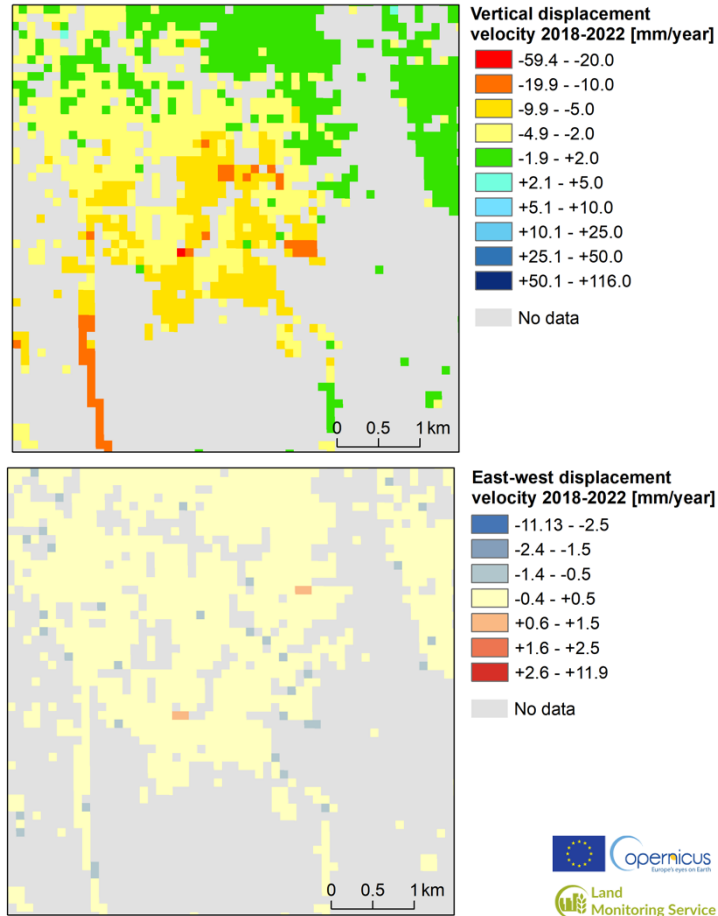


$$\epsilon = \frac{\Delta d_{Ei}}{l}$$

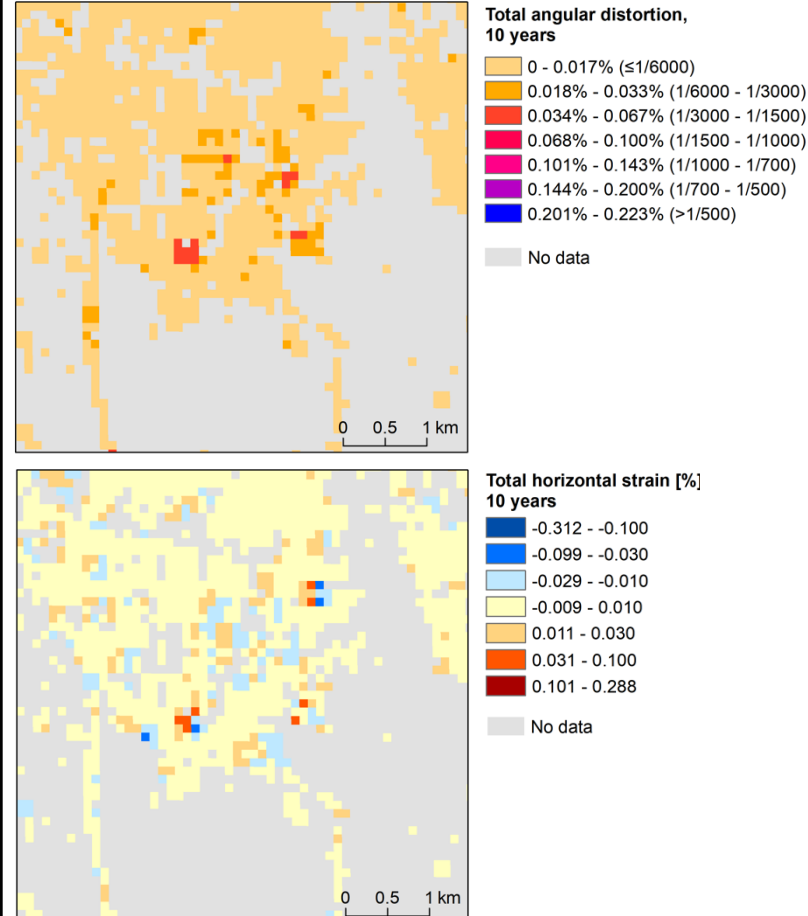
$\Delta d_{Ei}$  = E-W differential displacement between the two points  
 $l$  = distance between the two points

e.g.:  $\epsilon = 0.15\%$  (1/670) refers to a total of 15 cm differential displacement over a 100 m distance

## INPUT: European Ground Motion Service (EGMS)



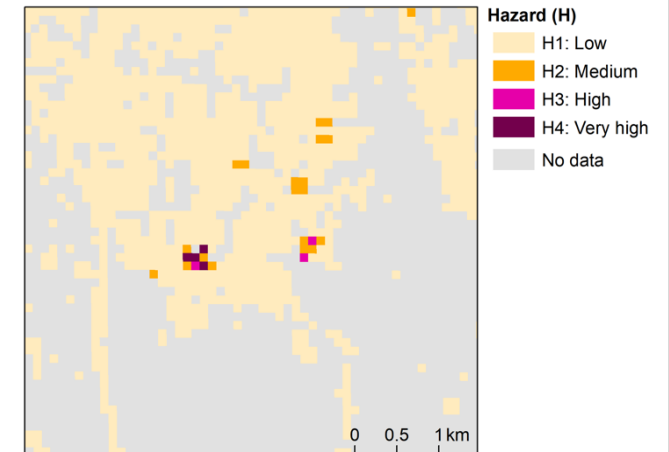
## Structural stress due to differential displacement



## Resulting Hazard (H) levels

	Total horizontal strain	
	$ \epsilon  < 0.03\%$	$ \epsilon  \geq 0.03\%$
$\beta \leq 1/3000$	H1	H2
$1/3000 < \beta \leq 1/1500$	H2	H3
$1/1500 < \beta \leq 1/500$	H3	H4
$\beta > 1/500$	H4	H4

\* A safety factor of 20% might be applied to reduce the  $\beta$  thresholds and thus ensure a more conservative hazard assessment





An innovative exposure-vulnerability scoring approach building upon urban settlement characteristics derived from open global datasets

Input datasets:

- **Copernicus Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) BUILT-C** settlement characteristics → [type, height]
- **World Settlement Footprint (WSF)** → [construction year]

Assumptions:

- Non residential buildings are more vulnerable (e.g. hospitals, churches, industrial sheds)
- Older buildings are more vulnerable (by law, new buildings use reinforced concrete vs. masonry/old buildings)

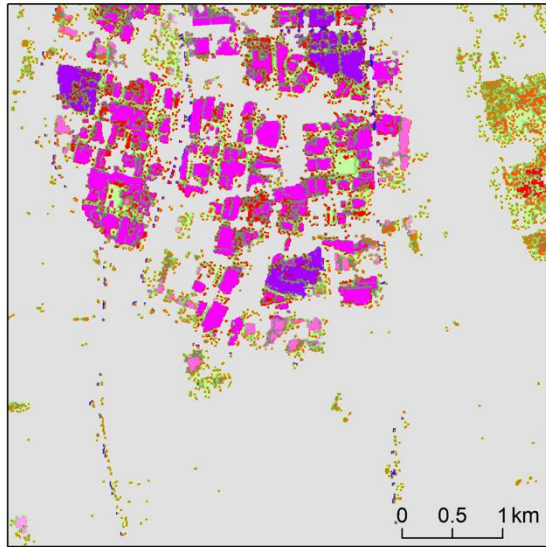
Output EV scores:

EV1 (low)  
EV2 (medium)  
EV3 (high)  
EV4 (very high)

			Age	
			≤ 1985	> 1985
Settlement characteristics	Open spaces	01-05 low to high vegetation, water and road surfaces	n/a	
	Built spaces, Residential	11 building height ≤ 3 m	EV2	EV1
		12 3 m < building height ≤ 6 m	EV3	EV2
		13 6 m < building height ≤ 15 m	EV3	EV2
		14 15 m < building height ≤ 30 m	EV4	EV3
		15 building height > 30 m	EV4	EV3
	Built spaces, Non-residential	21 building height ≤ 3 m	EV2	EV2
		22 3 m < building height ≤ 6 m	EV3	EV2
		23 6 m < building height ≤ 15 m	EV3	EV3
		24 15 m < building height ≤ 30 m	EV4	EV3
		25 building height > 30 m	EV4	EV4

CIGNA *et al.* 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8

## INPUT: Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) & World Settlement Footprint (WSF)



### GHSL Settlement characteristics (2018)

#### Open spaces

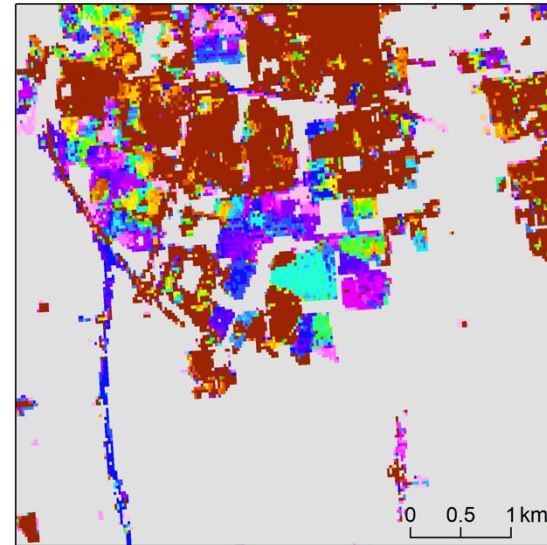
- 01: low vegetation, NDVI  $\leq 0.3$
- 02: medium vegetation,  $0.3 < \text{NDVI} \leq 0.5$
- 03: high vegetation, NDVI  $> 0.5$
- 04: water, LAND  $< 0.5$
- 05: road surfaces

#### Built spaces, residential

- 11: building height  $\leq 3\text{m}$
- 12:  $3\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 6\text{m}$
- 13:  $6\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 15\text{m}$
- 14:  $15\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 30\text{m}$
- 15: building height  $> 30\text{m}$

#### Built spaces, non-residential

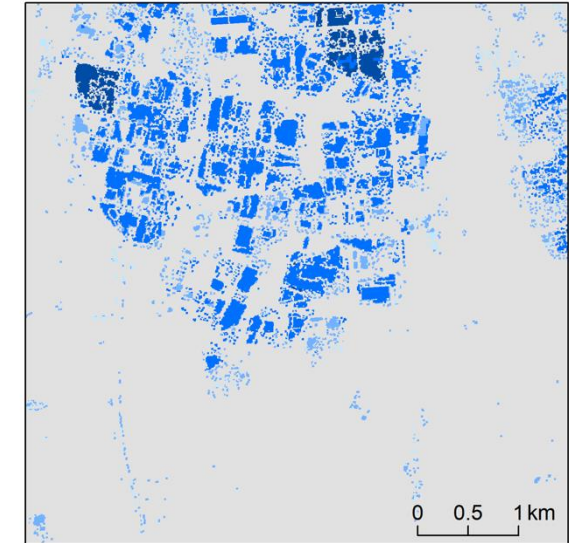
- 21: building height  $\leq 3\text{m}$
- 22:  $3\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 6\text{m}$
- 23:  $6\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 15\text{m}$
- 24:  $15\text{m} < \text{building height} \leq 30\text{m}$
- 25: building height  $> 30\text{m}$
- No data



### WSF Evolution



## Resulting Exposure-Vulnerability (EV) scoring



### Exposure-Vulnerability (EV)

- EV1: Low
- EV2: Medium
- EV3: High
- EV4: Very high
- N/A

## Geospatial combination of H and EV through a tailored risk matrix

Inputs:

**Hazard** (H1 to H4)

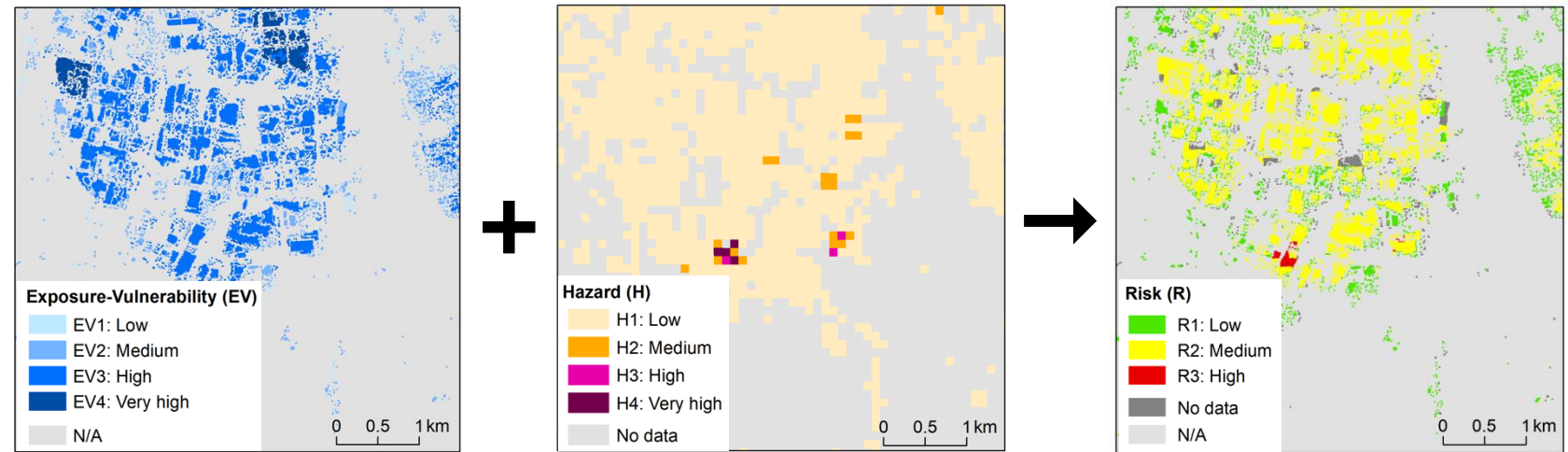
**Exposure-Vulnerability** (EV1 to EV4)

Output:

Risk classes: R1 (low) to R3 (high)

NoData (no hazard data)

N/A (unbuilt spaces)



		HAZARD			
		H1	H2	H3	H4
EXPOSURE- VULNERABILITY	EV1	R1	R1	R2	R2
	EV2	R1	R2	R2	R3
	EV3	R2	R2	R3	R3
	EV4	R2	R3	R3	R3

**R1 = low**

**R2 = medium**

**R3 = high**

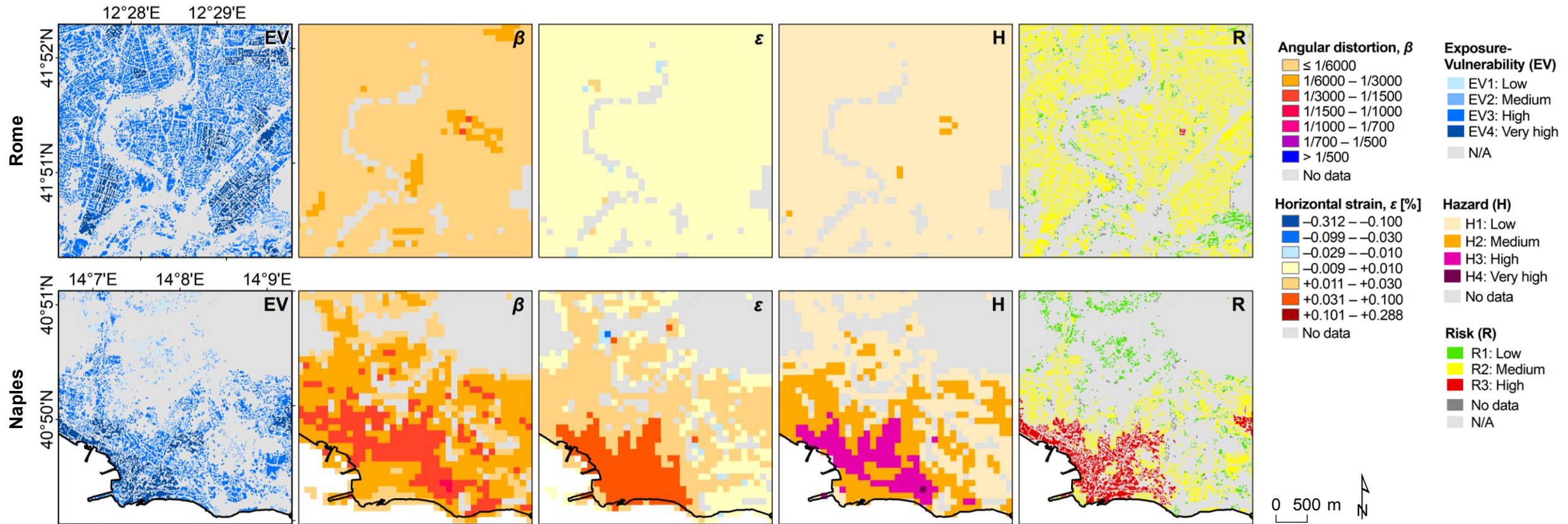
→ Acceptable risk level, no actions

→ Relevant risk level, potential for structural damage, tailored monitoring is recommended

→ Maximum risk level, high likelihood of occurred/incipient structural damage, site inspections and mitigation measures are recommended at single-infrastructure scale

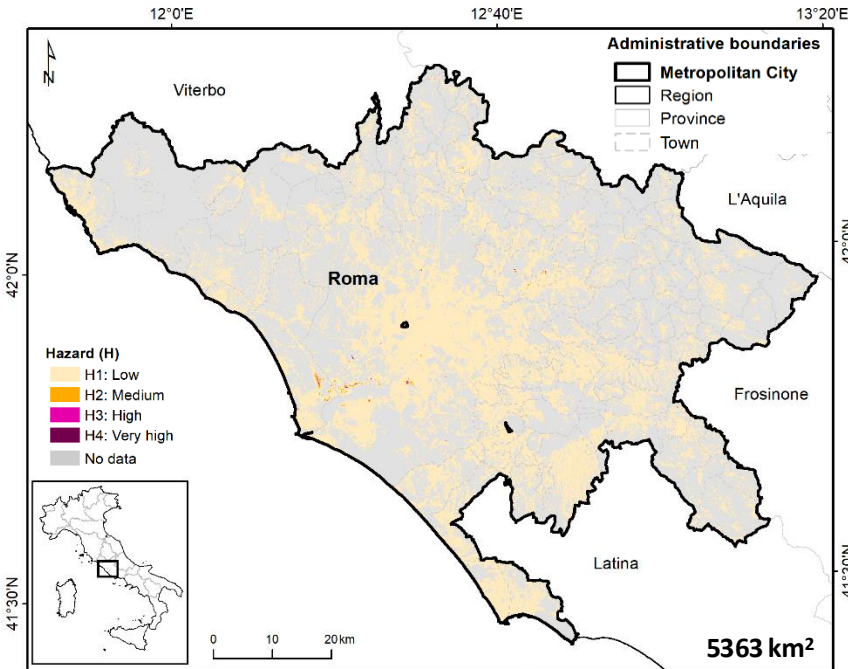
CIGNA *et al.* 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8



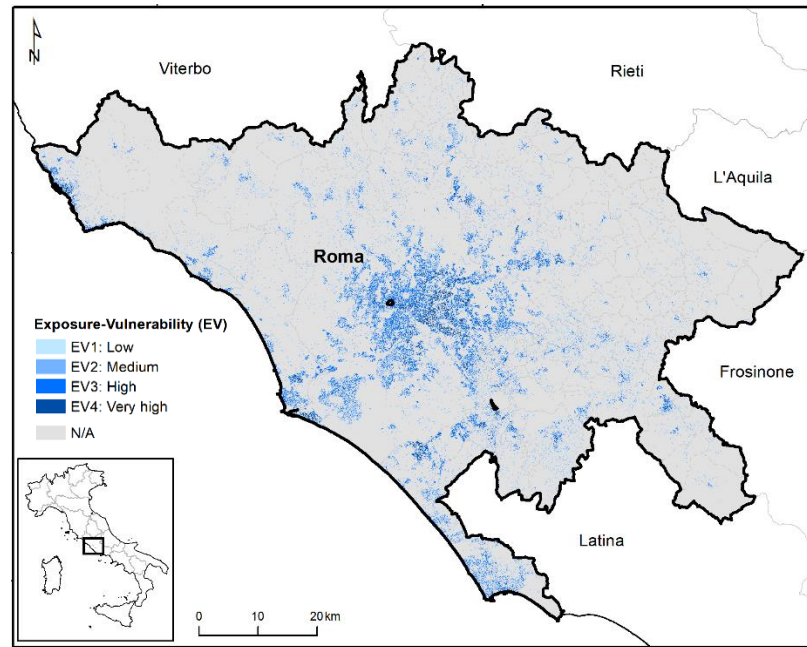
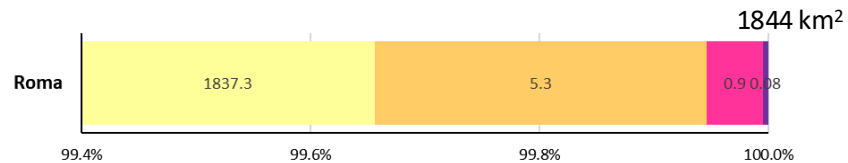


CIGNA *et al.* 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8

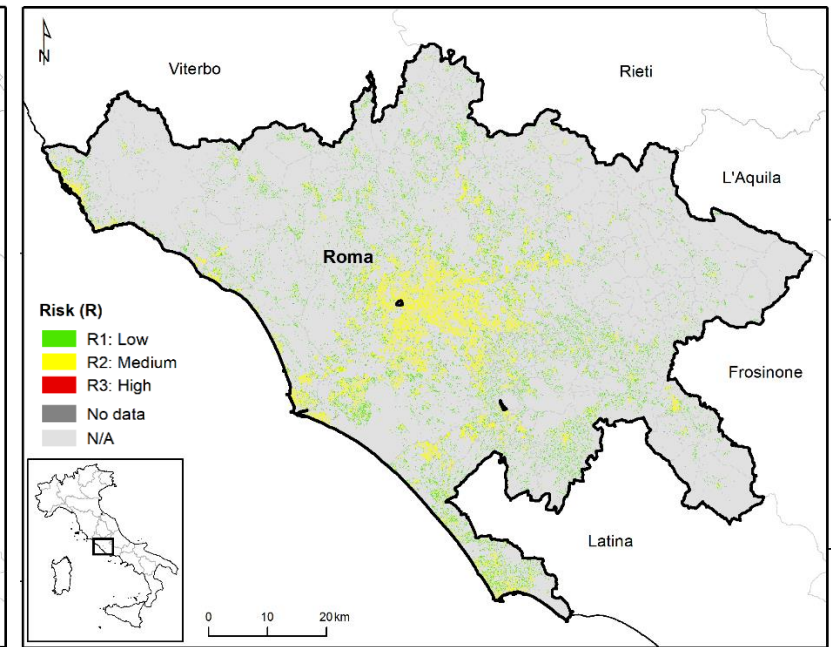
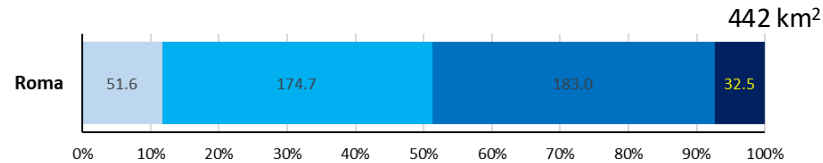
## Land subsidence-induced hazard due to differential displacement and induced risk for urban infrastructure



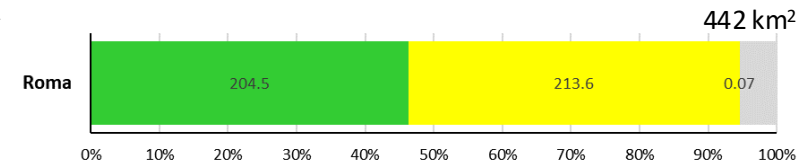
Hazard classes extent [km²]



Exposure-Vulnerability classes extent [km²]

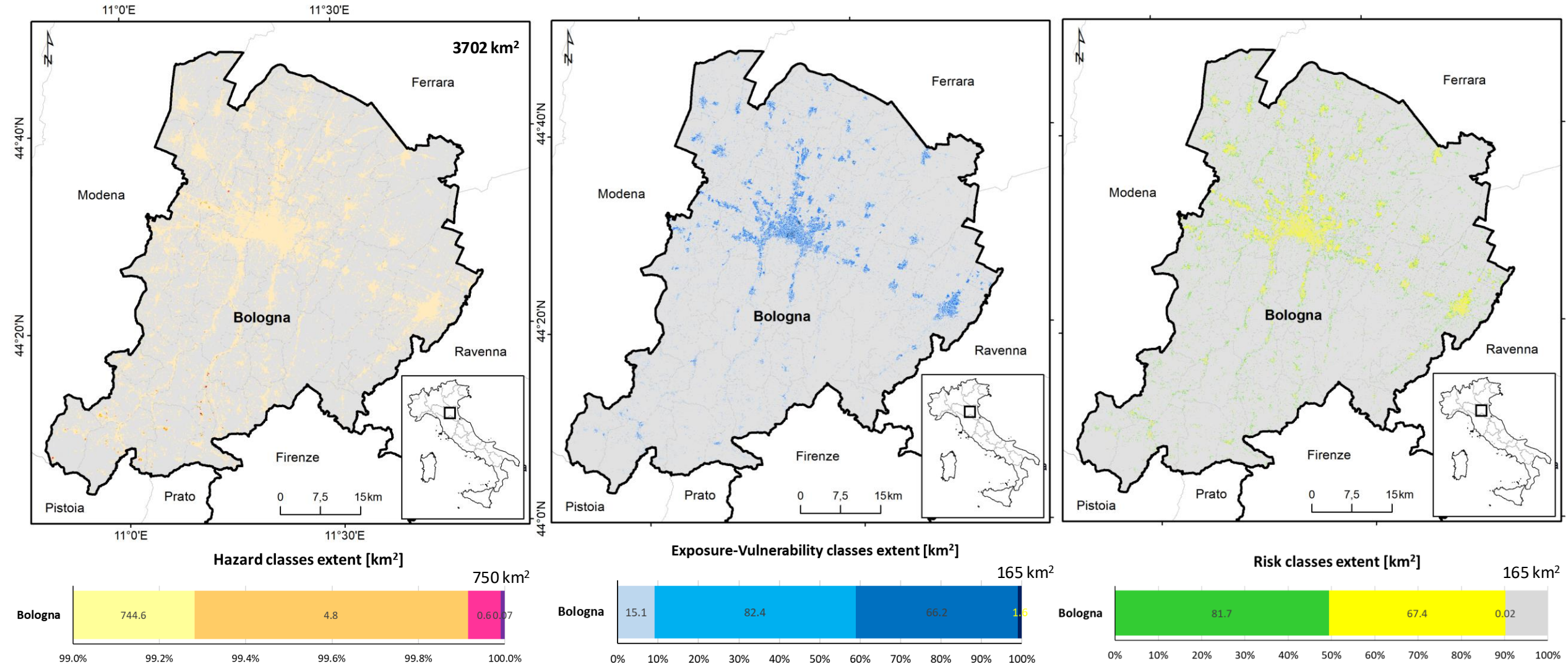


Risk classes extent [km²]





## Land subsidence-induced hazard due to differential displacement and induced risk for urban infrastructure





# Overview at the 15 metropolitan cities

## High risk (R3): 1.44 km<sup>2</sup> → > 2700 buildings

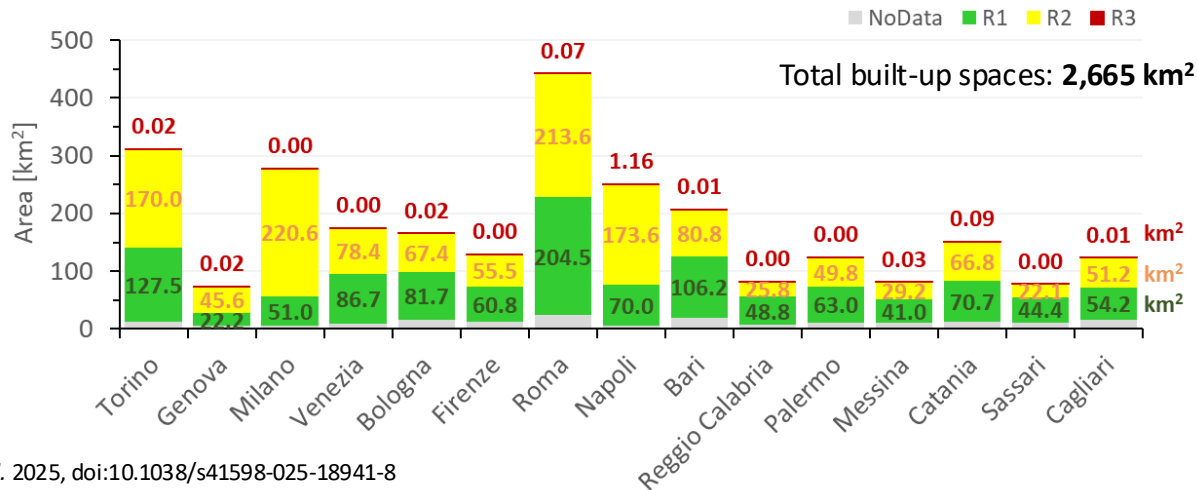
- Narrow sectors with significant  $\theta$  (in some cases, an additive threat due to  $\varepsilon$ ) over vulnerable infrastructure
- High likelihood of already occurred/incipient structural damage; site inspections of structural health and mitigation measures are recommended

## Medium risk (R2): 1,351 km<sup>2</sup> → ~ 2.44 million buildings

- Potential structural damage might occur at the urban infrastructure involved
- Tailored ground deformation monitoring and derived stress indices is recommended

## Low risk (R1): 1,133 km<sup>2</sup> → ~ 2.76 million buildings

- Acceptable risk level; no specific actions are required



Metropolitan City	Number of buildings			
	Total	R1	R2	R3
Turin	733,414	410,068	323,343	3
Genoa	179,346	89,927	89,366	53
Milan	429,940	121,684	308,255	1
Venice	360,661	218,347	142,314	0
Bologna	286,250	175,119	111,111	20
Florence	282,671	148,901	133,770	0
Rome	777,218	481,964	295,226	28
Naples	363,569	125,457	236,294	1,818
Bari	349,862	246,273	103,584	5
Reggio Calabria	224,584	170,342	54,240	2
Palermo	357,500	175,729	181,755	16
Messina	270,675	168,057	102,155	463
Catania	440,943	161,409	279,202	332
Sassari	59,905	37,398	22,507	0
Cagliari	85,419	33,353	52,047	19
Total	5,201,957	2,764,028	2,435,169	2,760

CIGNA et al. 2025, doi:10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8

A simple statistical approach that assesses the effects of groundwater withdrawal and changes in climate variables patterns under local climate change based on RCP scenarios

**GOAL** → To assess future impacts of climate change on land subsidence

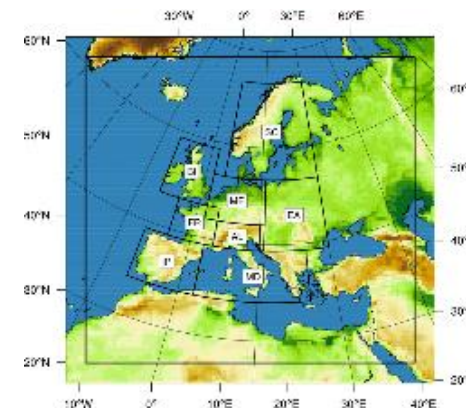
## Climate Data

- Historical Reference dataset: E-OBS
  - Spatial resolution:  $0.1^\circ \times 0.1^\circ$
  - Temporal coverage: January 1950 to present
- Regional Climate Models (RCMs): EuroCORDEX
  - European domain:  $0.11^\circ \times 0.11^\circ$
  - Temporal horizon: 2050-2100
  - Scenarios: RCP 4.5 and 8.5

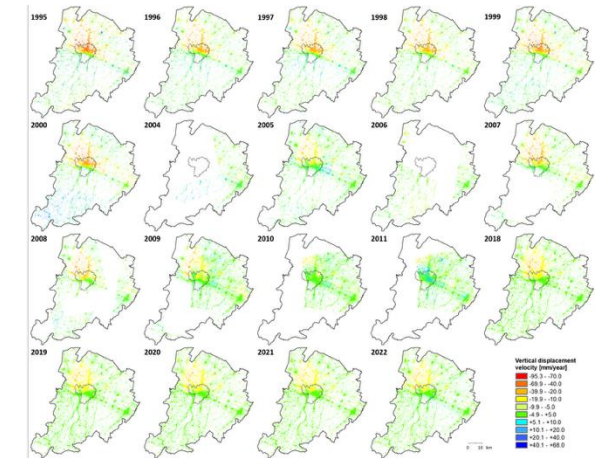


## Other Data

- ISTAT administrative boundaries of the metropolitan cities
- Copernicus EGMS + PST-A InSAR data (L3, ortho, 100 m res.) over 1995–2022
- Groundwater withdrawals (for potable use) over 2008–2024 (ISTAT)



## ISTAT public water supply data



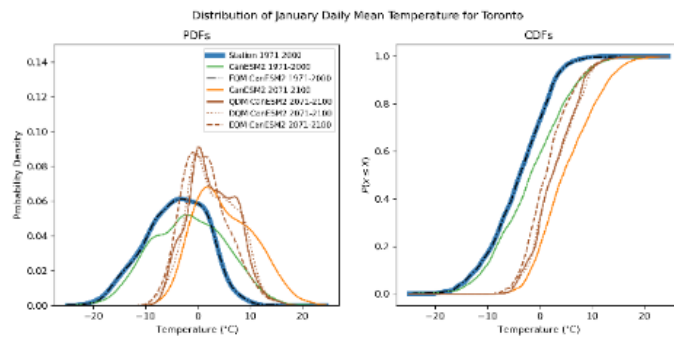
Yearly displacement velocity based on PST-A & EGMS InSAR

## Future Climate Scenario Generation

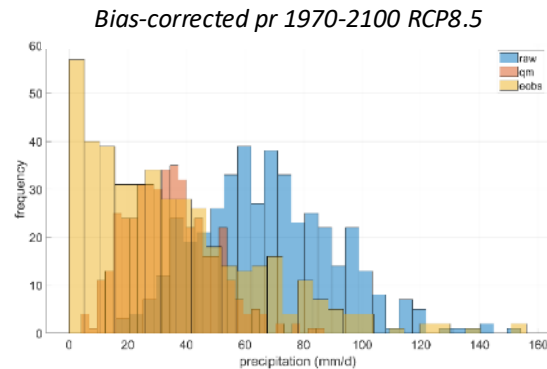
- Selection of different RCM simulations nested into GCMs are considered to reduce the modelling uncertainties
- Bias Correction Approach (Quantile Mapping)
- Equifeasible Ensembles of Predictions

RCMs nested into GCMs selected for this study

RCM	GCM		
	CNRM-CM5	ICHEC- EC-EARTH	MPI-ESM-LR
HIRHAM5		X	
RACMO22E		X	
RCA4	X	X	X
CCLM4-8-17		X	X



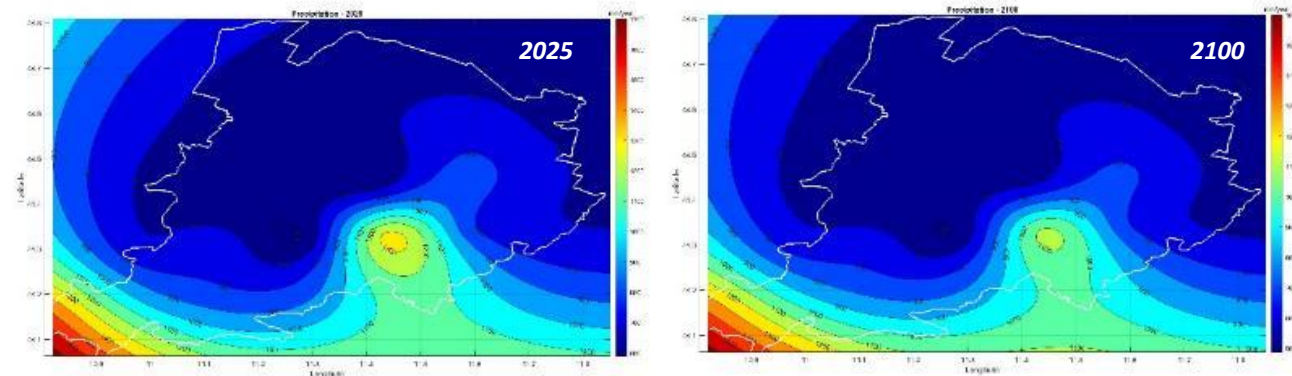
Example of Quantile Mapping application



PDF pre and post bias-correction using quantile mapping

## Gridded predictors (pr, tas, et) interpolation

- CRS Reprojection to match EGMS grid
- “Linear” interpolation in the ROI + fallback “nearest” interpolation for missing values in edge regions
- Loop over each time step and interpolate the climate data onto the EGMS grid



Bias-corrected precipitation in 2025 and 2100 under RCP8.5



## Linear/polynomial regression with LOOCV

- Every year is used for both training and validation
- Unbiased performance useful when you want to assess model reliability without overfitting
- Evaluation of model robustness (RMSE, Pearson coefficient,  $R^2$ )

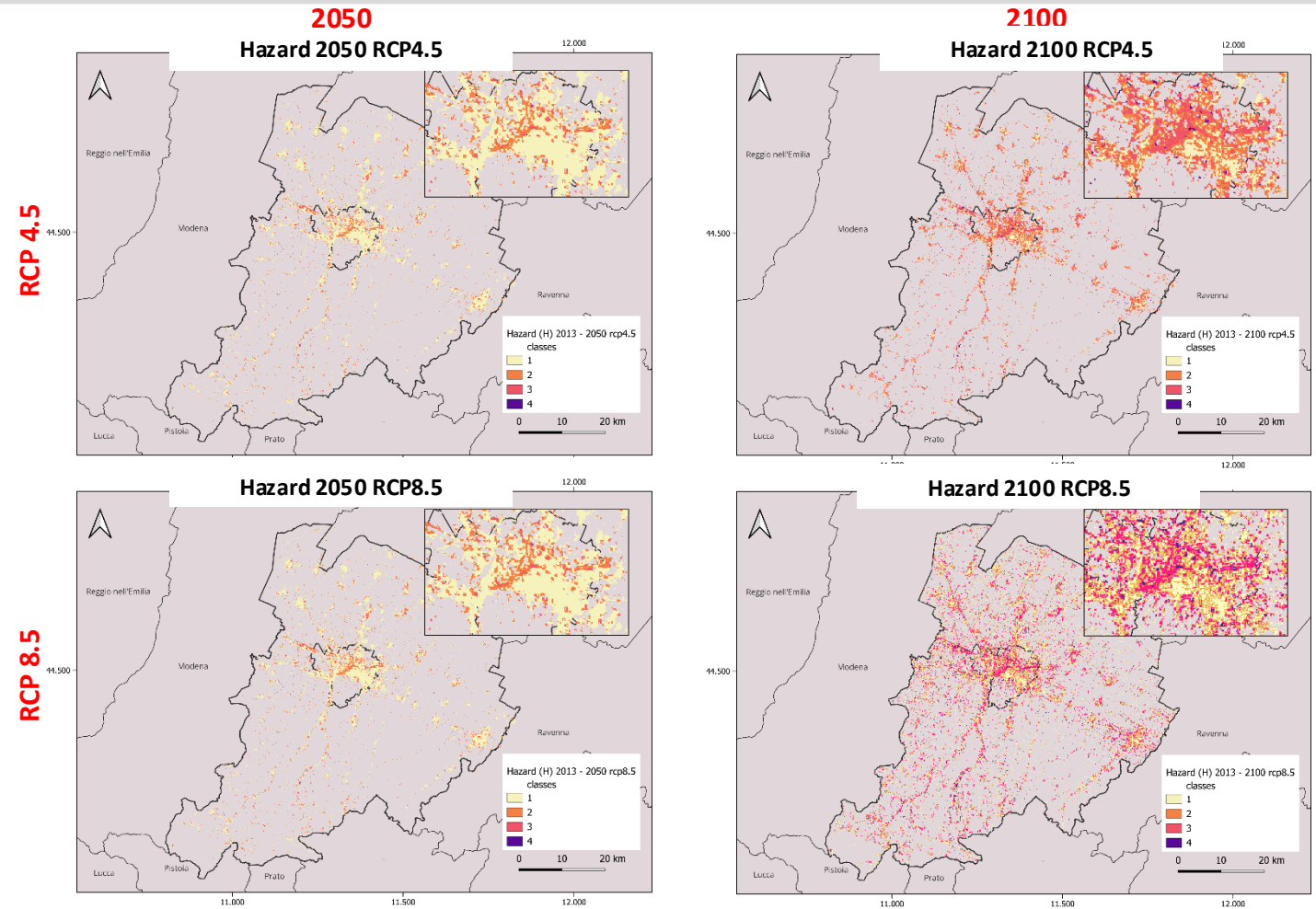
## Extrapolated prediction up to 2050-2100

- Predicting land subsidence every between 2023 and 2050-2100 based on the regression model
- Three water withdrawal (ww) scenarios:
  - +1% increase per year
  - -1% decrease per year
  - historical-trend based scenario



### Hazard Assessment

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Exposure} \times \text{Vulnerability}$$





# Project website

**SubRISK+**

Enhancing our understanding of Subsidence RISK induced by groundwater exploitation towards sustainable urban development



[Home](#) [Scientific goals](#) [Project partners](#) [News](#) [Deliverables](#) [Publications](#)

## IMPACTS IN URBAN AREAS

Development of ground depressions, fissures, structural damage, and increased flood risk are among the most common impacts caused by land subsidence on urban landscapes



### Project partners

Find out more about SubRISK+ research units and stakeholders

[Link ▶](#)



### Publications

Access SubRISK+ deliverables and publications

[Link ▶](#)



### Control room

A web portal enabling open access to SubRISK+ hazard and risk products

[Open the Control Room ▶](#)



<https://www.subrisk.eu/>



## Deliverables

### WP2: National scale risk assessment



#### DEL2.1 – Land subsidence baseline risk maps for the 15 metropolitan cities of Italy

This collection of digital maps aims to provide a baseline risk assessment overview for the 15 metropolitan cities of Italy, in relation to the process of differential displacement induced by land subsidence/uplift. The maps illustrate the spatial distribution of present-day hazard, exposure-vulnerability and risk levels within each city and, as such, could provide valuable inputs for land subsidence-related risk management and mitigation workflows for national land management and urban authorities. The detailed description of the methodology that was employed to generate the maps is available in DEL2.2.

→ Go to SubRISK+ '[Control Room](#)' to explore the maps



#### DEL2.2 – Present-day land subsidence risk in Italy

This report presents the newly-developed methodology to assess land subsidence risk at the national scale, using satellite-derived ground displacement observations and land cover data. The methodology exploits InSAR datasets from the European Ground Motion Service (EGMS) of the Copernicus Programme, along with urban settlement characteristics from the Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) and the World Settlement Footprint (WSF) datasets. These are used to estimate present-day distribution and levels of hazard and exposure-vulnerability across the 15 metropolitan cities of Italy and, in turn, classify and map risk levels.

→ Full report: CIGNA F., PARANUNZIO R., BONI R. & TEATINI P. (2024). [PRIN 2022 PNRR SubRISK+ Deliverable DEL 2.2: Present-day land subsidence risk in Italy](#). Version 1.0, Issue date: 30/09/2024, pp. 67.

→ See also the journal papers: [Cigna et al. 2025](#), [Lenardón Sánchez et al. 2024](#)



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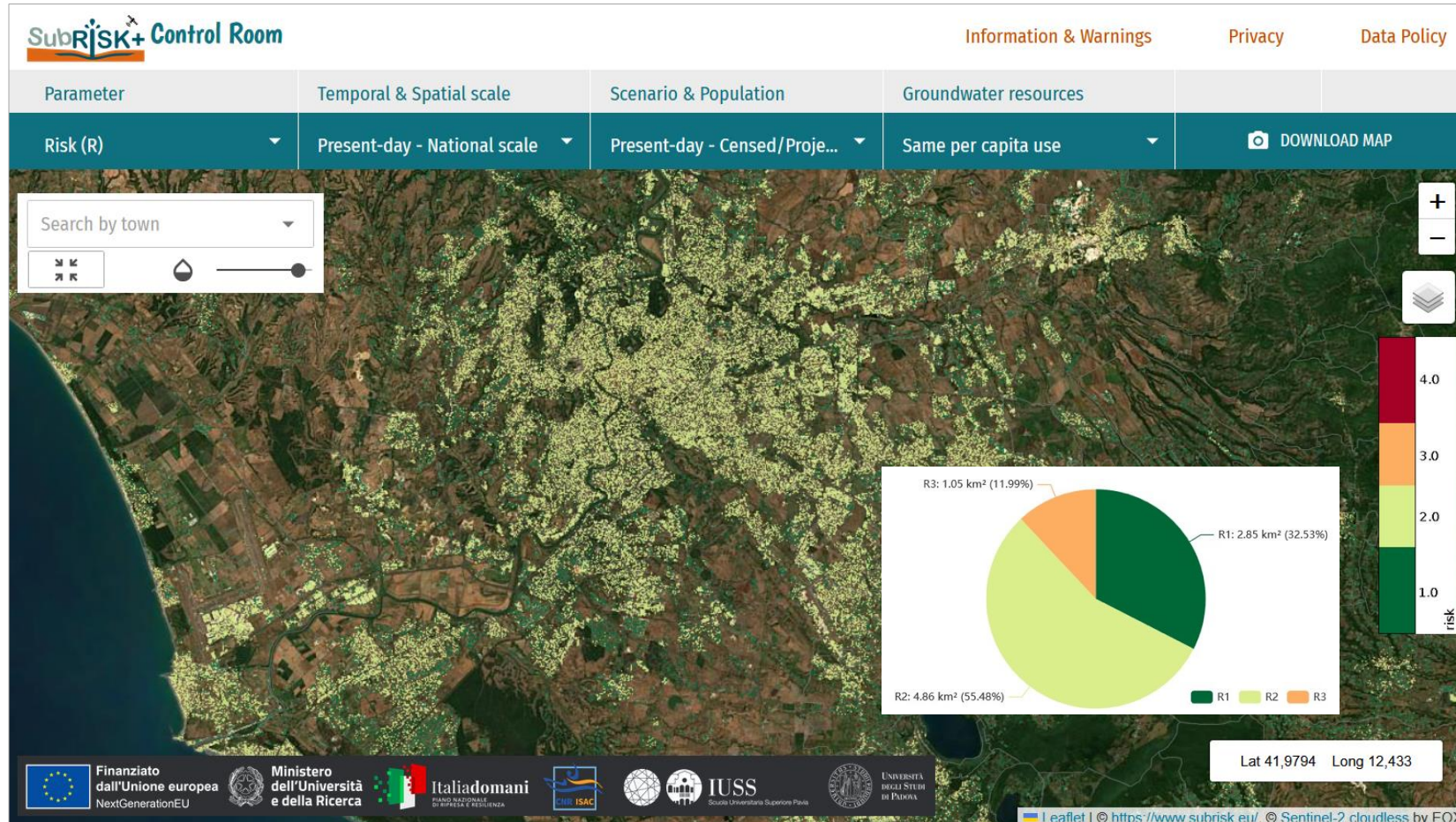
IUSS

Scuola Universitaria Superiore Pavia



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA





A **webGIS** enabling the simulation of future land subsidence risk and impacts by modifying climate, demographic and behavioral factors involved in groundwater availability and exploitation rates

**Land subsidence baseline hazard and risk maps for the 15 metropolitan cities of Italy**

*now available in*  
**\*\*\* SubRISK+ Control Room \*\*\***

<https://controlroom.subrisk.eu/>



# Conclusions & future perspectives

- ❖ The **exposure** of urban land and population to the land subsidence process, ground deformation and its associated **hazard**, and the resulting **risk** to urban infrastructure were investigated
- ❖ A reference knowledge-base on **present-day land subsidence risk** to urban infrastructure across the 15 metropolitan cities was developed using the novel InSAR-based workflow
- ❖ The work acts as **a baseline for future assessments** to build upon with a look to the next decades and sustainable urban development



GHSL - Global Human Settlement Layer

- ❖ The method **exploits standardised, validated and open EU/global datasets** and, as such, can be exported to other metropolises and countries worldwide
- ❖ The risk assessment workflow is to be considered alongside warnings associated with its input datasets and **technical assumptions** (see Cigna *et al.* 2025 paper)

- ❖ The work delivers **a significant step forward** from displacement velocity-based approaches that are nowadays common in the literature, **to actionable risk information layers** that are still rare
- ❖ The risk mapping outputs have the potential to be **embedded into the risk management and mitigation workflows** of stakeholders, such as those involved in SubRISK+, who contributed to tailor the approach at the regional scale





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CIGNA F., PARANUNZIO R., BONÌ R., TEATINI P. 2025. **Present-day land subsidence risk in the metropolitan cities of Italy.** *Scientific Reports*, 15, 34999. doi:[10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-18941-8)

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