

# METREX Expert Group on Metropolitan governance

## Introduction

Metropolitan governance is one of the central themes of Metrex activities. InterMetrex project has been one of the best experiences of the network on this issue and has given a valuable contribution to European metropolitan dimension.

Compared to 15 years ago, problems and challenges of Metropolitan Governance have changed considerably. Several studies and documents produced in these years by important bodies (e.g. OECD, ESPON, URBACT, EESC, EU Commission) have shown that in their evolution European cities have to address the following issues:

- The effects of globalization and of the financial and economic crisis;
- The increased competition between the big cities in Europe and around the world;
- Significant social changes, including growing youth unemployment and relevant migration flows;
- The public finance crisis at both national and local levels.

There are also major challenges on the side of technological innovation, climate change, urban regeneration.

Great changes are also underway in institutional settings. In many European regions, in particular the Italian ones, important institutional changes are underway, with the creation of “Città metropolitane” and the development of new regulatory frameworks.

To address the decline in available resources, many regions and local authorities are increasingly adopting a successful integration of EU and local resources, through the use of the European structural funds.

The recent successful experience of EXPO 2015 in Milan shows as a major event, run at the metropolitan level, can have an extraordinary international impact if governed through a strong inter-institutional cooperation.

For these reasons, it may be useful to reconstitute the Expert Group on Metropolitan Governance aimed:

- at addressing some of the emerging themes in the present phase of evolution of metropolis,
- to start a discussion and an exchange of knowledge and best practices,
- to achieve a concrete package of recommendations for policy makers.

## Purpose

Developing a reflection and an exchange of good practices on the issue of Metropolitan Governance with emphasis on institutional cooperation, public-private cooperation and innovation in its various components (e.g. social, economic, cultural, environmental, smart city).

Several studies at EU level put in evidence a strong tendency towards a higher urban density with a concentration of citizens, employees, functions and services in the metropolitan areas. A proposal of discussion about the role of a metropolitan area in the future comes out of the extract from Habitat III Policy Paper 4 on Urban Governance: *“A metropolitan area can be a single conurbation for which planning and distribution of services is functional, or it can be made of dozens of municipalities with significant disparities and spatial segregation across neighbourhoods.”* Is a metropolitan area to be considered an integrated area of competence or an isolated entity?

The group is invited to reason on territorial systems in a multiscale background aiming at focusing both the relationships between a metropolitan area and its surrounding area and the partnership between different metropolitan areas identified in a specific territory.

For example, as regards Northern Italy, in the urban development plan of Lombardy Region, a metropolitan area refers to the core city (Milan) including its surrounding area, from Varese to Brescia or can be referred to a urban system comprehensive of all the important north-western core cities (Milan, Turin, Genoa, Bologna, Venice) and their surrounding areas of influence as well as their functional relations.

### **Institutional cooperation**

Metropolitan Governance involves several and different institutional levels, first of all metropolitan regions and cities, but also Municipalities and National governments. In Europe there are different models, with a different balance regarding powers, competences, capacity. More advanced forms of inter-institutional cooperation should be identified as well as appropriate means of addressing resources coming from different origins on shared goals.

### **Public-private cooperation**

It is believed that adequate metropolitan governance models or solutions require an effective participation by private entities and therefore their cooperation with public institutions. These solutions should enhance the competitive dynamics already present in their respective economic development models and in the SMEs' network which characterize their territory.

### **Innovation**

The needs of the urban and metropolitan governance require a significant innovation in public policy, both in more traditional specific areas (spatial and city planning, urban regeneration, environmental policies, smart cities, etc.), and by recognizing that the augmented importance of economic, social and cultural issues is increasingly requiring an integrated approach both in goals and for the tools.

### **European funds**

Reflection on metropolitan governance should cover also the links with European financing instruments, including the Programme URBACT III and PON Metro. An integrated approach requires to take into account also other funding channels provided by the ERDF and the ESF funds.

### **Leaders**

Regione Emilia-Romagna and Regione Lombardia

## Possible participants

All Metrex members are invited to participate in the Expert group. Some Italian “Città metropolitana” (Turin, Naples) have already shown their interest in the Expert group.

In particular, other European metropolitan regions and areas that have enabled some forms of public-private collaboration (such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Glasgow, Lyon, Manchester, Stuttgart) and other European metropolitan regions and areas related to macro-regional strategies being developed in Europe (Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Alpine regions, such as Munich, Zurich, Vienna) are invited to take part in.

## Proposed timing

After the approval of the Expert Group by the Managing Committee, the proposal (possibly improved and detailed) will circulate among all Metrex members. On the basis of the contributions collected in the first meeting of the Expert Group that will be held during the biannual Conference of Metrex in Rotterdam, the methodology of work and the timing will be defined.

The Expert Group will mostly work online and by e-mail. The meetings will take place during the biannual conferences of Metrex.

The work of this group will be based on the following approach: the various members will exchange their experiences on this issue while defining the direction to take. A suitable format could be prepared to this purpose. Other tools such as interviews and research analysis as well as some cases studies could be useful.

Once all the contributions of the members involved are collected, the group will focus on the debate while sharing all the proposals.

Finally, the findings (the results achieved) will be published in a final report (document).

## Expected results

The analysis of the elements of innovation, institutional and public-private collaboration in metropolitan governance, exchange of the participants' experiences; enabling opportunities for communication and debate on the results achieved; preparation of a document containing guidelines for a more advanced structure of metropolitan governance and consequent recommendation to policymakers.