



METREX

The Network of
European Metropolitan
Regions and Areas

Annual Report 2023

#WeAreMETREX



Annual Report 2023

METREX Managing Committee 2023

Jakub Mazur
President of METREX
First Deputy Mayor of Wrocław

Gianina Panatau
Vice-President METREX
Director Metropolitan
Association Bucharest

Sandeep Shingadia
Vice-President of METREX
Director of Strategic
Partnerships and Delivery
Integration, Transport for
West Midlands

Miguel Ángel Crespo Rico
General Director of Spatial
Planning Diputación Foral de
Gipuzkoa / Gipuzkoa County
Council

Thomas Kiwitt
Director Planning (Leitender
Technischer Direktor), Verband
Region Stuttgart

Łukasz Medeksza
Deputy Director of
the Strategy and City
Development Department
Municipality of Wrocław

Laura Papaleo
Head of Europe Office City of
Genoa

Sébastien Rolland
Town planner and urban
designer at the Lyon Town
Planning Agency (Urbalyon)

Peter Pol
Spatial Strategist City of The
Hague

Contents

Foreword from our President	1
A Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships	2
The Spring Conference Wrocław	4
The Autumn Conference Braga and Cávado Region	6
Expert Groups	8
Network Groups	9
European Projects	10
Bernd Steinacher Fellowship	12
METREX Atelier	13
Partnerships	14
The network and finances	16



METREX President's 2023 Reflections:
Strengthening Metropolitan Partnerships
for Europe's Future

As the year closes, the journey METREX has taken in 2023 marks a crucial chapter for metropolitan regions across Europe. The development of the Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships has provided a comprehensive view into the perspectives of experts in science, business, and politics on Europe's institutions. This endeavor has reaffirmed METREX's long-standing belief: metropolitan areas play an indispensable yet under-recognized role in shaping Europe's future.

A Year of Milestones and Momentum

The launch of our Manifesto at the European Parliament stands as a highlight of our year and underscores a significant advance toward metropolitan-level advocacy. The Manifesto's reception has shown a clear movement toward stronger metropolitan support at the European level, building momentum for METREX's mission to raise the profile and influence of metropolitan regions. We are particularly grateful to the Members of the European Parliament who joined us in this vision and for their role in embedding metropolitan priorities within the Belgian EU Presidency programme for the first half of 2023.

Regional Engagements in Wrocław and CIM Cavado, Braga

We were fortunate to engage deeply with regional partners during spring and autumn, particularly in Wrocław and CIM Cavado, Braga. These collaborations shed light on the challenges and innovative solutions in building metropolitan partnerships in regions where formal structures are still evolving. This exchange of knowledge emphasizes the diversity and potential of metropolitan collaborations across Europe.

Expanding International Partnerships and Strengthening Existing Ties

METREX has also extended its influence internationally, particularly through our deepening collaboration with the U.S.-based National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). Alongside this, our alliances with European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA), Metropolis, and the European Urban Research Association (EURA) have been strengthened. Each partnership enriches METREX's efforts to build a network that is truly global in scope.

Enhancing Communication and Outreach

A key accomplishment this year has been finalizing our communication strategy, which aims to both highlight the impactful work of our members and expand METREX's reach and visibility across Europe. This strategy, grounded in four core objectives, will guide our communications, ensuring METREX's mission resonates across wider networks and engages new members and partners.

Looking Forward to 2024

Reflecting on the collective achievements of our Managing Committee, Secretariat, members, and partners fills me with optimism. I am immensely proud of the strides we have made in 2023, and I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you as we drive our Metropolitan Vision for Europe forward in 2024.

WE ARE METREX

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jakub Mazur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jakub Mazur
President of METREX
First Deputy Mayor of Wrocław

A Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships

In 2023 METREX launched a manifesto to promote the metropolitan level as a credible partner in delivering on Europe's aims.

METREX ran a wide-ranging consultation in the lead-up to the final Manifesto, which included online events with Members in February, a presentation and discussion during the Spring Conference in Wrocław, and a roundtable debate hosted by the Urban Intergroup at the European Parliament. The final launch event drew over 60 politicians, practitioners, officers and researchers back to the European Parliament on 8 November 2023. Again, we received welcome support from the Urban Intergroup at the European Parliament and its leaders MEP Jan Olbrycht and MEP Fabienne Keller.

METREX president Jakub Mazur set the scene at the launch event, stating that the answer to rebuilding Europe's global position is Metropolitan Partnerships – the theme behind the Manifesto. "It is a new era for metropolitan areas", said Mr. Mazur, calling for significant new financial and structural backing to see that these Partnerships can help Europe regain its global competitiveness.

The manifesto was presented by Łukasz Medeksza, a member of the METREX board and from municipality of Wrocław. Mr. Medeksza spoke about the interconnections and richness of metropolitan regions being a defining factor behind their potential. Metropolitan regions can aim big in terms of inward investment, with Mr. Medeksza citing a new semi-conductor facility due to bring around 2,000 jobs to the region around Wrocław. This, Mr. Medeksza said, points to the fact that real metropolitan areas are not



Jakub Mazur, METREX President and 1st Deputy Mayor of Wrocław



MEP Fabienne Keller



MEP Jan Olbrycht

solely about public institutions, but rather they are a mesh of public, private and other sectors. Mr. Medeksza reported that metropolitan regions and areas are home to over 60 percent of Europe's citizens, with 80 percent of migrants settling within them. But while they produce nearly 70 percent of EU GDP, they account for around 70 percent of emissions. Which on one hand means they are a useful place to focus attention on climate mitigation measures.



Speakers at the Manifesto launch: (clockwise from top left): MEP Andrey Novakov; Gianina Panatau, Vice President of METREX; MEP Marco Ros; Deputy Mayor of Milan Marco Griguolo; Deputy Mayor of The Hague Robert van Asten.

Speaking about the latent potential of metropolitan regions, Mr. Medeksza highlighted their varied institutional structures as one of the stalling points to greater success. This varied and sometimes informal governance has proven difficult for the EU to grasp. ‘Metropolitan Partnerships’ is therefore a useful umbrella under which to organise and present an identity. Metropolitan Partnerships are not only relationships between actors within territorial areas, but also with European institutions.

Marco Griguolo, the deputy mayor of the metropolitan city of Milan, called for formal recognition nationally and internationally of a metropolitan level that is adaptive to the many and diverse issues Europe faces.

Gianina Panatau, the general director of the Bucharest Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association, welcomed the manifesto’s position in advocating for a metropolitan funding program, giving a stronger voice and the means to include a wider array of stakeholders in development processes.

MEP Marcos Ros, who is the Socialists coordinator for REGI Committee, spoke about the importance of a new institutional framework that compliments metropolitan regions and areas, which in turn would boost efforts against climate change, war, housing and the effects of Covid.

Robert van Asten, deputy mayor of The Hague, supported the idea of metropolitan areas being at the table when policies are made, which would bring the unique sensitivity and perspective that comes from the spatial level. Mr. Van Asten ended with a pledge to help initiate an intergroup within the European Parliament dedicated to metropolitan regions and areas.

MEP Andrey Novakov, member of the European Parliament and member of the REGI committee, recalled a recent mission to Ukraine to meet Kyiv mayor Klitschko. Here, Mr. Novakov saw first-hand the “immense power” that comes from unity and cooperation between the city and surrounding villages that comprise the metropolitan level.

Mr. Olbrycht closed the event by describing metropolitan regions as “a concrete solution for the problems that exist between urban and rural areas”. Mr. Olbrycht urged METREX to focus the manifesto campaign on those that will work across political parties, and to those who are the future of the EU, such as the young MEPs present on the panel today.

Visit eurometrex.org/manifesto-for-metropolitan-partnerships



The Spring Conference

A Metropolitan answer to current crises in Europe:
Rethinking resources, demography, resilience

23-26 April 2023, Wrocław



*Photo
Panel of Poland's
metropolitan regions
and areas*

Tour of the city

The Spring Conference took place in Wrocław, Poland. With ongoing crises in climate and energy, demography and migration, war and security, it is easiest for Europe's policy-makers and practitioners to revert to familiar and trusted solutions.

But we can't; things have irrevocably changed. So how do we deal with continuous instability? How do we instil greater resilience? Moreover, how do we nurture the conditions in which to thrive? The Spring 2023 Conference in Wrocław dealt with such issues by looking at the possibilities of acting on the metropolitan level in these new, difficult circumstances.

The conference was an occasion to present what's going on in Polish and Central European metropolitan areas, in the fields of spatial planning as well as strategic thinking and doing.

We heard that the concept of a Wrocław Metropolitan Area is at the moment running on the basis of collaboration between actors through platforms such as ITIs (Integrated Territorial Investments) and the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency. There is though appetite locally to institutionalise the metropolitan area.

From elsewhere in Poland, we heard from West Pomerania, Gdańsk, Warsaw and Metropolis GZM, the latter being the only formalised metropolitan area in Poland. In the absence of formalised regions, and as has happened in Wrocław, incentives such as ITIs have played a key role in building cooperation at the metropolitan level. Financial incentives have proved to be a defining factor in improving cooperation over the past decade. However, despite their ability to get things moving, these sorts of instruments can sometimes lack flexibility, with regulations such as territorial size making them not viable.

We heard that Metropolis GZM is in a unique position as a de-facto test case, with eyes at the national and metropolitan levels closely watching. Poland's metropolitan future is therefore heavily influenced by the lessons learned from GZM.

"Money makes miracles" we heard from Gdańsk, recounting fresh co-operation of the city with its neighbour Gdynia around an ITI. The will towards metropolitanisation in Poland is very much a bottom-up issue, as described by Lukasz Medeksza in his scene-setting presentation. It is a question our panel said of political direction at the national level, where current policies focus funding predominantly on underprivileged regions, an approach that's at odds with the concept of metropolitan areas. And while reform or changes to structures

Photo
Lukasz Medeksza
explains the history
of Wroclaw

Volodymyr
Bondarenko, Deputy
Mayor of Kyiv,
accepts Honorary
Membership of
METREX



were discussed, the view was that there has already been too much reform in recent years, with not enough time to see the results or make small tweaks.

In comparison with the Polish metropolitan regions and areas, we heard reflections from Syamak Agha Babaei, the first Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg and the Vice President of the Eurométropole de Strasbourg.

The Eurométropole de Strasbourg is a federation of 33 municipalities, which range quite dramatically in terms of population and therefore also in terms of perception, challenges and demographics. Strasbourg has been on a metropolitan journey that started in 1966 and today, its main competences are economic development, mobility and infrastructure, housing, energy production and waste. It was clear that there are shared challenges among metropolitan regions and areas, and that these are not limited to these outputs. These include climate change and de-regulation, resilience and equality, but also how to solve such issues together with the help of citizens.

The governance of metropolitan regions and areas and the finance that enables them needs to be resolved and clarified. However, in closing, Henk Bouwman suggested that this should not get in the way of the end goals. Indeed, in the case of Strasbourg, the attitude to collaboration has been one of

the driving forces.

The conference also brought together an international panel to probe deeper into the concept of a Metropolitan Partnership, the key driver behind the new Manifesto from METREX. Discussed were the minimum conditions for such a partnership to succeed and the changes or additions that might be required from national and EU levels.

In parallel to the conference, a workshop was held to engage the minds and ideas of young people to shape the future of Spółeczny Square, a site in the centre of Wrocław that the city is keen to redevelop. Students from Wrocław University, the Politecnico di Milano and the Politecnico di Torino came together with experts from the METREX network to pitch ideas on how to transform a car-dominated site to a more harmonious, people-orientated space.

The Wrocław Conference paved the way for the final version of the *METREX Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships*. It brought together views from various representatives of the metropolitan dimension and refined what became our call to the EU for greater support and recognition.

Watch the conference presentation recordings at eurometrex.org/events/wroclaw-2023

The Autumn Conference

Framing Metropolitan Cohesion Policies: Exploring Urban-Rural Partnerships

22-25 October 2023, Braga and Cávado Region



Panel with Duarte Rodrigues, Agency for Development and Cohesion; Jakub Mazur, Deputy Mayor of Wrocław; Ricardo Rio, Mayor of Braga; Prof. Fernando Alexandre, Minho University

The Autumn conference was held in Braga and hosted by the Intermunicipal Community of Cávado, and supported by a number of national partners including the Operational Programme NORTE 2030, Regional Directorate Cultura Norte, and the D. Diogo de Sousa Museum of Archaeology. Internationally, it was supported by the EU Rural Pact.

The biannual event offered an international platform for learning and discussing Cohesion Policy and urban-rural partnerships.

The agenda focused on how the metropolitan level can strengthen urban and rural partnerships to respond to Europe's big challenges in housing and innovation, the green and digital transition, energy, transport, and how the transitions called for by the EU are delivered on the ground, shaping a positive future of both urban and rural territories. METREX Members, from Portugal and from across Europe, shared experiences and metropolitan-level solutions. These cases also put the recently finalised *Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships* into context by demonstrating their proactive responses to dealing with food systems, digitalisation and mobility.

Ricardo Rio, president of CIM Cávado and Mayor of Braga, opened by highlighting that the METREX Autumn Conference was an opportunity to exchange how Portuguese regions tackle common challenges and elevate the importance of urban-rural partnerships. "Braga and CIM Cávado have been committed to international collaborations, focusing on learning, sharing good practices and developing new projects. The goal is to promote policies that guarantee territorial cohesion, and encourage collaboration within their areas of influence, respecting and celebrating regional diversity to improve the quality of life for all citizens".

Metropolitan partnerships between urban and rural exist and are already working. Despite the different stages of cooperation and the tools/strategies that support that process, the eight cases presented and discussed in Braga are exemplary of metropolitan partnerships unfolding.

Achieving and pursuing this goal is definitely not an easy task in crosscutting topics. On the contrary, it is about activating a process, implying a step-by-step approach towards the definition, experimentation and implementation of a new institutional framework (Uwe Ferber).

What emerged from the two-day

Ana Abrunhosa, Minister of Territorial Cohesion, Portugal

Visit to generation cultural centre; panel with Silvia Nanni, EU Rural Pact, MEP Isabel Carvalhais, Margarida Belém, Mayor of Arouca



discussions is the need to organise urban rural partnerships in a proactive way. The goal of the partnership itself is to mobilise synergies by bringing the rural and the urban together. Because the partnership won't happen all alone. It is about introducing spatial and management planning at the metropolitan scale to create the conditions and to support the cultural understanding of the metropolitan territory as a common dimension. It is indeed about integrating bottom-up and cross-sectoral mechanisms but, most of all, it is about nurturing and enabling territorial cooperation.

Partnerships are the real core of the metropolitan dimension. Among many considerations, it was also pointed out that difficulties start at the European scale where the funding and policy programmes are defined, influencing all the choices – and the possibilities – of the levels downstream.

As was often underlined and stated on many occasions during this conference, the separation between urban and rural does not exist – it is an artificial construction. The urban and rural need to be conceived as interconnected eco and functional systems, implying a change in the European level as well as in the national governments, which remain the gatekeepers for the EU funding and policy instruments (Ivan Tosics).

The case studies showcased during the conference act as laboratories, where breaking silos and multifunctional and efficient ways of operating is achieved through an innovative and distinctive 'metropolitan problem solving' attitude (Filipe Ferreira).

Financing, strategic and technical instruments, tools and competences which are typically urban are applied in the rural areas with the aim to respond to territorial challenges, showing that the priority is to align the "rururban" complexity with an adequate funding system allocating resources.

Metropolitan areas can be efficient when they are financially independent, if they are important actors and the subsidiarity is relevant at the national level. Therefore, organising metropolitan institutions and their own funds to implement their own policies could be the goal to achieve cohesive and just European territorial development.

Read the full conference report at eurometrex.org/events/braga

Expert Groups

The issue of housing is rising in metropolitan circles. In 2023, we launched a new Expert Group on sustainable and affordable housing at International Social Housing Festival.

METREX joined the fourth edition of the International Social Housing Festival (ISHF) to launch a new Expert Group aimed at assessing the role of the metropolitan level in housing.

Housing matters usually come under the incumbency of municipal governments. However, there is emerging evidence that metropolitan governments have a better understanding of intermunicipal operators that are at the forefront of housing development, such as financial organizations, landowners and developers. This group of stakeholders usually cross boundaries at municipal and even country level in their operations, and we propose a new approach to engage with them and find opportunities and solutions for regional affordability.

The main objective is to explore alternatives and solutions that can help us tackle the housing and affordability crisis by linking to existing initiatives, for example EU programs and funding opportunities as well as organizations such as Housing Europe, the largest European network of public, cooperative and social housing providers. Furthermore, we want to hear from non-government actors, such as developers, landowners and financial institutions to a series of in-depth focus groups and discussions that can map the metropolitan landscape of operators and find ways to collaborate. We aim to engage with members and share their expertise on land issues affecting housing affordability in their regions and co-produce innovative thinking and approaches.



Overall, the launch of a Sustainable and Affordable Housing Expert Group would be an opportunity to develop a strategic multi-stakeholder network that can enable the creation of more equitable and sustainable communities. By attempting to bridge the local and metropolitan gap in affordable housing solutions, this group has the potential to make a significant impact on the housing landscape and improve the lives of countless individuals and families in Europe.

The new Expert Group will provide Members with the information, tools, and resources they need to take action to address housing affordability and related climate change issues in their communities. It is expected that the group will meet over the course of two years, online and in person. Members are asked to consider appropriate colleagues to join the group.

Development of Expert Groups

At the General Assembly in Braga in October, Members were canvassed on themes that would form the basis of new Expert Groups. Themes expressed included the digital transition, sustainability, strategic planning and energy transition. In addition to picking up some of these themes, there will be a re-boot of the Metropolitan Governance and Strategies Expert Group in 2024, linked to the ongoing work on the Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships.

Network Groups

Network Groups are a setting for Members to meet and share learning with a territorial focus.

Nordic-Baltic Network

The Nordic Baltic Network was led in 2023 by Riga continued its long-standing programme of meeting during the METREX bi-annual Conference, both in Wrocław and Braga in 2023. This informal grouping meets to update on new initiatives and share challenges.

SURE Network

The SURE network – which stands for the Strategic Urban Region Eurodelta – brought together its wide range of partners to showcase what young minds can bring to this megaregion of Europe. This was done through the Next Generation Podium, which ran for its third edition in 2023. Over 120 people from more than 10 universities came together over three lunch discussions and a two-day online symposium to bring in fresh perspectives and ideas that can inspire the actions to address the challenges that the mega-region is facing.

The students and young professionals gained valuable insights and experience in working across three scales of actions (city/ metropolitan region, national, Eurodelta), understanding three stepped decision-making process (design, upscale, impact) providing three types of outputs (vision, strategy, action plan).

METREX was delighted to support this third edition as a sponsor and also through the SURE Network, which is a sub-network of METREX. A 'Eurodelta Vision Catalogue – Next Generation Podium 2023' has been produced as an outcome, which recapitulates the innovative Plans of Action

created by the participants of the Online Working Conference. For more information please visit sure-eurodelta.eurometrex.org/projects/.

Through a series of monthly 'Meet and Learn' events, the SURE network geared up for a successful submission to Interreg North West for a project on the circular built environment. Read more about the ASSET project on page 11. The series has laid the groundwork for thinking about how to transition to a circular economy by focusing on some of the key obstacles, such as the significant spatial requirements, reclaiming existing built structures, and identifying opportunities within current policies that could be used to support circular objectives.

As the ASSET project comes into life in 2024, the SURE network and its activities will continue to grow and become a learning platform relevant for other large regions in Europe seeking to transition to a circular economy.

Visit sure-eurodelta.eurometrex.org to access these events.

European projects



METREX joined three European projects that are set to bring new and relevant insights to our Members.

If you have a project that would benefit from the involvement of METREX, please contact the Secretary General on info@eurometrex.org.



MECOG-CE: Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance in Central Europe

METREX is an Associated Partner of this new Interreg Central Europe project, which is led by Brno Metropolitan Area and which will focus on strengthening metropolitan cooperation and Governance in Central Europe.

The project aims to identify the best tools, procedures and examples of good practices for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance in Central Europe and apply them in metropolitan areas towards strengthening integrated metropolitan strategic and spatial development.

The project will consist of intensive cooperation between the partner cities, research experts and representatives of international networks. The cooperation is based on international meetings aimed at sharing good practices. The first transnational partner meeting has already taken place in Brno.

Secretary General Henk Bouwman said: "With the upcoming EU elections in Spring 2024, Metropolitan regions and Areas should be bold in explaining their important role in achieving our common agendas. As an important basis, strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance is central to the effectiveness of our members and how well they can create the right sorts of environments for people to thrive."

*Photo
MECOG kick-off
meeting in Brno*



ASSET: A Spatial Strategy for Eurodelta, boosting the Transition to circular construction

The SURE Eurodelta network, under the leadership of the City of Amsterdam, will begin a new INTERREG North-West Europe project 'A Spatial Strategy for Eurodelta, boosting the Transition to circular construction (ASSET)'. 40 affiliated partners will explore whether the transition to a circular built environment can be accelerated through cross-border collaboration.

A circular built environment (CBE) comes with new and greater demand for space. This transition adds to the spatial claims of the energy transition, climate adaptation and regeneration of biodiversity. In the ASSET project, partners will explore whether the transition to a circular built environment can be accelerated through a collaboration across borders. The focus of the project is the spatial implications that this transition requires.

Policymakers are only beginning to realise the far-reaching spatial implications of a truly circular built environment. These effects will be mapped out in this project. The aim is for the Eurodelta, to become a blueprint for a European circular built environment (CBE) on a mega-regional scale and probably the first of its kind in Europe. ASSET aims to develop a spatial strategy for a CBE in the Eurodelta that would support the partners in establishing a jump in scale from the urban/regional level to a larger mega-regional spatial perspective.



R-MAP: Mapping, understanding, assessing and predicting the effects of remote working arrangements in urban and rural areas

This new Horizon project bases its research on the premise that understanding and shaping the trends related to the emergence of RWAs provides an opportunity to bridge the urban-rural divide affecting its multiple facets. To achieve its goals, R-Map will produce an Integrated Impact Assessment Framework (powered by the R-Map model) that will allow the assessment of individual, social, economic, environmental and spatial impacts of RWAs. A platform will be developed leveraging the R-Map model to provide visualization and interactive services allowing decision-makers to monitor and assess how remote work arrangements affect people, communities, space, economy, and environment in urban and rural regions.

The developed tools will be applied at local level to monitor and assess current remote working trends across six representative use-cases in the EU and the AC, in regions within Greece, United Kingdom, Italy, Turkey, Netherlands-Germany, Austria-Switzerland (two cross-border cases).

R-Map will explore the potential future impact of remote work in these regions for the next 5-10 years and formulate policy recommendations on how to create environments conducive to remote work, that are tailored to the needs of local governments in both urban and rural settings.

Bernd Steinacher Fellowship

We were delighted to appoint our new Bernd Steinacher Fellow at the end of 2023.

Ioana Ivanov, who is a senior expert in urban and territorial development based in Bucharest, Romania, takes on the two-year post to research the intersection of metropolitan governance and funding.

Considering the increased popularity and importance of metropolitan cooperation in Europe over the last programming periods, with metropolitan areas providing various services and guiding the development of the territories they encompass based on integrated development strategies and plans, funding mechanisms must catch up and be able to provide suitable and sustainable funding.

This is particularly important to reduce the dependence on European funds, and to build trust in cooperation and joint metropolitan projects. While there are several examples and approaches used by European countries and metropolitan areas, including dedicated national funding, governmental support, metropolitan (revolving) funds, or membership fees, the literature on metropolitan funding and its efficiency in achieving the objectives of territorial development and cohesion is rather scarce.

In this context, the proposed research aims to address two main objectives: 1. Funding mechanisms for effective metropolitan areas in Europe; 2. Added value of funding metropolitan development. It is anticipated that three interrelated research questions will be posed to the network, covering the composition of multilevel governance structures of metropolitan areas in Europe, an assessment of funding mechanisms of metropolitan areas in Europe, and a

measure of the territorial impact. The Fellowship aims to bring fresh insights to a challenge all metropolitan regions and areas in one way or another. Our thanks go to Verband Region Stuttgart, who is the co-funder of this research programme in honour of the late Bernd Steinacher, former Director of Verband Region Stuttgart and President of METREX.

The influence of crises on housing policies

After some delay due to Covid, the Fellowship of David Dooghe has come to an end and a report published. This research was based on the effects that different crises have on housing, drawing on the ever-evolving climate emergency, the 2008 financial crisis, and COVID-19 pandemic. Cases are presented from Spain, the United Kingdom, France and Portugal.

Read the report at eurometrex.org/publications/the-influence-of-crises-on-housing-policies



METREX Ateliers

*Photo
The METREX Atelier
team in Milan*

METREX has developed a program that brings together the expertise of the network for the benefit of Members that are looking at solving specific issues.

Sustainable Freight in the Metropolitan Regions: last Mile solutions for the Metropolitan City of Milan

The Metropolitan City of Milan and several cross-sector partners have been developing a new sustainable freight transport plan for the future of the region. The so-called PULS plan will work towards ensuring that the strategically important Rhine-Alpine corridor becomes carbon neutral, as well as delivering safer, more reliable and efficient “last mile” logistics systems.

METREX was asked to assist the process by connecting to other regions around Europe with similar interests and challenges. In came Oslo, the West Midlands, Métropole de Lyon, and the Rhine Alpine Corridor EGTC, who offered case studies and acted as a “critical friend” to the plan.

PULS responds to the aims of the European Commission, which says that “the recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic should be used to accelerate the decarbonisation and modernisation of the entire transport and mobility system”.

It is hoped that the twin green and digital transitions should reshape the sector, redraw connectivity and re-energise the economy. Milan is a key point along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, one of nine European Core Network Corridors, which together form the most important part of Europe’s infrastructure network. The Rhine-Alpine Corridor is the busiest in Europe and



contains innovative regions that are actively engaged in a shift to sustainable transport.

Online meetings were held in May and July to set the context, share case studies and address mutual challenges. This third and final appointment took place in Milan in October to present the updated version of PULS, resulting from this collaborative process in dialogue with European best practice cases.

With positive feedback from the Città Metropolitana di Milano, METREX is aiming to expand on this workshop model and offer it to other Members that require external input to specific challenges. Please get in touch if you would like more information on working with METREX on an Atelier for our metropolitan region.

Partnerships

METREX continues to nurture important strategic relationships that bring insights to Members and help to raise the network's profile.

National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) – U.S.

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is one such partnership that we have sought to strengthen links with. NARC represents metropolitan regions across the U.S. in similar ways to METREX in Europe. We were extremely pleased to be joined by former Executive Director of NARC, Chuck Bean, at both our Spring and Autumn Conferences. New connections were made between Mr. Bean and our colleagues who travelled to Wrocław from Kyiv.

METREX was delighted to be represented in Washington D.C. by our President, Jakub Mazur, and Vice President, Sandeep Shingadia. Mr. Mazur and Mr. Shingadia participated in a very full programme, not only attending the NARC annual conference, but taking the opportunity to meet with key individuals from the Federal metropolitan level. Thanks go to Chuck Bean, who has been a very supportive figure in bringing METREX and NARC together.

METREX will continue to strengthen these new bonds, and invite Members who are interested to take part in Transatlantic activities to come forward.



Jakub Mazur and Sandeep Shingadia meet Ty Warner, chair of NARC



Sandeep Shingadia with the Honorable Todd Bettison, Deputy Mayor of the City of Detroit



Jakub Mazur and Sandeep Shingadia meet Congressman Don Beyer

Right: Jakub Mazur signs the 2023 EMA declaration

European Urban Research Association (EURA)

EURA has for over 25 years promoted innovative research design, exchange of knowledge and knowledge transfer, and aims to offer a bridge between research and policy. METREX joined as a Member of EURA in early 2023 in recognition of the need for practitioners within the METREX network to have access to the latest scientific research from Europe's best institutes.

It will serve as a platform for METREX and EURA to collaborate on a number of initiatives that will bring our networks closer together. This will include various events and learning exchanges, but also when seeking new partners for EU project applications.

Speaking about this new collaboration, the secretary general of METREX, Henk Bouwman, said: "We are very pleased to formalise this important connection between our two organisations. Between the people who gather evidence on the best solutions to Europe's big issues and the people who need to solve them. We look forward to developing a programme of activity where both our networks come together.

EU Rural Pact

In 2021, the European Commission launched the Rural Pact, as part of its Long-Term Vision for EU's rural areas. The Rural Pact provides a framework for cooperation between public authorities, civil society, businesses, academia and citizens, at the European, national, regional and local level.

Through the Primeiro Secretário Executivo of our Member CIM Cávado, Rafael Amorim,



METREX will be represented as a Member of the Rural Pact community. This is a steering group of individuals representing a range public, civic, business and academic organisations with a role of promoting rural challenges. This network is important bridge to the rural agenda in many of our Member's regions and areas.

European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA)

In October 2023, METREX was represented at the EMA annual forum by our President Jakub Mazur. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council – an esteemed Member of METREX – hosted the forum which focused on climate change mitigation with green and digital solutions.

Signed by a number of European regions and areas, including METREX President Jakub Mazur, was the Helsinki-Uusimaa Political Declaration.

"Our collective purpose is to propel the visionary agenda of the Metropolitan areas, setting forth a comprehensive strategy to advance the realms of green, digital, and labour market transformations," begins the Declaration.

METREX and EMA will continue to work closely to support the metropolitan dimension.

The network and finances

Also in the year 2023 the METREX network was growing, in membership as well as in relevance.

Although, sadly, the Lombardia region has announced that it will end its membership in 2023, we could welcome the CIM Coimbra Portugal, and the Warsaw Metropolitan Association. The ongoing metropolisation in Europe we see as an answer to an increasing complexity in the challenges we all face and the need to learn from others and to join forces.

METREX welcomes areas where there is a will to collaborate, the Metropolitan Attitude, including both urban and rural aspects, and with that comes a variety of governance structures as part of the European culture.

Financially, METREX is in a healthy condition. Our turn-over is growing due to membership growth (although the offered first year reduction in membership fee gives a delay).

In 2023 we have continued working on the METREX Communication Strategy and implementation plan, and we have started working on our Metropolitan Manifesto for Metropolitan partnership, launched in November 2023 at the European Parliament. This gave additional costs for external services.

Both the production as the launch of the manifesto has taken most of the reserves that we had built up before, but that is what these reserves are for. We still have maintained our basic reserves that could enable us to run METREX for a year without income.

METREX is more and more asked to participate and contribute to external events, to studies and consortia, to policy debate (e.g. EU opinion papers, EU policy development). We make more noise: our network and the individual members are present in many events, where often METREX is mentioned. With the upcoming Communication Strategy and implementation plan we hope to further stimulate and support this.

Finally, with the growth of our network and its activities, the Managing Committee has agreed to look for a part-time assistant to add to our staff and since summer 2023 we have found this extra assistance, which at the Braga Conference already showed its great value.

METREX is in a healthy financial situation.

METREX Members 2023

Aire Métropolitaine de Lyon - Ville de Lyon - UrbaLyon
Área Metropolitana de Lisboa
Área Metropolitana do Porto
Athens
Bucharest Metropolitan Area
Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg
CIM Cávado
Città Metropolitana di Genova
Città Metropolitana di Napoli
Città Metropolitana di Roma Capitale
Città Metropolitana di Torino
City of Brno
Viken County and City of Oslo
Gipúzkoa – San Sebastián
Clydeplan – Glasgow City Region
Gothenburg Region
Greater Helsinki City-Region-Usimaa
Iasi Metropolitan Area
L'Institut Paris Region – Ile-de-France
Lower Silesia
Mazovian Office for Regional Planning in Warsaw
Metropolis GZM
Metropolregion FrankfurtRheinMain
Metropolregion Hamburg
Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar
Metropolregion Mitteldeutschland
Metropolregion Nürnberg
Metropolregion Rheinland
Metropoolregio Amsterdam
Metropoolregio Rotterdam / Den Haag
Oradea Metropolitan Area
Pais-Vasco – Basque Country
Provincie Zuid-Holland
Region Stockholm
Regione Emilia-Romagna
Regione Lombardia
and Città Metropolitana di Milano
Regione del Veneto
Riga
Sofia
Szczecin
Thessaloniki
Verband Region Stuttgart
West Pomerania
West Midlands and Birmingham
Wien
Wroclaw
Zagreb





METREX

The Network of
European Metropolitan
Regions and Areas

METREX

**The Network of European
Metropolitan Regions and Areas**

Tour Part-Dieu
129, rue Servient
69326 Lyon Cedex 3
France

info@eurometrex.org
www.eurometrex.org
@METREXnow

METREX is registered as an
Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif
(AISBL) with the Ministry of Justice Belgium
Identification Number: 6477/2001

Registry from 2024:
Avenue de la Toison d'Or 22, 1st floor
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Henk Bouwman
Secretary General
henk.bouwman@eurometrex.org
00 33 603 989 224

Yvan Kostadinovski
Head of Secretariat
yvan.kostadinovski@eurometrex.org
00 33 673 598 848

Viviana Rubbo
Events and Conference Manager
viviana.rubbo@eurometrex.org
00 39 377 086 9127

METREX Annual Report 2023
Template design: www.wolfstrome.com

*Cover image: Kyiv, by Artem Zhukov on
Unsplash*