

METREX

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



THE METROPOLITAN DIMENSION

There are some 120 metropolitan regions and areas in the wider Europe of the EU and the accession countries. These are the larger urban areas, with populations of 500,000 or more, and they contain 60%, or some 280 million, of the 470 million people in the wider Europe. This is a measure of the importance of **metropolitan** competitiveness and wellbeing to the economic prosperity and social cohesion of Europe.

The process of urbanization across Europe has resulted in core cities and their hinterlands, or clusters of cities and towns, becoming the primary urban form. Most such areas are now metropolitan in character, meaning that they function as one interdependent urban region or area. The Committee of the Regions uses the phrase Functional Urban Region (FUR) to describe them.

Many of the key issues that affect the **sustainability** of European urban life can only be addressed **effectively** at the metropolitan level. These include,

- **Balancing** urban redevelopment with urban expansion
- **Integrating** land use, transportation and infrastructure
- **Sustaining** the vitality and viability of city and town centres
- **Enabling** economic competitiveness
- **Promoting** social inclusion
- **Assessing** the environmental impact of development
- **Safeguarding** natural and urban heritage resources

Metropolitan spatial planning will not be effective unless the necessary **competencies, capabilities and processes** are in place. Competence means having the authority to adopt, implement and safeguard a metropolitan spatial strategy. Capability means having the knowledge and understanding to take informed decisions. Process means having the means to regularly monitor review and update the strategy. **These are the fundamentals of effective metropolitan spatial planning.**

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

The concept of **subsidiarity** means that metropolitan areas are now the level at which wider European spatial planning objectives and can be realised most effectively. Without effective metropolitan governance the populations of metropolitan areas are unable to influence some of the **key issues** affecting their future and its sustainability.

A sustainable approach to European metropolitan strategies will involve compact urban forms and mixed use, public transport orientated development focussed on city and town centres.

A polycentric approach of this kind within metropolitan areas will require effective metropolitan governance.

A sustainable approach to improving the quality of urban life also requires **integrated social, economic, environmental and spatial action** at the metropolitan level.

THE PORTO CONVOCATION 1999

METREX promoted the **Porto Convocation in 1999**, on the initiative of the Aréa Metropolitana do Porto and with the support of the European Commission, which resulted in 40 signatories to the Metropolitan Magna Carta and its related Practice Benchmark. **These provide the foundation for METREX activities and initiatives.**

THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (ESDP) 1999

The ESDP, published in 1999, also provides a context for METREX activities and initiatives. It is concerned that, to remain competitive in a global economy, **Europe needs to achieve a better urban balance.** It foresees the need for **polycentric groupings of metropolitan regions and areas** beyond the core London/ParisRhine/Ruhr economic area.

METREX is making a metropolitan contribution to the objectives of the ESDP through the InterMETREX and PolyMETREXplus projects.



InterMETREX

METREX has developed the **Porto Practice Benchmark** through a pilot project under the Interreg IIC programme of the European Commission. It contains 28 benchmarks of effective metropolitan spatial planning and development practice covering all aspects of competence, capability and process. **Its purpose is to assist the function of spatial planning and development to become as effective as possible within metropolitan areas.**

METREX has recently received **approval of the InterMETREX project**, under the Interreg IIIC programme to apply and develop the Practice Benchmark across the wider Europe. It will be led by Glasgow, involve 32 metropolitan partners and run from 2003-2006 with a budget of 1.16m. The project will also add to the existing METREX e-Atlas, which contains planning profiles of European metropolitan regions and areas as an aid to networking.

PolyMETREXplus

METREX has also recently received approval of the PolyMETREXplus project under the Interreg IIIC programme. Its purpose is to respond the challenge in the ESDP to develop a better urban balance across Europe through **the promotion of polycentric relationships**, including social, economic, transportation and environmental linkages. It is led by Catalunya with 19 partners and a budget of €1.84m. The project will lead to the production of a Framework for a Polycentric Metropolitan Europe, a related Action Plan, a programme of representative interregional networking activities (RINA's) and a Polycentric Practice Benchmark.

The METREX Network



THE METREX NETWORK

METREX is a network of practitioners in some 40 of Europe's metropolitan regions and areas who are involved in formulating and implementing spatial planning and development strategies, policies, programmes and projects at the metropolitan level. In effect, those involved with **the metropolitan dimension**. In order to promote and foster networking METREX meets biannually, holds a Conference biennially and its activities include Expert Group working on issues of common interest and projects within European Commission Programmes.

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

2002 THESSALONIKI SPRING CONFERENCE AND GENOVA AUTUMN MEETING

2003 STUTTGART SPRING MEETING AND STOCKHOLM AUTUMN MEETING

2004 SAN SEBASTIAN - BAYONNE (EUROCITY BASQUE) SPRING MEETING AND BARCELONA CONFERENCE

2005 BUDAPEST SPRING MEETING AND GRANADA AUTUMN MEETING

2006 SZCZECIN CONFERENCE

METREX EXPERT GROUPS

- **Planning for Major Events**
led by the Provincia di Torino.
- **Major Urban Restructuring projects**
led by the City of Rotterdam in association with the newly formed Rotterdam Docklands Agency.
- **Urban Requalification**
led by the Regione Emilia-Romagna.
- **Strategic Planning for Retailing**
led by the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Joint Committee (GCVSPJC).
- **Agriculture in the Hinterlands of Metropolitan Areas**
led by the Verband Region Stuttgart.
- **Metropolitan Governance**
led by the President of Metrex.





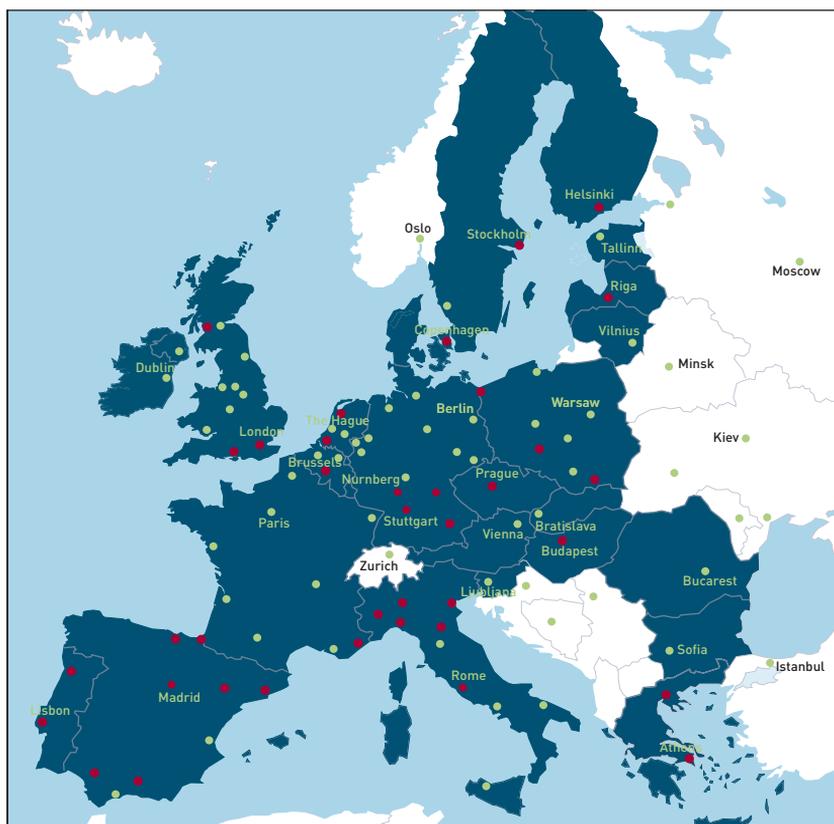
Why METREX?

- METREX is the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas. It is a network of practitioners, that is, politicians, officials and their advisers, concerned with the spatial planning and development at the metropolitan level. It is essentially a network through which key European strategic decision makers can share their knowledge, experience and expertise.
- One of Europe's greatest assets is its rich and varied urban way of life. All European metropolitan regions and areas are seeking to take advantage of their strengths and address their weaknesses. They are seeking to maintain their special identity and competitive advantage in a rapidly changing and uncertain world.
- Spatial planning is one of the means through which this social and economic change can be managed. Many of the key issues arising can only be addressed effectively at the level of the metropolitan region.
- Many of the key issues that are of concern at the European level, such as economic competitiveness, social cohesion and the balanced and sustainable development of the wider Europe (European Spatial Development Perspective), require a response at the metropolitan level.
- METREX was founded in 1996, at the Metropolitan Regions Conference in Glasgow and with the support of the European Commission, to provide a means of promoting effective metropolitan governance to manage change at the metropolitan level and respond to European issues.
- The uniqueness of metropolitan Europe is its variety and vitality and effective metropolitan governance and spatial planning have key roles to play in sustaining these qualities over the longer term.
- METREX exists to contribute a metropolitan dimension to European affairs.

WHEN IT COMES TO DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN POLICIES I WOULD LIKE TO SEE CLOSE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE ASSOCIATIONS THAT REPRESENT REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Michel Barnier

Member of the Commission responsible for regional policy and institutional reform.



METREX COMMUNICATIONS

METREX conducts its affairs in EN|IT|ES|FR|DE through the METREX web site. The web site contains detailed information on METREX activities and initiatives.

www.eurometrex.org



METREX CONTACTS

President of METREX
Prof. ssa Mercedes Bresso, MEP.
email president@eurometrex.org

Secretary General

Roger Read
email roger.read@eurometrex.org

Secretariat/Interpretariat

METREX
Nye Bevan House 2,
20 India Street,
Glasgow G2 4PF
T. F. +44 (0) 1292 317074
email secretariat@eurometrex.org
www.eurometrex.org

METREX is registered as an Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) with the Ministry of Justice Belgium, identification number 6477/2001. Registry Scotland Europa, Rond-Point Schuman 6, 1040 Bruxelles.