



Metropolitan Planning in Europe

An abstract of the Spatial Plans for the Metropolitan Regions and Areas of Europe

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Abstract of Spatial Plans from the web sites and publications of the following METREX Member areas

Purpose of this Abstract

This Abstract has been prepared by METREX, on the occasion of its 20th Anniversary in 2016, as a source of comparative information and a basis for networking on issues of common interest between Members.

A primary purpose of METREX is the exchange of knowledge and information to improve practice.

METREX acknowledges the source material from which this Abstract has been drawn for the purpose of Member networking.

[In all cases the web references are shown](#)

The Abstracts also include METREX Observers from Northern Virginia and Shanghai.

1	Stad Amsterdam
2	Oranisation of Athens*
3	Prefecture of Catalunya
4	Joint Spatial Planning Department of Berlin and Brandenburg
5	Gobierno del Pais-Vasco*
6	Regione Emilia-Romagna*
7	Municipality of Bucarest (UMPCB)*
8	Planungsverband Frankfurt
9	Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Clydeplan (GCVSDPA)
10	Hamburg Metropolitan Region
11	Helsinki City Council
12	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council
13	HSY
14	Metropolregion Köln/Bonn
15	Area Metropolitana de Lisboa (AML)
16	agAM
17	Regione Lombardia
18	Institute for the General Plan of Moscow
19	Megacities*
20	Metropolregion Mitteldeutschland
21	Provincia di Napoli
22	Verien die Region Nürnberg
23	Oradea Metropolitan Area Association
24	Oslo City/Askerhus
25	IAU-Idf
26	Area Metropolitana do Porto
27	Verband Region Rhein-Neckar
28	City of Riga Council
29	MRDH - Rotterdam City Council
30	MRDH - Municipality of The Hague
31	Municipality of Sofia
32	Stockholm County Council
33	Verband Region Stuttgart
34	Municipality of Szczecin
35	Region of West Pomerania
36	Organisation of Thessaloniki
37	Provincia di Torino
38	Regione del Veneto
39	Vilnius City Municipal Government
40	Mazovia Regional Council
41	Stadt Wien
42	Municipality of Wroclaw
43	Region of Lower Silesia
44	City of Zagreb
45	RZU

* The web sites did not provide the necessary material for these 5 Member areas. It will be added through consultation.

Commentary

Overview

An overview of the 46 available METREX Member/Observer Abstracts provides interesting insight into the very varied approaches to spatial planning and development across Europe. There are clear, and interesting, cultural and political differences North South and East West. Amongst these are the following.

Regulation and facilitation

Spatial planning as a primarily regulatory function or a primarily facilitating function. Spatial planning in parts of Europe seeks influence through longer term Visions and indicative strategies, both integrated and sectoral, and others more through defined administrative processes and documents.

Economic competitiveness and quality of life

This is often a question of emphasis and priorities. In prosperous metropolitan economies the quality of life is a primary focus but in metropolitan areas with fewer strengths and opportunities and more threats and weaknesses the emphasis is more on competitiveness.

However, all metropolitan areas see quality of life and quality of environment as key factors in retaining their population and local investment and attracting incomers and inward investment.

Graphic and a visual approach and the balance with text

In some Member areas the spatial planning graphics used in reports and presentations are highly imaginative and powerful and very sophisticated. They assume a well-informed citizen audience and a highly participative approach to strategy and plan making. Amsterdam and Wien are examples. Oradea is unique in having its Development Strategy and planning process supported by the EU as an example of good practice.

In other areas graphics play a lesser role with a greater reliance on maps, particularly GIS generated maps. These are very precise and specific but might benefit from being complemented with graphics that give the main messages.

The readability of text varies, with some giving plentiful and explicit section and paragraph headings, to indicate content, and others being much less so. Ease of reading should always be a key consideration.

Project led plans

Many plans, at both the regional and metropolitan level, include a range of large projects in response to specific locational problems or opportunities. They give the impression of being project led.

Foresight

The value of longer term planning is that most people, politicians, officials, stakeholders and the public, have an interest in what happens next and what the future might hold.

Foresight involves uncertainty but scenarios to explore future possibilities help to clarify these and enable them to be taken into account. The process of foresight has more value when it is regularly rolled forward and updated.

Strategic planning process

Some, but not all, metropolitan spatial plans follow a logic of,

- Foresight
- Scenarios
- Vision
- Integrated strategy
- Sectoral strategies
- Plans
- Programmes
- Projects

Quality of metropolitan spatial plans

A final observation is that where the value of spatial planning, as a function, is recognised in a metropolitan areas then it is usually resourced accordingly. The quality of spatial plans seems to reflect the extent to which the function of spatial planning is valued in European metropolitan authorities and bodies.