

# **METREX – The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas**

## **XIII Meeting of the Network, Genova, 23-26 October 2002**

---

**Discussion Note on the Options of Metropolitan Competencies, Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2002**  
**Dr. Bernd Steinacher, Executive Director, Stuttgart Region**

---

### **I. CALL FOR A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE: PUTTING HUMAN NEEDS FIRST**

Stuttgart Region takes the view that the debate about the competencies of planning authorities should not be defined by state organisation and administrative theory. The primary focus should not be the dividing line between central and local government responsibilities, the correct organisation of legal and technical supervision, the debate on regional administrative structures ("Regierungspräsidium" or "Regionalkreis"), or shifts in the relative importance of central regions and peripheries. Stuttgart Region believes that people's living conditions and daily needs must be at the heart of that debate. The citizens have long equated regions with cities. The discussion about the competencies of planning authorities in the metropolitan regions of Europe is thus concerned with different issues:

- competition between locations,
- globalisation,
- land take and urban sprawl,
- new concepts for eco-friendly mobility,
- sustainable financing of local public transport services,
- streamlined cost management of public institutions,
- regional management for regional problems.

### **II. CHALLENGES FOR METROPOLITAN REGIONS**

The common denominator of development in Europe's metropolitan areas is intensification of all human activity. This is accompanied by growing consumption of natural resources:

- long-term population growth accompanied by disproportionate soil sealing,
- competition between municipalities for residents and taxpayers,
- intensification of economic activity, i.e. increasing gross value added, higher productivity, downturn in jobs,
- increase in traffic movements, distances travelled and numbers of vehicles,
- mounting pressure on public budgets, mainly for social transfer payments, but also for construction and maintenance of infrastructural facilities,
- lack of local authority investment capacity,
- growing pollution,
- globalisation of (public) supply and disposal services: gas, water, electricity, local public transport, medical care.

### **III. JOINING FORCES**

Crafting an effective concept for the future development of a metropolitan region takes more than just a series of isolated solutions launched by municipal and district authorities within the region. The conception and implementation of sustainable development needs to be directed at regional level. The regional authority must contribute activities and resources of its own to the implementation of plans; otherwise, it remains a paper tiger – toothless and ineffectual.

### **IV. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

One of the primary tasks of regional development management is to co-ordinate spatial development:

- identification of settlement areas and open areas in regional plans,
- identification of regional green belts and green zones in landscape plans,
- creation of a "green infrastructure",
- planning implementation measures (e.g. promotion of industrial zones operated jointly by local authorities),
- control of the development of large-scale retailing.

## **V. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

The watchword of regional business promotion must be "concrete and realistic":

- location marketing aimed at establishing and sharpening the region's profile in Europe,
- voluntary co-operation in networks,
- cluster management for strengthening traditional areas of competence and promoting the development of new technologies,
- establishment of new businesses,
- job opportunities for people with low qualifications,
- involvement in the creation of economic infrastructures,
- comprehensive waste management concept for the region,
- regional channelling of public demand for gas, water and electricity,
- coupling of the issues economy and environment.

## **VI. REGIONAL TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

Transport plays a key role in defining a metropolitan region's ability to function as both a space to live and an economic area. Traffic volumes in metropolitan regions will continue to increase. This calls for a regional response to traffic problems:

- regional transport concept (regional transport plan),
- implementing regional transport plans calls for a package of measures and a long-term approach,
- regional co-ordination of local public transport systems,
- development from automobile region to mobility region,
- greater role of public authorities in financing transport services by harnessing competition between service providers,
- development and improvement of regional rail services and rail substitute services.

## **VII. INVOLVEMENT IN MAJOR REGIONAL PROJECTS**

Many major projects (airports, trade exhibition centres, events) outstrip the resources of individual municipalities in metropolitan regions. Metropolitan authorities should therefore be able to participate in these projects through:

- regional location planning,
- (financial) involvement,
- sponsorship.

## **VIII. NEW AREAS OF REGIONAL POLICY**

Metropolitan authorities do not fulfil their role by merely treading well-beaten paths. On the contrary, they need to be innovative and to direct the searchlights of regional development far into the future, e.g. focusing on

- sport and culture as regional development "software",
- metropolitan regions as European players,
- ways of promoting the social and educational development of the region,
- gearing to human resources.

## **IX. THESIS: "FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION FOLLOWS TASKS FOLLOW HUMAN AND SUSTAINABLE NEEDS"**

- Where people live and work within regional confines, public duties must be performed by regional management.
- Regionalisation is the right answer to globalisation.
- Sustainable regional development must be the ultimate goal.
- Sustainable regional development calls for cross-sectional, integrated planning and implementation from a single source.
- Autonomous regional policy requires an autonomous regional organisation with sovereign powers, real authority, financial resources and a directly elected regional assembly.
- Regional planners and policy-makers are thus perceived and accepted as regional players, able to co-operate with other players at regional, national and European level while maintaining adequate proximity to the citizens of the region through their democratic legitimisation.
- At the same time, however, national and European policy must be geared to strengthening and actively promoting the regional tier of metropolitan regions.

**Status: 8 October 2002**