



Annual Report 2019





Remstal Garden Show,
Stuttgart
ph. Lise Pedersen



Dear reader,

The foundations that have enabled Europe and in particular the EEC and EU to thrive over the past 60 years have undergone considerable movement in the past few years. We know that the United Kingdom is lining up to leave the EU in 2020. Whether or not this has inspired and given voice to groups within other member states we are not sure, but one thing we know is that in this time of introspection and increased scrutiny, the EU will need to assert its values and the strength that derives from being together.

METREX cannot ignore these external shifts and in particular the willingness with which countries collaborate and share knowledge. Members of METREX are united by the idea that each of us can learn from one another. This state of mind transcends borders when it seems that all across Europe there are those that seek to reaffirm them.

Globally, the agenda is being shaped more than ever by the environment, the economy, health and wellbeing and access to affordable and decent housing. These issues are deciding elections and are propelling political agendas. We must however welcome the rising awareness and debate amongst the general population, who are more in tune than ever before with individual, municipal and state responsibilities.

However, there is a sense that the EU is starting to shift its view on the importance of Metropolitan Regions and METREX stands poised to offer the full weight of the expertise and knowledge within the network to assist, as we did with the Committee of the Regions opinion paper and as we continue to do with the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities.

In light of all of this, METREX has worked on retaining links across all of Europe in the belief that we all share common goals, common values and common challenges. The first part of this was the agreement to hold the first conference of 2019 in Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

Dr. NICOLA SCHELLING
President of METREX
Director of the Stuttgart Region

METREX Conferences in 2019

The METREX Conference continues to be the focal point of the network. This time spent twice a year with colleagues from across regions and areas in Europe, many of whom attend regularly, is a platform upon which to share common interests and challenges.

Birmingham Conference

Creating an environment for
inclusive economic growth
15-17 May 2019

Attendees from:

Austria
Bulgaria
Finland
France
Germany
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

The METREX Conference in Birmingham was important in setting out our ambition to strengthen links with the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The conference was a great success and brought us closer to analyse the newly formed Transport for West Midlands, a part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, and Birmingham City Council. Both organisations reflected on the opportunity to enhance links with regions and cities across the English Channel.

The event looked at the conditions required to foster inclusive economic growth. We heard from a number of local speakers, who explained the context of the West Midlands from the perspective of business, transport, design and governance.

Simon Marks, board director for optimising assets at the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), spoke about Greater Birmingham's role as a core city in a wider landscape of cities, towns and communities and the role of the LEP to bring together public, private and academic sectors. Their aim is to deliver economic growth for the region by, among other things, becoming a leader in innovation and creativity, exploiting the region's role as an international transport hub, promoting skills and apprenticeships for the next generation and unlocking development sites.

Reception at
Birmingham Art Gallery



Sandeep Shingadia, director of development and delivery for Transport for West Midlands, outlined the newly formed region's vision to boost productivity, address a skills gap, tackle challenges in public services and improve connectivity. Mr Shingadia outlined the success they have achieved so far in terms of growth in GVA, but also the challenges this brings, with population growth exasperating the need to solve issues in terms of movement, housing provision and service provision.

Peer reviews were provided by Lyon, Milan, Leipzig and Frankfurt.

Study visits took advantage of the improvements to the transport network by visiting neighbouring cities Wolverhampton and Coventry, the UKCentral transport hub, as well as tours around Birmingham to see Digbeth, a city centre neighbourhood of education and manufacturing (also our base for the conference), and Paradise, to see public realm improvement and the areas around the proposed HS2 interchange.

Our thanks go to Transport for West Midlands and Birmingham City Council who hosted the conference.

Stuttgart Conference

Modern infrastructures for
growing metropolitan regions
11-13 September 2019

Attendees from:

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Finland
France
Germany
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Russia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
USA

Over three days in Stuttgart, we gained insights from our host, the Verband Region Stuttgart, METREX members and other actors including Arlington Economic Development in the US – who have secured the new Amazon HQ and its 25,000 jobs – on how they provide modern infrastructure for growing metropolitan regions and how this can create the conditions for positive 'social infrastructure'.

We visited two projects within the region – the Stuttgart 21 transport project and the Remstal Garden Show. The former is a large infrastructure and urban development project that will transform the current terminus into a through station, simultaneously upgrading capacity and the wider neighbourhood. METREX members were given a tour of the site to understand the changes to the station and surrounding landscape, but also to see the tunnel boring process.

The Remstal Garden Show meanwhile is a remarkable model of local and regional cooperation to revamp green infrastructure and tourism in the region. Remstal is the first garden show in Germany to be jointly organised by as many as 16 towns and municipalities.

Andreas Hofer, Director
IBA CityRegion Stuttgart
2027, speaking in Stuttgart





“...we also have a strong culture of associations like Eurocities and METREX, which represent a concrete group of actors and have a very strong influence...”

“It’s amazing how these municipalities have worked together. It puts the region on the tourism map: very often, people just drive through on their way to Switzerland, they don’t know this valley, and yet it has a lot to offer,” said METREX member Peter Pol, Strategic Urban Planner at the City of the Hague.

During the ‘Stuttgart Day’, in addition to green infrastructure and transport infrastructure, we learned about the region’s approach to digital infrastructure. Addressing the challenge of meeting the rapidly growing demand for digital services both for corporate and private needs, Hans-Jürgen Bahde, managing director of Gigabit Region Stuttgart, outlined plans for a public-private partnership to develop the region’s fibre optic broadband infrastructure. The goal is to equip 50 per cent of households and all enterprises in the region with FTTH (fibre to the home) by 2025.

Smart Cities Director at Robert Bosch GMBH, Dr. Andrea Bräuning, who heads up the Living Lab innovation network in Ludwigsburg, offered an inspiring presentation on how companies, researchers and municipalities can work together to bring projects to fruition to make tomorrow’s city smarter and more liveable for its growing population. Examples included intelligent street lighting, sensor-equipped parking places and green walls.

On the second day of the conference, we dealt with European instruments regarding the development of the metropolitan dimension. A Member of the European Parliament for the Polish region of Silesia since 2004, Dr. Jan Olbrycht is also president of the URBAN Intergroup at the European Parliament – whose main role is to get urban needs onto the EU agenda – and rapporteur for the next budget (2021-2027). Invited by METREX to speak about the *status quo* of the urban agenda, Dr. Olbrycht took time after his presentation for an interview where he described the rivalry between regions, cities and smaller towns, adding that this is where networks like METREX play a crucial role:

“In Europe, we have different actors. The question is whether they are competing against each other. We have city representatives in the Committee of Regions, for example. But we also have a strong culture of associations like Eurocities and METREX, which represent a concrete group of actors and have a very strong influence. The challenge is to make the actors work together, even if their interests are not always the same. METREX is very well known on a European level and its members need it to represent their interests and challenges.”

METREX members welcomed the opportunity to hear from and provide feedback to those responsible for revising the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and Territorial Agenda. METREX was invited to follow-up and continue to assist in the development of these important European initiatives which will be adopted in December 2020 during the German EU Council Presidency.

Our thanks go to Verband Region Stuttgart who hosted the conference.

Upcoming conferences

We are thrilled to be able to list the upcoming conferences for the next two-to-three years: in 2020 our Spring Conference in Lisbon (update: this had to be postponed due to Covid-19), our Autumn Conference in Lyon together with the L'Institut Paris Region. And in 2021 we will visit Nürnberg and Riga. For 2022 talks are underway with the City of Almere (partner in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area).

Furthermore, METREX has become a regular partner of the EMA conferences (in 2020 in Porto). METREX has also been asked to partner in various other conferences next year, underlining the relevance of the Metropolitan Dimension!

METREX Expert and Network Groups

2019 saw the continuation of the Metropolitan Governance, EconoMETREX and Nordic-Baltic Space Expert Groups, which have now been active and continuing to meet for some time.

Nordic-Baltic Space Transnational Development Perspective

The Nordic Baltic Space Expert Group produced a substantial report titled *Nordic-Baltic Space Transnational Development Perspective*. The perspective presented aims to use spatial planning as the means to guide future development in cities and regions in the Nordic Baltic Space. It involves cooperation at the macro-regional level to a wider understanding of the main driving forces behind change.

One of the aims of the Expert Group is to build a network of city-regions working together across the Space that complements the EU's vision of a sustainable and cohesive European Territory 2050. The lead partners of the report are the City of Helsinki, the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council together with Region Stockholm. The participating city-regions include Gothenburg, Oslo, and Riga, with Tallinn as an observer. It is hoped that the report can provide a model that other areas can use to make a similar analysis.

SURE Network Group

This year also saw the establishment of the SURE (Strategic Urban Region Eurodelta) Network Group, which emerged from a meeting at the METREX Conference in San Sebastián. The objective of the group is to share information and issues in order to better understand the common challenges and opportunities across this mega-region of 50 million people. The group met in January at a kick-off meeting in Cologne, followed by a conference later in November in The Hague, where they covered topics including the circular economy and economies of scale for services, production, agriculture and construction across the region. In 2020 and beyond the group hopes to look at mapping and better understanding issues with regards to a circular economy approach.

Actively taking the European stage



“The cooperation between cities and learning from each other is indispensable, when we want to find solutions to burning issues....”

METREX responds to The European Committee of the Regions opinion paper

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) decided to prepare an opinion on *The challenges of metropolitan regions and their position in the future Cohesion Policy post 2020*.

Metropolitan regions are often economic centres of growth, providing opportunities for study, research, innovation and employment, which naturally attract people. But they have also to cope with specific challenges associated with transport, environment and social inclusion as well as an ever-increasing demand for services coupled with limited financial resources, which has a significant impact on the population's overall quality of life.

The main objectives of this opinion were to bring a better recognition of the challenges of the metropolitan regions, of their contribution to the cohesion policy and territorial cohesion as well as to recommend measures to support them while paying attention to urban-rural links.

METREX produced a joint response with Eurocities to the Committee of the Regions draft opinion, in which the emphasis from our organisations was to establish greater clarity on how to define and measure metropolitan areas and regions.

The feedback from the CoR and indeed the rapporteur, Mr. Juraj Droba, suggested that the response from METREX and Eurocities was welcome and useful. This led to both parties being invited to participate in a subsequent seminar in Bratislava at which the opinion paper would be further discussed.

METREX signs the Helsinki Impact Conference declaration

In October, Helsinki invited other cities and organisations to take systemic and rapid actions in solving global challenges. Framed by a two-day conference, policy makers, urban planners and researchers discussed the role of cities in the future.

As a result of the conference, the leaders of Helsinki, Stockholm and Tallinn, as well as European networks Eurocities and METREX, signed a declaration, through which they commit to advancing a solution to global challenges.

“We are convinced that the challenge today is to allow everyone, in particular those with the least prospect of employment and housing, thus the most vulnerable, to be recognised, protected and respected,”



METREX tour Remstal
Garden Show in Stuttgart

“Learning from each other is indispensable, when we want to find solutions to burning issues. The pace both in the climate actions and in the construction of socially equitable cities must be stepped up from what it has been thus far”, emphasised Deputy Mayor Anni Sinnemäki, who signed the declaration on behalf of the City of Helsinki.

In the declaration, the signatories committed to:

- Combating climate change
- Working towards a human-centric digital transition and ethical use of technology
- Improving urban environments through spatial planning
- Enabling social equality and more inclusive cities, as well as
- Strengthening the role of cities as innovation platforms
- In the declaration, the signatories also highlight the need for a more ambitious EU Urban Agenda.

“It is great that our city partners have joined Helsinki in conveying the message to the European stages that the significance and financing of urban policy must increase during the European Union’s next funding period”, said Sinnemäki.



METREX in conference

The declaration was signed by Deputy Mayor of Helsinki Anni Sinnemäki, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn Andrei Novikov and Vice Mayor of Stockholm Dennis Wedin, as well as by Secretary General of Eurocities Anna Lisa Boni and Secretary General of METREX Henk Bouwman.

METREX participates in the EMA conference and signs declaration

Mayors, presidents and political representatives of the European metropolitan areas gathered in Lyon for the 5th EMA Forum to advocate for *European inclusive metropolitan areas facing together social challenges*.

METREX was represented at the event by its Secretary General, Henk Bouwman, who moderated a roundtable discussion on 'Inclusive economic growth: no one left behind!'. The session featured contributions from Jean-Claude Dardelet, Vice-President of Toulouse Métropole, Valérie Glatard, Councillor of Lyon Métropole, Michal Olszewski, Deputy

Mayor of Warsaw and Silvia Cossu, political leader of Città Metropolitana di Torino.

The outcome of this event was a political declaration for which support was sought from all European metropolitan regions and areas. *"We are convinced that the challenge today is to allow everyone, in particular those with the least prospect of employment and housing, thus the most vulnerable, to be recognised, protected and respected,"* said EMA.

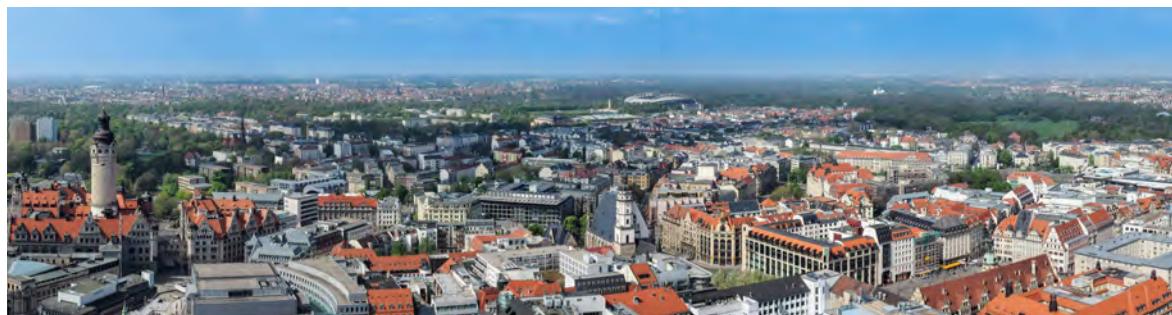
METREX signed the declaration and encouraged all of its members to consider doing the same.

METREX involved in the new Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities

As a result of the Stuttgart Conference, METREX responded to a first draft of the new Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. The new Leipzig Charter is specifically addressing cities, but acknowledges that a city and its surrounding area need each other and benefit from each other.

The secretary general, Henk Bouwman, also participated in the fourth European meeting towards a final draft of the new Leipzig Charter on 27 and 28 November in Brussels. METREX continues to be involved in this process and also aligns with other partners like the German Association for Housing, Urban and Spatial Development.

Leipzig



Focus on members

New website

METREX launched its new website which offers space for members to share information on their key challenges and projects, as well as key personnel. As with any living organisation, the website is an ongoing project which will be adapted as members provide their feedback.

Research Portal

At our conference in Stuttgart it was announced that we intend to setup a METREX Research Portal. The portal will offer members access to the best research from the universities and institutes in our European Metropolitan regions and to create a network of researchers and potential project partners. This we believe will support our members in their vital work.

The objective of Phase 1 of the project will be to get a better understanding of the market and needs of members. We expect this to begin in Spring 2020.

New members

It is great to see growing interest in METREX membership from metropolitan regions! In 2019 we welcomed new members Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority in a shared membership, the Città Metropolitana di Milano, the City of Brno, the Province of South Holland and the Città Metropolitana di Roma.

Financial situation

Over the year 2019, METREX has been able to build up its financial resilience. Part of the result will serve as a reserve for the years to come, and part will be invested in improving our performance to members. The following actions are set out and will appear on the 2020 balance, such as:

- The METREX Research Portal
- Investing in two major EU project applications
- Investing in further digitalisation such as video-conference and tele-work platforms

A continuous pressure on member's resources ask for careful spending in order to maintain the service level and the offer in the coming years.

The Annual Financial report will show the details of expenditure and resources. Due to the current pandemic crisis, the final report was only finished in August 2020.



METREX Managing Committee 2019

Dr Nicola Schelling
President of METREX
Regional Director of
the Stuttgart Region

Irma Karjalainen
Vice-President of METREX
Director of Regional and
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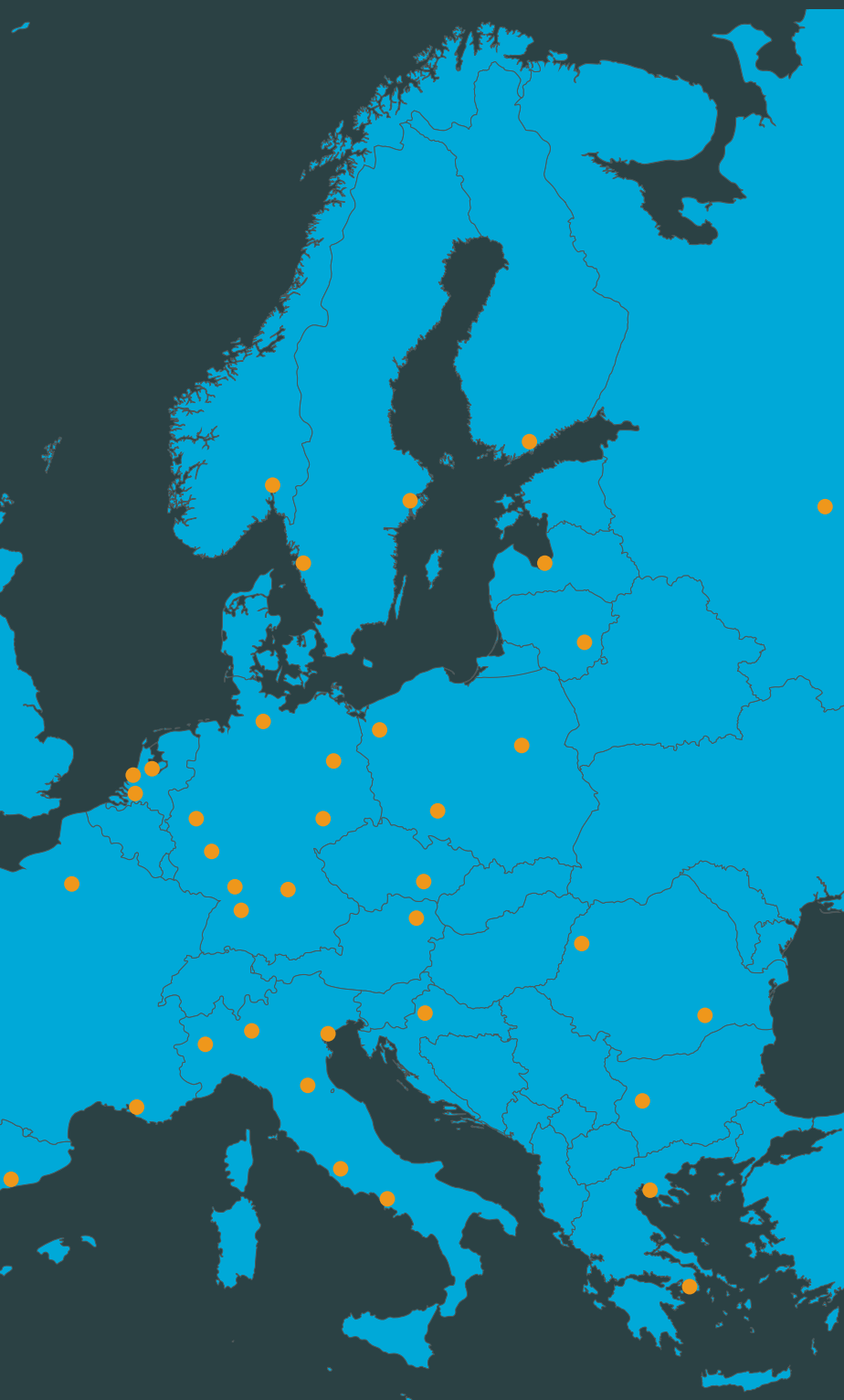
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Senior Economist,
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Douglas Gordon
City of Helsinki

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City of Helsinki



METREX Members 2019

Agence d'urbanisme de l'agglomération Marseillaise - Marseille
Área Metropolitana de Lisboa
Área Metropolitana do Porto
Athens
Birmingham and Transport for West Midlands
Brno City
Bucharest
Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg
Città Metropolitana di Milano
Città Metropolitana di Napoli
Città Metropolitana di Roma Capitale
Città Metropolitana di Torino
City of Oslo and County of Viken
Gipúzkoa – San Sebastián
Glasgow
Göteborg GRAoLA
Greater Helsinki City-Region-Usimaa
L'Institut Paris Region Ile-de-France
Lower Silesia
Mazovian Office for Regional Planning in Warsaw
Metropolregion FrankfurtRheinMain
Metropolregion Hamburg
Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar
Metropolregion Mitteldeutschland
Metropolregion Nürnberg
Metropolregion Rheinland
Metropool Regio Amsterdam
Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag (MRDH) Rotterdam Den Haag
Moscow
Oradea
País-Vasco / Basque Country
Provincie Zuid-Holland
Regione Emilia-Romagna
Regione Lombardia
Regione del Veneto
Riga
Sofia
Stockholm
Szczecin
Thessaloniki
Verband Region Stuttgart
Vilnius Planas – Vilnius
West Pomerania
Wien
Wroclaw
Zagreb

Observers

Budapest
Granada
INU Piemonte e Valle d'Aosta
Krakow
München
Northern Virginia
Shanghai
USA metropolitan regions



The Network of
European Metropolitan
Regions and Areas

METREX

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

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