



Unleashing Metropolitan Partnerships

**TO CO-CREATE A RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE
AND PROSPEROUS EUROPE**

A Manifesto for a Metropolitan Europe



“I want Europe to become the first climate-neutral continent in the world by 2050”

– European Commission President
Ursula von der Leyen.

We need to rethink our institutional structures and the ways we work together to make them agile for current and future challenges.

We propose **Metropolitan Partnerships** to support stronger and better collaboration between **urban to rural areas** for more resilient, greener, just and better-connected communities.

METROPOLITAN PARTNERSHIPS ARE already delivering change

Metropolitan Partnerships are already delivering positive change. Formally and informally, across borders, within the urban and rural, they are the manifestation of collaborations happening right now across Europe.

They exist where there is need for greater, more strategically planned action in areas of socio-economic realities, from housing and utility management to transport networks and industry.

They are the vanguard of what it means to be European: supporting and implementing EU principles and political instruments from subsidiarity to neighbourhood and development policies and strategies, through to spatial planning, European Bauhaus initiatives, and more.

Metropolitan Partnerships differ from country to country, yet they represent the same principle: to collaborate at scale to make more efficient and informed decisions to improve the everyday lives of over 100 million Europeans.



METROPOLITAN PARTNERSHIPS ARE ready to co-create a future for Europe

Europe is a beneficiary of extraordinary talent and togetherness, which coalesces around a common purpose. Its ambitions allow it to be considered at the forefront of a global transition towards a sustainable and just future. However, this fight for the future is in danger of falling apart unless all available allies are equally equipped and ready to deliver.

To avoid missed opportunities going forward, the EU must give greater agency to all partners involved in shaping policies and multilevel governance systems in all functional areas.

This is why **METREX and EMA** (European Metropolitan Authorities) and our respective communities, have come together to urge the EU to significantly enhance the role and status of Metropolitan Partnerships.

Together, we recognise the added value that Metropolitan Partnerships can bring in building a stronger, greener, more resilient and connected Europe by 2050.

The credentials of Metropolitan Partnerships cannot be doubted. They are reliable partners, familiar with and already actively engaged in many of the main EU policies, including structural

projects, industrial policy, digital and 'twin' transitions, and NextGenEU.

They can be depended on to manage even the largest, most complex implementations and have thus built up expertise in dealing with complex issues and **solving big socio-economic problems** on a daily basis and often with quiet efficiency.

In the face of extremely tough economic, social, and structural crises, Metropolitan Partnerships offer a route to a more efficient deployment of policies at the most appropriate scale for the job – and in even the most hard-to-reach of places.

With greater support, Metropolitan Partnerships can also be a boost to each other: the big core European cities and metropolitan region, as well as the second and third tier cities and their rural areas.

But more than this, Metropolitan Partnerships stand ready to co-create and shape the fundamental structures of Europe, from the funding and strategic agenda, through reenvisioned institutional frameworks to delivery mechanisms and policies.

OUR PROPOSAL TO EUROPE, ITS NATIONS, REGIONS AND CITIES: Recognise our strength, support us, work with us, reap the benefits

Metropolitan Partnerships host valuable knowhow, innovation, social capital and creativity which translate into job-creation and (green) economic growth. Yet the materials, resources and people needed to stimulate these qualities and help to solve concurrent and compounding challenges are not available in sufficient quantity, or not working together effectively.



*Put simply, for all their acknowledged potential, Metropolitan Partnerships **need greater freedom and capacity** to develop and share imaginative and (often) collective solutions, to break open the silos currently defining the metropolitan space.*

To further strengthen Metropolitan Partnerships, they need long-term support to forge bottom-up approaches and enhanced lateral ties connecting different actors, spheres of interest – economic, industrial, political, environmental, societal, etc. – and both rural and urban communities across Europe.



A MANIFESTO FOR A METROPOLITAN EUROPE

We call upon the EU and the national level for the following:

From the EU

1. A formal role for Metropolitan Partners within **existing** programmes and initiatives such as the Rural Pact and for METREX, EMA, Eurotowns, etc. to be better consulted during Commission dialogues under its pan-European networks initiative.
2. A new and dedicated **Metropolitan Programme 2050** in the MFF for Metropolitan partnerships or dimension and call for active involvement in shaping the pilot to achieve this.
3. The metropolitan dimension to be an obligatory stakeholder in processes regulated by the EU code of conduct on partnerships.
4. An EU Commissioner that has the “Metropolitan Partnerships” or “metropolitan dimension” in their portfolio and to link to the Committee of the Regions as it needs to include more direct representation from metropolitan partners among its members.
5. The big EU infrastructural (e.g. TEN-T), agricultural (CAP) and innovation policies (Horizon Europe) to be shaped to strengthen Europe’s metropolitan dimension.
6. Greater emphasis on physical metropolitan links across Europe (flagship projects such as high-speed railway networks connecting metropolitan areas and regions of Europe).

From nations

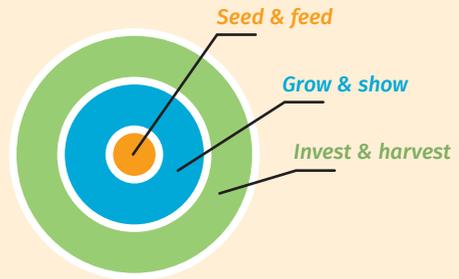
7. New national operational programmes, funded with EU, national and regional money, dedicated to metropolitan areas and regions (i.e. Italy model).
8. National regulations and policies concerning metropolitan partnerships and institutions to be adapted to include spatial planning, infrastructure projects, services, and other ways to improve quality of life (i.e. France model).
9. A ‘culture of good practices’ (metropolitan strategies and governance models) to be developed, for which we offer advice and assistance.
10. Capacity building among metropolitan communities (analysts in metropolitan issues and trends) and improving education in metropolitan institutions (i.e. Portugal model) for both urban and rural level and in between.
11. A default “whole-of-area” perspective when making industrial development and peri-urban planning decisions, factoring in the wider implications on transport, logistics, social disruption, etc. (i.e. Barcelona Metropolitan Area).
12. More benchmarking of cross-national and cross-border cooperation in large and critical infrastructure (i.e. Germany model).

A PLAN TO MOBILISE METROPOLITAN PARTNERSHIPS

Metropolitan-as-a-Service: integrating metropolitan know-how with Europe's existing delivery partners

We see the metropolitan (or 'M') dimension being delivered as a package of proposals and solutions – so-called M-as-a-Service tools (MaaS).

As developed in our MV2050 White Paper¹, this concept is a tangible yet adjustable metropolitan solution in line with the Urban Initiative with its New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat initiatives, and wider EU and international commitments including the Green Deal and Sustainable Development Goals.



MaaS can be implemented over the coming years in three main stages, monitored and evaluated cross-Europe by our scientific partners.

Stage 1

Seed and feed the M-as-a-Service approach in the right ground – at local, regional, and European levels, and across traditional geographical and political boundaries – to stimulate metropolitan thinking as a positive reflex. This is the time to try new ideas and pilots in different contexts and at speeds as needed. Use cases can be aimed at tackling issues and overcoming hurdles, many of which will be unique to a situation or region.

Stage 2

Grow and show metropolitan achievements; encouraged to try out a new idea or tools, metropolitan communities can explore its limits and find ways to improve it. A 3-circle concept – a system of concentric tree-ring circles which expand with progress and age as metropolitan partnerships grow new connections; strengthen relationships among the community (self-sewn), between different members (grafted) meeting as part of a network in local, regional or European consortia, and between individuals/collectives and various external agents (fertilised) who can fund, support and generally promote the metropolitan agenda.

Stage 3

Invest and harvest from the best examples fed into a repository, or 3-circle platform, developed as a sharing plate to sustain everyone needing inspiration or tried-and-tested solutions to move ahead in their way.

¹ METREX Metropolitan Vision for Europe 2050 – Whitepaper, March 2023

Come and speak with us

METREX has 25-years' experience of Metropolitan Partnerships: we understand how they can help you.

The urgent question Europe should be asking is what will happen if the metropolitan dimension continues to be undervalued in national and European policy- and law-making? Help metropolitan partnerships continue to grow and flourish, and together we can achieve our shared goals for Europe!

WE ARE METREX

METREX

The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas
Tour Part-Dieu
129, rue Servient
69326 Lyon
Cedex 3
France

www.eurometrex.org
info@eurometrex.org
+31 654 295 377
Henk Bouwman
+44 7840 436 844
Stephen Gallagher