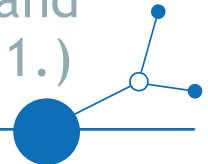


COMMON METROPOLITAN VISION

Conceptual Framework, Approach, Work Plan and
Outcome (for Deliverable 1.1.2. and Output 1.1.)



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1. Introduction

The **Common Metropolitan Vision** is a deliverable 1.1.2 of „**Activity 1.1. Mapping the metropolitan dimension of European strategic documents and its status quo**” and at the same time it serves as the key **Output 1.1.** of the whole working package “**WP1: Analysis of metropolitan dimension**“ realized during the first year of the project “**MECOG-CE: Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance in central Europe**”.

The **Common Metropolitan Vision** is a **policy advocacy document** which articulates the position of **MECOG-CE partners** to **promote metropolitan dimension** in public policies. While the document primarily aims at the European level, it also intends to address national stakeholders. It argues for the **relevance and importance of metropolitan dimension** in European and national strategic documents and policies. It highlights the **benefits and advantages** of metropolitan dimension in public policies and metropolitan level governance for the accomplishments of national and European policy objectives as well as local (municipal) and regional policy priorities. The document also points to the **needs and requirements** of metropolitan areas to enhance metropolitan governance and cooperation.

The work on the **Common Metropolitan Vision** has been organised by Charles University, Prague within the “**WP1: Analysis of metropolitan dimension**“ coordinated together with University of Silesia in Katowice.

2. Approach, method and work plan

The work on **Common Metropolitan Vision** started already during the elaboration of deliverable “**D.1.1.1 Identification of challenges specific for central European MAs**”. The survey for D 1.1.1 not only assembled opinions, policies and practices about challenges and opportunities for MAs. It specifically addressed the identification of challenges and opportunities that can be used to **promote the metropolitan dimension and strengthen its role in public policies** and could **contribute to the formulation of the advocacy policy document “Common Metropolitan Vision”**.

The first phase of the work on the **Common Metropolitan Vision** included the discussion and definition of the focus and structure of the document as well as the character of its narrative. First, policy advocacy was clarified in relation to a plan to prepare a brief 4-5 page document. **Policy advocacy** is understood as a deliberate process focused on informing and influencing decision-makers. It seeks changes and recommends solutions. The goal of policy advocacy is to achieve a desired policy change. The imperative is to convince policymakers to take a preferred action. **Policy** is a set of formal institutions such as laws, regulations and guidelines embedded in wider institutional context that includes values, norms and practices. It is supported by public organisations as well as selected private sector and non-governmental organizations. Policy usually includes a plan and addresses its implementation. The **plan, strategy or course of action** is based on a set of ideas (concerning management of given affairs) and a set of principles (to guide the



course of action). The **implementation** concerns rules such as laws, regulations or incentives and can include a set or system of guidelines (procedures, protocols, practices).

Based on the general and conceptual knowledge, the work on the **structure** of Common Metropolitan Vision focused on five areas:

- **state-of-the-art** overview of metropolitan dimension in public policies;
- **vision** for metropolitan areas;
- **relevance** of metropolitan dimension for objectives of public policies;
- **benefits/advantages** of metropolitan dimension for societal development;
- **needs of metropolitan areas** for cooperation and governance to deliver the benefits.

An **overview of existing policy documents** focused on metropolitan dimension was made. It used two perspectives. First, it **structured insights, statements and recommendations** from these documents according to the above presented five areas. Second, using **inductive analysis** it drew the most important highlights and lessons irrespective of their affiliation with this structure.

During a session at the Transnational Project Meeting in Warsaw, October 19-20, 2023, **the insights from Deliverable 1.1.1** “Identification of challenges specific for central European MAs” important for the formulation of the Deliverable 1.1.2 “Common Metropolitan Vision” (CMV) were presented, together with a **state-of-the-art** overview of metropolitan dimension in public policies. Furthermore, the **objectives, key concepts, and structure** of CMV were proposed to MECOG-CE project partners and discussed. It was decided that the Common Metropolitan Vision does not aim to argue for **any specificity of conditions in Central Europe**. It is aimed to address a wider audience. The key strength of Central European metropolitan areas (MAs) is a **diverse experience** with metropolitan governance, cooperation and planning. Intensive discussion of MECOG-CE partners focused on **initial inputs for the CMV through assembling ideas to formulate the vision, the benefits and the needs**.

Following the Transnational Project Meeting in Warsaw, an **online web interface with the survey of MECOG-CE partners' ideas, suggestions and formulations** for CMV (<https://sites.google.com/natur.cuni.cz/metropolitan-vision/>) was prepared. The page also included the **inputs from the Warsaw meeting** and the analysis of existing policy advocacy documents. In the weeks of October 2023, a survey of MECOG-CE partners' inputs to Common Metropolitan Vision was organised through the online questionnaire.

A first draft of the Common Metropolitan Vision was prepared by Charles University. Several variants were tested with adjustments of the character of the document and a way of text structure and argumentation. The **key imperative** was to have a concise policy advocacy document that can **represent all MECOG-CE partners, reach other European MAs, target primarily European but also national, regional and local audience, is not repetitive, presents positive picture of MAs and clearly states the commitment of MAs to metropolitan populations and beyond, to the society as a whole**. The narrative of the document purposefully used the flavour of “vision”. It was written as “if we already are in the desired metropolitan future”. The reason is that the **narrative can establish the discourse**. If accepted and disseminated, texts, words,



titles, concepts can have major **performativity impact**. They are becoming a part of reality with the power to change, to perform new realities. Therefore, the text of the narrative was constructed in a sense that we metropolitan areas have the resources, deal with obstacles, already have achievements, are recognized and are part of European and national policy making. The text also includes **argumentation about the needs of metropolitan areas**.

The first draft of the Common Metropolitan Vision was circulated at the beginning of January 2024 with reflections and suggestions on the first draft of CMV by MECOG-CE partners by the end of the month. **The second draft** of Common Metropolitan Vision was circulated on February 5th with reflections and suggestions on the second draft of CMV by MECOG-CE partners received before the Transnational Project Meeting in Stuttgart, February 22-23, 2024. As there was quite an extensive reflection of the second draft, the discussion of the document during the Project Meeting in Stuttgart focused on a large number of issues that required further amendments and work on **third version** to be circulated on March 8th for final readings and comments before the discussion and approval of the document at the MECOG-CE Steering Committee on March 19th, 2024.

3. Overview and analysis of policy documents

The first analysis structured the documents' content into five categories (state-of-the-art, vision, relevance, benefits/advantages, needs). It came to the following conclusions. **The state-of-the-art of metropolitan dimension (MD) is rarely articulated**. If yes, it is mentioned very briefly, not functioning as a core of the document's message. The documents **do not often paint a clear vision of the future of MAs**, rather it is somehow expressed in the sections dedicated to their relevance and needs. Nevertheless, the newest documents (Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships & Helsinki-Uusimaa Political Declaration) outline a vision which stresses the improvement of Europeans' lives. Within the articulation of the relevance of metropolitan dimension, there are frequent remarks concerning the **embeddedness of MD in current EU policies**, namely the New Leipzig Charter and Territorial Agenda 2030. On a similar note, the documents often emphasize the **relevance of MD for the accomplishment of EU objectives** - climate neutrality, Green Deal, EU Flagships, implementation of Recovery and Resistance Facility (RRF), Urban Agenda. As the **benefits** of metropolitan dimension for societal development, there are repeated mentions of **social justice**, e.g. just transition, "no one will be left behind", social dimension of transformation. Interestingly, this wasn't articulated as often by the project partners during the analysis of challenges and opportunities for Central European Metropolitan Areas (Deliverable D.1.1.1). Most of the documents **aim to address the European level**, which is reflected in the type of needs they voice. They **demand the metropolitan dimension to be made a stable part of the EU agenda, its policies, programs, and dialogues**. They ask for **acknowledgement** of such territorial level and its specifics as well as for the participation of this level on the formulation of the agenda itself. Furthermore, the documents call for the EU to mandate member states to **include metropolitan dimension in their planning and decision-making processes**.

The second **inductive analysis** drew the most important highlights and lessons irrespective of their affiliation with the pre-given structure as was applied in the former approach. It revealed that



the key feature of the policy advocacy documents is that they are **building the argument for metropolitan dimension gradually**, circulating around different themes, persuading readers step by step. Therefore, they **must be approached as a whole**, as being more than a sum of their parts - more than a sum of individual segments of content. The following general observations were made. Concrete **benefits** of metropolitan dimension are **mentioned when speaking about MD's relevance for the accomplishment of EU or national goals**. Rather than having a specific chapter, the **benefits are used as examples of relevance**. All the documents **connect the current and planned actions of metropolitan dimension to existing EU and national policies, institutions, and initiatives**, namely Green Deal, Urban Agenda, URBACT, RRF. All the documents **mention the already existing success of metropolitan dimension**, for instance regarding efficiency, administration, identification and tackling of challenges, or development of innovative solutions. The most persuasive documents first **express the readiness and willingness of metropolitan dimension to act even in imperfect conditions**, eventually only then call for something upon the EU/state.

Both analyses were concerned with the following documents:

EMA (European Metropolitan Authorities)

- Position paper on the role of metropolitan areas in planning and implementing the European Recovery and Resilience Facility (2020)
- Policy Brief - How to boost climate neutral metropolitan areas: Green, smart and resilient (2021)
- Porto Political Declaration (2021)
- Katowice-GZM Political Declaration (2022)
- Helsinki-Uusimaa Political Declaration (2023)

Eurocities

- Delivering EU's Rural Vision 2040 through urban-rural cooperation (2022)

METREX

- Metropolitan Vision 2050 (2023)
- Manifesto for Metropolitan Partnerships (2023)



4. Inputs to Common Metropolitan Vision from the discussion at the Warsaw international meeting

At the Warsaw transnational project meeting, MECOG-CE partners discussed the vision, benefits and needs for the enhancement of their metropolitan areas. Below are listed the suggestions by partners grouped together into thematic fields. These were provided as suggestions to be reflected, further developed and enriched in the online survey.

Vision

(1)

Balanced development;

Balanced spatial development;

Balanced (spatial) distribution of resources;

Access to resources, services, jobs;

Equal living conditions.

(2)

Metropolitan identity;

Place attachment;

Metropolitan citizen;

Everybody appreciates being part of Metro;

We are the metropolis.

(3)

Post-dichotomy thinking and acting;

Urban/rural is replaced/displaced by metropolitan;

Metropolitan/non-metropolitan is bridged by “post-metropolitan”;

Living MetroUnion;

One integrated territory.

(4)

Metro as globally proliferated centres of innovation, education, R&D enhancing European autonomy (independence);

Innovations: technological, social, organizational;

They are centres already now, new is visioning them as key global places;



Without us you EU and national governments will not made it (to stay as at the prime places in world economies and innovation).

(5)

Postmetropolitan vision?

Benefits/advantages

(1)

Hubs (centres) of economy;

Economy is not about places of production, finance, administration/office, services, also industries;

It is about labor force and its reproductions, people daily life, housing, services, education, entertainment, short term recreation;

The metro is the economic hub, not the central city.

(2)

Daily life ecosystem;

This is the right scale ecosystem to address complex issues of daily life of citizens;

Provision of services;

This plus 1 - relation to the EU goals / right level for implementation and also to mitigate the impacts of societal challenges, processes as well as policies.

(3)

Integrated approach to address the complexity / interwoven thematic areas in the metropolitan (territorial) socio/spatial formation;

Economies of scale and scope and delivery of services.

(4)

Handling diversity, inclusion, innovation - learning values and competences and forming European citizen;

Open, democratic, inclusive, tolerant, innovative, competitive, global, forward looking.

Needs

(1)

Recognition (regional institutionalization);

Bottom up, own work of metro areas.

(2)



Legal framework for effective (metropolitan) management (of the metropolitan ecosystem, metro economies).

(3)

Shift of responsibilities and competences towards metropolitan level (government);

Metro is better in what and why?

(4)

Funds;

Quantity;

Stability;

Flexibility.

(5)

Cooperation of municipalities;

Participation of/for citizens;

Municipalities represent citizens, elections.

(6)

Data availability and analyses for MAs;

Need for stability of MAs delimitation.

5. Survey for Common Metropolitan Vision

The objective of the web online survey was to gather suggestions by MECOG-CE partners for the formulation of Common Metropolitan Vision. It focused on the vision of future metropolitan areas, relevance and benefits/advantages of metropolitan dimension and needs of metropolitan areas. The open-ended format of the answers encouraged respondents to provide more in-depth thoughts, offering comprehensive insights, arguments, explanations, and interpretations.

All MECOG-CE partners and associated partners were requested to participate in the survey. The answers provided were visible on the survey webpage to all participants. This visibility was intended to encourage mutual contact and facilitate the exchange of views and positions between participants and thus foster collaboration and stimulate valuable discussions within the MECOG-CE network. This flexibility allowed for ongoing dialogue and ensured that viewpoints of participants could be shared and refined throughout the survey period.

The survey form was available at a webpage <https://sites.google.com/natur.cuni.cz/metropolitan-vision/>. It consisted of four key open questions that addressed vision, relevance, benefits and advantages, and needs and requirements.



Vision

A concise statement, an inspiring picture of future, desirable and realistic state of metropolitan development, governance, planning and cooperation and the role of metropolitan dimension in public policies; this long-term goal can also refer to key values and principles for metropolitan governance and cooperation.

Relevance

Arguments for the relevance and importance of metropolitan dimension for public policies (to achieve objectives of public policies) and formulated in European and national strategic documents (reflected in the objectives and implementation mechanisms of public policies).

Benefits and advantages

Articulations and examples of benefits and advantages of metropolitan dimension in public policies and metropolitan level governance for societal development in general and specifically with regard to the accomplishments of national and European policy objectives as well as local (municipal) and regional policy priorities.

Needs and requirements

Definition of the needs and requirements of metropolitan areas to enhance metropolitan governance and cooperation, so the delivery of expected outputs and services can be effective and efficient.

The following partners contributed to the survey:

- Brno Metropolitan Area,
- Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia,
- Joint Spatial Planning Department Berlin-Brandenburg,
- Metropolitan City of Turin,
- Ostrava Metropolitan Area,
- Stuttgart Region,
- Warsaw Metropolitan Area,
- METREX,
- Metropolitan Research Institute,
- Charles University, Prague,
- University of Silesia, Katowice.



The **analysis of the survey** answers from the partners used the procedure of the **CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis)**. First, information rich **segments of text** were selected from the survey answers within the question/answer categories, i.e. for vision, relevance, benefits and advantages, and needs and requirements. These segments were **clustered by themes and meanings** to receive **thematically consistent blocks**. During this step, the thematic clustering also reflected the respondent's position and approach towards metropolitan dimension and its articulation in metropolitan vision, placing the text segments in answers into the wider context of the responses from particular respondents, partners in MECOG-CE, and the knowledge of their position expressed during the meetings and other activities within the MECOG-CE project.

In this part of the analysis, it was evident, that answers and responses from one respondent were often **repetitive** as they **did not clearly differentiate between vision, relevance, benefits and needs** (despite they were explained in the survey as well as discussed during the Transnational Meeting in Warsaw). Several **iterations of simplifying and generalising of thematic blocks** of responses into **singularised statements** followed. This work on the analysis of the partners' answers in the survey prepared the **background text for drafting the Common Metropolitan Vision**.

Because the thematic blocks were **significantly repetitive** for the four categories vision, relevance, benefits and needs, it called for a **change in the strategy** of the use of survey answers and partner contributions for the structure of the Common Metropolitan Vision (CMV). Specifically, the issue of metropolitan dimension relevance in urban and regional development as well as in public policies was reflected across answers and contributions to all questions concerned with vision, relevance, benefits and needs. Consequently, **the relevance has not been kept as separate category** of the analysis that will inform the CMV vision. The arguments for the relevance were used to **penetrate all three parts** important for drafting the CMV vision, i.e. vision, benefits and needs. Consequently, the whole **text of CMV**, informed by the analysis of the survey, was constructed more like a vision divided into three parts that accentuated long term vision of key aspects of metropolitan areas, benefits provided by metropolitan cooperation and needs to effectively achieve these benefits with a call for more proactive public policies in favour of metropolitan dimension.

Within the survey among partners, some of the repeatedly mentioned suggestions were: the **importance of metropolitan areas** for achieving various public policy objectives at European and national levels. Related to that were responses **bringing awareness to the existing initiatives** such as the European Green Deal or New European Bauhaus, whose goals MAs can help fulfil. Another frequent topic was **sustainable development** and the importance of **climate change adaptation**, both as a needed trajectory and an opportunity for MAs to contribute to general societal efforts. Finally, the respondents often mentioned the **benefits of integrated provision of public services** such as public transportation, mobility, or housing. Along with that comes the expressed **need for integrated solutions** of issues MAs face in various fields.



6. Character and structure of Common Metropolitan Vision

The key **imperative** for drafting the Common Metropolitan Vision (CMV) was to have a **concise** policy advocacy document. It was decided that the CMV will not aim to argue for any specificity of conditions and achievements in Central Europe. The key strength of Central European MAs was seen in a **diverse experience** with metropolitan governance, cooperation and planning that can reach the interests of other European MAs. Therefore, the CMV was intended to be general to represent all MECOG-CE partners and address issues expected to be shared more generally between MAs in the EU member states. CMV was intended to target primarily European, and also national, regional and local audience.

As the suggestions of partners' contribution in the survey under the themes of vision, relevance, benefits and advantages, and needs and requirements were often repetitive, and the initial text that attempted to reflect and include partners' suggestions was too long, it was decided to **simplify the structure and focus on vision, benefits and needs**. The narrative of the document was purposefully drafted using **positive language** with the **flavour of "vision"**, i.e. as "if we already are in the desired metropolitan future". The purpose is to use the CMV to **establish a narrative and influence discourse on the important role of the metropolitan dimension**. The text can then have the power to change and form new realities. Therefore, the text of the narrative was constructed in a sense that we metropolitan areas have the resources, deal with obstacles, already have achievements, are recognized and are part of European and national policy making. The text also includes arguments about the needs of metropolitan areas, fulfilment of which can help to achieve the benefits.

7. Preamble of Common Metropolitan Vision

The document "We are the Metropolitan Areas - Our Common Metropolitan Vision" outlines a framework for a long-term, shared, and enduring commitment of undersigned metropolitan leaders, stakeholders, and actors to:

- advance the development of metropolitan societies and their areas;
- maximize the positive impacts that metropolitan areas currently have and can potentially contribute to the overall prosperity and quality of life in Europe, its member states, and regions;
- continuously strengthen and develop the institutionalization of metropolitan governance, emphasizing the pivotal role of the metropolitan dimension in European and national policies.

The narrative in the document is purposefully flavored with a vision. It envisions an ideal situation that has not yet been fully developed and achieved in our cities and regions. We, the representatives of metropolitan areas and regions, are committed to further enhancing



metropolitan societies, given that they possess the best preconditions, capabilities, and skills to address major societal challenges. Metropolitan areas can substantially contribute to achieving a high quality of life and resilient, sustainable, and inclusive development on European, national, and regional levels. In this endeavor, we are encouraged by the growing recognition of the role of metropolitan areas and urban regions in European and national strategies and policies. However, we emphasize that we cannot fully and effectively pursue policy objectives and address societal challenges without adequate competences and resources. Our effort aligns with a wide array of initiatives and declarations calling for a more active role of local governments in the dialogue about systematic and comprehensive European and national urban policies.

The Common Metropolitan Vision recognizes metropolitan areas as:

- functional urban regions comprising agglomerations of densely populated urban cores and their surrounding territories, fostering integrated labor and housing markets, and interconnected through commuting and mobility;
- urbanized spaces encompassing large cities with pivotal roles in international and national development, alongside towns serving as local and regional centers;
- surrounding territories of suburban and rural settlements, areas designated for agriculture and forestry, nature protection zones, and spaces dedicated to recreation;
- being shaped by governance mechanisms that facilitate metropolitan cooperation among diverse stakeholders from public, private, and citizen sectors.

The articulation of the Common Metropolitan Vision is motivated by:

- the increasing importance and relevance of the metropolitan dimension in national and European development and policy-making;
- acknowledgment of potentials and opportunities in realizing the benefits and advantages arising from metropolitan cooperation, planning, and governance;
- needs of metropolitan areas to enhance their institutional capabilities, enabling effective cooperation and governance for the timely and efficient delivery of public services.

The Common Metropolitan Vision comprises three integral components:

- **Vision for Metropolitan Areas:** Paints a comprehensive picture of a future state for metropolitan areas, societies, and governance that is both aspirational and attainable.
- **Metropolitan Strengths and Commitments:** Spotlights the current and potential resources, capabilities, knowledge, and skills inherent in metropolitan societies, stakeholders, and leadership. These are harnessed to address major societal challenges, implement policy priorities, and achieve declared goals.
- **Metropolitan Empowerment:** Tackles organizational and procedural challenges, proposing viable solutions to overcome existing limitations in metropolitan cooperation and governance. The aim is to fortify the capacity, effectiveness, and efficiency of metropolitan policy-making.



8. Text of Common Metropolitan Vision

We are the Metropolitan Areas - Our Common Metropolitan Vision

Vision for Metropolitan Areas

Metropolitan agendas, initiatives, long-term policies, and everyday practices are carefully crafted, driven by a common vision of a future state that is both desirable and realistic. This vision encompasses the holistic development, governance, planning, and cooperation within metropolitan areas, all framed by the key values of democracy, participation, and equality. The overarching goal of these efforts is to establish sustainable and resilient metropolitan areas (MAs) committed to societal leadership and social responsibilities.

Centers of Everyday Life and Creativity

Metropolitan Areas are esteemed by citizens, businesses, organizations, and governments across regions, countries, and the European Union. They stand out as globally renowned centers of Research and Development (R&D) and innovation in technological, social, and organizational realms. Additionally, MAs are recognized as educational hubs, providing learning opportunities at all levels, including lifelong learning. Their vibrant cultural scene and advanced production capabilities contribute to creating a dynamic metropolitan environment. MAs are particularly prized for fostering a high quality of life, entrepreneurship, and creativity, making them magnets for talent and investment. These areas offer a diverse range of jobs, housing, and services, facilitating a seamless integration of living, studying, working, and leisure activities. This comprehensive approach enhances not only regional and national competitiveness but also reinforces European resilience and independence within the globalized economy.

Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable

Balanced and inclusive development strives for equitable living conditions, ensuring universal access to jobs, services, cultural, and environmental amenities for all social and demographic groups. This commitment extends to socially and spatially just, efficient, and sustainable distribution of resources. Environmentally friendly solutions and policies are applied in MAs and effectively contribute to improving the environment. Transportation, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and other systems use smart technologies that enhance accessibility and connectivity and play a vital role in enabling efficient and sustainable mobility and communication within the metropolitan living space. Importantly, all local governments, citizens, and stakeholders from organizations and firms actively participate in democratic and collaborative planning, governance, and management across the metropolitan area in pursuing metropolitan interests.



Diverse and Complex Community

The strength and advantage of a metropolitan area lie in its social, cultural, economic, and organizational complexity – a synergy of metro diversities. Metropolitan areas harness this diversity by fostering specialized businesses engaged in an advanced and mutually supportive division of labor. They thrive on the cohabitation of diverse social groups, each contributing differentiated knowledge, skills, and competences while attending to their unique priorities and needs. The unity of local governments, marked by varied population composition, diverse economies, cultural amenities, natural resources, and geographic positions, is anchored and guided by effective cooperation and community attachment. This ensures the harmonious coexistence and integration of these diverse elements, thereby maintaining metropolitan integrity.

Metropolitan Partnership and Identity

Inhabitants, businesses, and local governments deeply value their roles within the functionally integrated, socially inclusive, and spatially collaborative metropolitan area. They actively contribute to and appreciate the dynamics of the metropolitan union, collectively working towards the realization of the metropolitan cooperation. Governments engage in cooperative efforts, while citizens and businesses actively participate in metropolitan policies centered around shared and intersecting common interest goals. The cultivation of a widely shared metropolitan identity serves to overshadow urban-rural dichotomies, fostering a sense of unity between local communities. Additionally, the pursuit of integrated territorial development serves as a crucial bridge, connecting and harmonizing both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. This collaborative approach ensures the cohesive growth and prosperity of the entire regions in national and European territories.

Recognition and Appreciation

The metropolitan dimension is unequivocally recognized as an essential foundation for mutual cooperation, vital in addressing major challenges and achieving shared goals more effectively. Specific instances, such as collaborative initiatives or joint efforts, exemplify the practical importance of the metropolitan dimension. Metropolitan areas are esteemed as natural spaces where citizens' lives unfold, fostering daily interactions that contribute to the vibrancy and dynamism of the region. The resounding voice and substantial contribution of metropolitan areas are highly valued, not only by local residents but also by partners in neighboring non-metropolitan regions and at the national and European levels. This recognition underscores the pivotal role of metropolitan areas in shaping regional, national, and European dynamics.

Metropolitan Strengths and Commitments

Metropolitan areas and societies possess vital resources, capabilities, knowledge, and skills crucial for building a common future. The commitment of metropolitan leadership extends to addressing



major societal challenges, defining and accomplishing local and metropolitan priorities, and actively contributing to fulfilling national and European policy objectives. The metropolitan dimension, encompassing organization, development, planning, and governance, offers benefits for all, from local communities to the planetary environment. Metropolitan areas are key players on the global stage, contributing significantly to international performance and competitiveness, thereby shaping the process of European integration.

Metropolitan Hubs

Metropolitan areas are home to a significant portion of a region or country's population, serving as engines of development for the entire economic system. The large number and qualitative diversity of jobs and services, coupled with the resources generated by metropolitan economies and cultures, are the most valuable asset and have far-reaching effects beyond metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas, encompassing not only places of production and services but also daily life, education, and recreation, fully leverage the potential of agglomeration advantages.

Metropolitan Ecosystems

Metropolitan areas function as daily socio-spatial ecosystems, where most social interactions and connections take place. The intricate web of these interactions fosters the advanced division of labor, crucial for economic performance and the well-being of the population. The size and density of metropolitan settlements, coupled with the heterogeneity of human activities, are vital for generating benefits from agglomeration mechanisms. However, strategic, integrated, and effective public policies become imperative to address potentials and opportunities as well as inefficiencies and obstacles. Metropolitan actors and instruments play a pivotal role in developing and coordinating the innovation ecosystem. They establish spaces and institutions that foster creativity and innovation while also identifying and supporting emerging grassroots innovative places where residents devise alternative solutions and contribute to urban commons. These policies are instrumental in realizing the full potential of metropolitan contributions to societal development, facilitating sustainable development and resilience to both long-term risks and sudden threats. As complex and advanced ecosystems, metropolitan societies and territories initiate new developmental paths, address pivotal societal challenges, learn from successes and failures, and present innovative solutions. Metropolises stand at the forefront of shaping alternative urban models for the future.

Metropolitan Societies

The cosmopolitan culture of metropolitan societies emerges from values of openness, inclusion, and tolerance - essential markers of democracy, convivial interaction, and social cohesion. This culture empowers metropolitan areas to handle diversity, embrace inclusion, and prevent xenophobia, conflicts, and segregation. It strengthens population mental and physical health, stimulates reproductive behavior and cares for everyday life needs of productive age population, adolescents, elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable. The strength of metropolises generates



benefits for all, fostering solidarity with disadvantaged regions or places affected by hazards, threats, and disasters, both within our countries, the European Union, and on a planetary scale. Open and pluralistic metropolitan societies, along with inclusive public spaces, stimulate mutual learning essential for developing competencies in creativity, innovation, and competitiveness. Communities with robust social and human capital encourage the exchange of ideas and collaboration, making them more resilient, adaptable, and capable of collectively addressing challenges. Rooted in the local neighborhoods, metropolitan leaders, citizens, firms and organizations envision a global, forward-looking view of prosperity, sustainability and resilience.

Metropolitan Co-operations

Metropolitan projects, initiatives, and solutions often stem from mutual learning and multidimensional co-operations embedded within and spanning outside the metro-area. Multilevel cooperation in governance and planning involves different actors committed to achieving shared goals. Examples of policy agendas, developed tools, and good practices spread towards other regions. Benefits achieved through cooperation ensure the enabling metropolitan environment to advance economies, services and quality of life pushing the frontiers of dealing with major societal challenges. Metropolitan acting and planning enhance urban-region functional interdependencies. Metropolitan traffic management and mass transportation systems, designed to meet the daily needs of increasing numbers of commuters, are compelling examples of complex metropolitan co-operations. The metropolitan level of planning and governance can fully address complex issues such as suburbanization and urban sprawl, sustainable mobility, and accessible public services, which require cooperation between stakeholders. The strategic and integrated planning of metropolitan areas identifies development potentials, addresses shortcomings, obstacles, and risk trends, requiring coordination and cooperation with agencies and governments at regional, country, and European scales.

Metropolitan Solutions

Metropolitan areas concentrate major societal challenges and their impacts on societal development. Metropolitan solutions, anchored in the priorities of national governments and the European Union, play a pivotal role in significantly reducing risks and threats. Metropolitan actors take on the responsibility of ensuring the security of the metropolis and fostering an appropriate level of self-sufficiency, with a focus on the benefits of a circular economy within the interconnected metropolitan area. The populations within these areas actively adapt their activities to withstand and positively utilize the complexities posed by environmental, social, demographic, cultural, health, security, and technological challenges. For instance, large metropolitan cities and their regions often stand as key contributors to emissions. Simultaneously, they experience the consequences of climate change. Research and development initiatives within these metropolitan areas not only help to mitigate the impacts of climate change but also position them as proactive agents in this global challenge. Functional metropolitan cooperation, strategic planning, and an integrated approach are essential components that effectively address these complex societal challenges across a variety of thematic areas. The application of this integrated



approach at the metropolitan scale yields better results with fewer resources. Metropolitan solutions, therefore, serve as the flagship at the forefront of societal advancements.

Metropolitan Empowerment

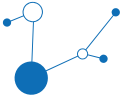
While metropolitan areas are committed and resourceful, their full potential is not always recognized and utilized. Metropolitan strategies, policies and instruments play a crucial role in identifying, evaluating, and addressing key challenges and thematic development priorities. They are dedicated to building green, inclusive, and productive metropolitan communities. However, organizational and procedural arrangements currently hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of their fulfillment. Frictions and path dependencies sometimes limit cooperative efforts between multiple partners in private business, NGOs, citizen groups, governments, and public organizations within metropolitan areas, as well as with neighbors and partners at national and EU levels.

Emancipation and Recognition

Forward-looking organizational agendas of metropolitan areas, societies, and governments focus on internal, emancipatory, bottom-up activities, synergies, and co-ordination. These agendas prioritize the establishment of a solid institutional framework, ensuring the firm integration of the metropolitan dimension in external, top-down national and European policies, planning, and governance. The key entry point is the promotion of inclusive, equal, balanced, and respectful cooperation among all local governments, actively involving citizens and businesses in the design and implementation of shared goals anchored in metropolitan strategies and policies. Despite the presence of fragmented local government jurisdictions, the co-operative governance builds mutual trust and synergies. In this context, the European Union and national governments increasingly recognize metropolitan areas as essential partners in strategic policy dialogues and embed them in policies and legal documents. The metropolitan vocabulary gains prominence in media and public discourse, thereby reinforcing metropolitan identity and recognition.

Metropolitan Institutionalization

While metropolitan governance holds the potential to effectively address regional and global societal challenges, the insufficient, weak, or missing competences of metropolitan agencies limit their effectiveness. An essential precondition for realizing the full benefits of metropolitan governance is the establishment of a legal framework that facilitates effective metropolitan co-operation, planning, and management. This includes a strategic shift of responsibilities and competences towards the metropolitan level of governance. The support of soft forms of governance, such as collaborative networks, joint initiatives, and informal partnerships, alongside formal structures, raises awareness of metropolitan issues and paves the path towards metropolitan institutionalization. To effectively empower metropolitan development, concerted efforts are needed at all levels of government, including the EU, with dedicated attention to securing metropolitan funds, ensuring sufficient budget allocation, maintaining stability of resources, and allowing flexibility in their disposition. These measures are crucial for providing



the necessary power to steer metropolitan development in a manner that aligns with overarching goals and societal needs.

Metropolitan Expertise and Capacity

Clever and smart metropolitan agendas, policies, and practices strike a balance between applying universal principles and recognizing the diverse challenges presented by global and specific place-related metropolitan contexts. The drivers, potentials, limitations, and risks vary significantly based on local, regional, national, legal, political, organizational, economic, social, cultural, and environmental contexts. Realistic evaluations of potential paths and roadmaps to strengthen cooperation and build metropolitan institutions are essential. Metropolitan expertise, guided by thorough analysis, data-driven policies, and evaluation, supports the timely, flexible, and effective advancement of the metropolitan dimension. Tailored data provision for metropolitan areas streamlines the formulation and implementation of evidence-based policies. Moreover, metropolitan intelligence thrives on a dynamic interplay of innovation, creativity, and diverse human capital, enhancing the empowerment of citizens, technological advancements, and multilateral cooperation. Deep and cooperative knowledge sharing and exchange contribute significantly to spreading the benefits derived from the diverse experiences, pushing the frontiers of metropolitan cooperation.



Conclusions: further steps and the envisaged role of the Common Metropolitan Vision

In the forthcoming months of 2024, the Common Metropolitan Vision will be **formally approved in the bodies of MECOG-CE partners**. This way, it will be **adopted as an important policy advocacy document**. The MECOG-CE and individual partners will **disseminate the document towards EU and national level government bodies and other stakeholders**. It will serve MECOG-CE partners to promote metropolitan dimension in the EU and national policies and initiatives.

The document "We are the Metropolitan Areas - Our Common Metropolitan Vision" is **opened for being joined and used** for the promotion of metropolitan dimension by other partners from metropolitan areas and wider community of stakeholders involved in metropolitan development, governance, planning and cooperation.

9. Literature and resources

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