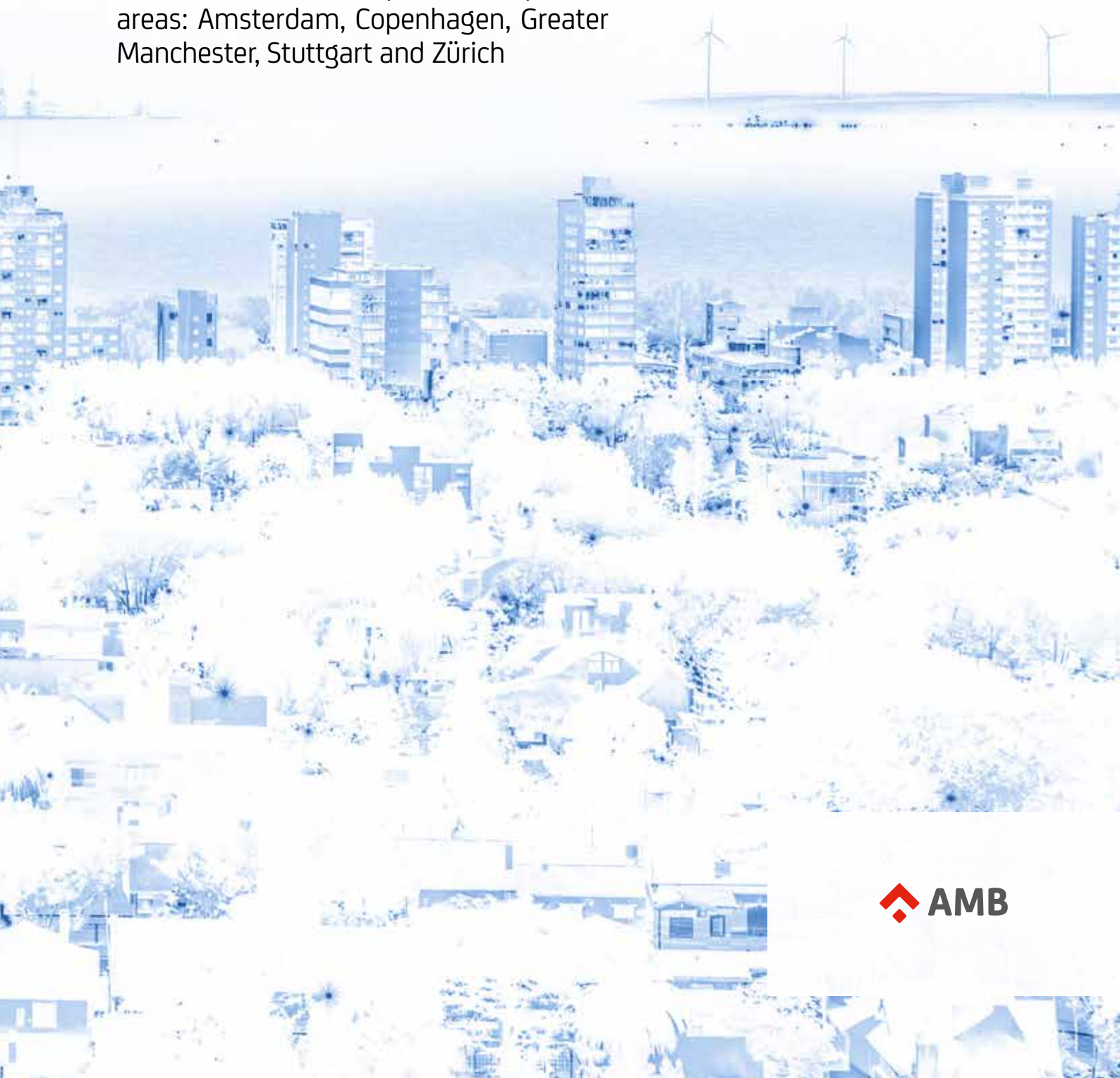


ADDRESSING THE METROPOLITAN CHALLENGE IN BARCELONA METROPOLITAN AREA

Lessons from five European metropolitan areas: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Greater Manchester, Stuttgart and Zürich



Addressing Metropolitan Challenges for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area was drafted by the Metropolitan Research Institute of Budapest for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB). The views expressed herein are those of the authors alone, and the AMB cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained in this document.

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DL: B 16220-2018

All photographs have been given up by the institutions of the cities involved in the study.

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www.amb.cat

Barcelona, June 2018

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1. Introduction

At the request of Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), the Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI) of Budapest has conducted a study of the operations of several European metropolitan areas in order to derive ideas and lessons that can be applied to the case of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.

The metropolitan areas of the following cities have been selected for the study because of their relevance to the growing and economically strong Barcelona urban area: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Greater Manchester, Stuttgart, and Zürich. These metropolitan areas were chosen to represent a wide range of types of metropolitan cooperation and organisation, ranging from metropolitan areas that are linked only via a spatial plan (Copenhagen), to those that are only now about to create the institutional framework for cooperation (Amsterdam and Zürich), to other metropolitan areas with a combined authority for coordinated service provision and strategic planning (Greater Manchester), and finally to one with a directly elected metropolitan parliament (Stuttgart).

The metropolitan area of Barcelona has advanced further in the complexity of its metropolitan governance than most of these other metropolitan areas. However, there are critical issues (identity, legitimacy, devolved competencies, cooperation with stakeholders, efficiency of the spatial plan, cooperation on a larger territorial scale, etc.) that are handled differently, and sometimes more efficiently, in some of the five case study areas than they are in the AMB – hence they provide good sources of transferable lessons.

Within the limited scope of the contract, in 2017 MRI conducted a critical literature review (examining not only the conditions of the urban areas but also the national frameworks in which they operate). This was followed by telephone interviews with relevant experts or civil servants from these metropolitan areas. It has to be noted that in the report the descriptions of the five case studies naturally differ in the depth of their content, due to the differences in metropolitan competencies and to the complex historical evolution of metropolitan development processes. In many regards Greater

Manchester and the Metropolitan Region of Stuttgart are ahead of the other metropolitan areas examined, both in terms of organisational forms and competencies gained.

Following a short Executive Summary (Chapter 2) the study begins by summarising the main aspects of the operation of the five metropolitan areas (Chapter 3). This is followed by recommendations regarding transferability of these lessons to the metropolitan area of Barcelona (Chapter 4). The last part of the study is an appendix¹ that includes detailed case study descriptions and analyses on each of the five metropolitan areas.

The views and recommendations for the AMB expressed in the study are those of the authors of the Metropolitan Research Institute alone, and do not in any case represent the institutional positions of the AMB.

¹ The appendix with the five case studies can be downloaded from www.amb.cat/en/web/amb/area-internacional/ema

2. Executive Summary

A comparative analysis of the successful models found across Europe indicates that two viable approaches seem to exist to the handling of metropolitan challenges: institutional, i.e. the creation of a metropolitan organisation on a fixed territorial basis with sufficiently large range of competences, and procedural, i.e. striving for mechanisms and rules which allow for coordinated activities on a sufficiently large metropolitan territory, not necessarily in fixed territorial constellations.

Among the five metropolitan areas discussed in this study, representatives of both approaches can be found:

- Institutional: Stuttgart, Greater Manchester (AMB belongs to this category too)
- Procedural: Zürich, Copenhagen, Amsterdam

Some of the cases have long histories and boast extensive experience (especially Stuttgart and Greater Manchester), while like Amsterdam and Copenhagen have recently undertaken restructuring in a departure from longstanding policies; finally, there are areas in an early phase of development, like Zürich.

The metropolitan area of Barcelona has a rather advanced institutional approach, with AMB representing a relatively strong metropolitan organisation. A comparative analysis of the five other cities might help Barcelona to meet the following two strands of challenges, which we found to be seminal: the institutional challenge posed by the limitations on AMB's competences; and the territorial challenge that lies in the reality that AMB's territory does not cover the full functional urban area of Barcelona.

The results of our study indicate that these two main sets of problems might require a combination of different approaches and the application of different tools (see Chapter 4 summarising the recommendations).

Regarding the institutional challenge, the case study analysis highlights the following recommendations as to how AMB could be strengthened:

- Adopt direct election of the president of the metropolitan area (like in Greater Manchester) and, in the long run, direct election of metropolitan council members (like in Stuttgart).
- Promote a metropolitan identity: based on some historic elements of cooperation, further develop this identity through consistent and long-lasting efforts based on a stable metropolitan governance structure and the creation of new symbols e.g. through the direct election of the president.
- Take on more devolved functions from higher administrative tiers (e.g. in coordinating medium-level education services, health services, or some of social services).
- Strengthen economic development cooperation with the private sector through boards, panels and committees of the authority in broad-based partnership with the private stakeholders of the metropolitan area, while developing specific tools (strategies, funds, networking, database development, guidance) to deal with economic actors.
- Develop strategic thinking capacity on the metropolitan level with the tasks of vision building, communication, and partnership building towards the larger area.
- Improve spatial planning to strike the right balance between growth and values to be preserved, for example, by promoting densification around the highly accessible sub-centres of the metropolitan area, precisely defining the preconditions for growth, setting aside future development areas for different purposes.
- Develop stronger financial tools and methods (e.g. policy-oriented funds) to achieve metropolitan priorities, based on increased own tax income, more devolved sources from upper level of administration.

Regarding the territorial challenge, further institution building with an expansion to a larger fixed area might prove quite difficult, because it would require a modification of AMB Law 31/2010. Other options

might involve seeking cooperation with the surrounding area through collaboration and planning agreements and advocating for improvements in the national and regional framework (e.g., indirect planning power at the metropolitan level or a strategic planning system) that would make room for the territorial bodies of larger metropolitan areas to more effectively cooperate.

Finally, the study shows the need for a metropolitan dimension in EU policies, and in particular Cohesion Policy. In this respect, the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) platform –where AMB plays a key role– could become a relevant tool for advocacy.



Amsterdam

3. Main findings: summary of the case studies

3.1. The metropolitan challenge

European urban areas are suffering from a substantial territorial mismatch, as the administrative borders of cities are often obsolete; morphological urban areas (MUA) and functional urban areas (FUA) are much larger than the territory of jurisdiction of elected local governments (Tosics, 2011).

The economic implications of this metropolitan mismatch mean that it requires urgent attention, as the problem of administrative borders is especially vexing for large and growing urban areas, where many problems are best faced on the level of the larger urban area. Territorial coordination across a metropolitan area should serve not only to prevent externalities with restrictive planning tools but also to spur integrated development in a coherent manner.

The metropolitan challenge can be understood as the need for coordination mechanisms in the flexible action spaces of the metropolitan areas, which, in a territorial sense, lie between the fixed administrative government layers. The metropolitan challenge can be as follows (based on Claude Jacquier’s scheme):

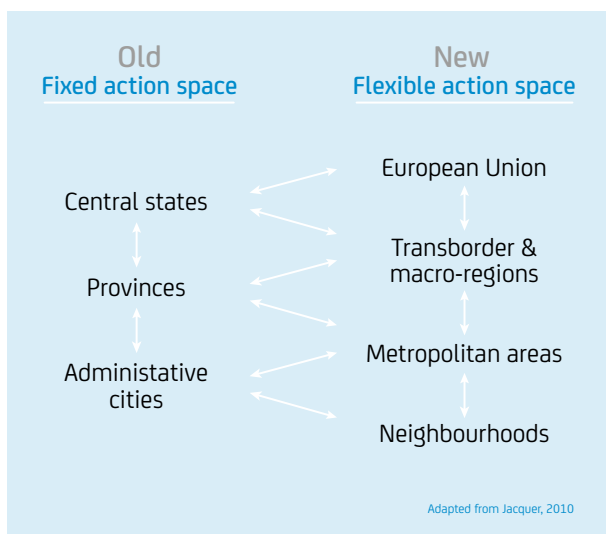


Figure 1: Relationship between government structures and real action spaces.

In this study we discuss ways of efficiently addressing the metropolitan mismatch to achieve coordinated development, while also avoiding the negative spill-overs to the greatest possible extent.

European experiences show that there are basically two viable approaches to meeting the metropolitan challenge. The institutional approach aims for the creation of a metropolitan organisation (either a new government level or a strong institutional setting) on a fixed territorial basis with a sufficiently large range of competences (but not as a new general administrative/government level, as this is unfeasible in almost all EU member states). The procedural approach attempts to forge mechanisms and rules which allow for coordinated activities within a sufficiently large metropolitan territory (although not necessarily in fixed territorial constellations).

These two approaches are very different but not mutually exclusive; elements of the other appear in each approach. For example, the key element of the procedural approach is strategic and spatial planning, and this is also an important aspect of the institutional approach. Conversely, while the existence of a strong institutional structure on the metropolitan level is specific to the institutional approach, the functional approach also strives for the creation of some forms of institutions, albeit in a much more flexible way.

Although the metropolitan challenge is well known in all European countries, in most cases the present political climate (the indebtedness of the public sector and the rise of other political challenges, such as the far right in many of the countries) does not lend itself to institutional solutions, i.e. the creation of large-scale metropolitan governments or strong institutions. Such tendencies can only be observed in Italy and to some extent in France and England. There are a few other countries (Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic) where the EU Cohesion Policy tools are being used to strengthen the metropolitan level of government – most often via the Integrated Territorial

Table 1. Recent national efforts towards metropolitan development in selected countries.

Country	Initiative	Top-down (TD) or Bottom-up (BU)	Gate-keeper level
France	Municipal associations: series of laws since 1999 Regional reform (2015); open question of the future of <i>départements</i>	TD – BU TD	(Regions)
Italy	Metropolitan cities initiative: 1990, 2000, 2012, 2014; focus on the future of provinces	TD	Regions
Germany	Metropolitan regions initiative: starting from the late 1990s	BU	Länder
Poland	Regional reform in 1990s. Metropolisation of regional seats since 2007, using EU funding (ITI)	TD – BU	Regions
Romania	Municipal associations since 2004, Growth Poles to allocate EU resources since 2007	TD	-

Investment (ITI) tool, which allows countries to define a functional urban area as the recipient of integrated urban development funding (Article 7 of ERDF)². In many member states, the metropolitan challenge is approached from a procedural perspective, through planning and communication policies.

Table 1 illustrates some recent efforts made at the national level to establish forms of metropolitan cooperation around large cities in the given countries. The aim of the present study is to go beyond this to explore lessons from innovative metropolitan areas around Europe where the metropolitan challenge is being addressed through a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts.

After consultations with the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), five metropolitan areas were selected for this study. In all of them, the population and economy are growing. Thus, the metropolitan challenge is substantial and is high on the political agendas of all of the cities. Even so, the selected five metropolitan areas vary greatly in their history, their specificities and the political conditions they face, both within the metropolitan areas themselves and on the national level. The kinds of approaches taken in the most recent efforts at metropolitan development can roughly be categorised as follows:

- Institutional (based on already existing metropolitan-level institutions and looking for ways to make them more efficient): Stuttgart, Greater Manchester, Barcelona Metropolitan Area
- Procedural (in the absence of metropolitan-level institutions, looking for procedures to strengthen metropolitan cooperation): Zürich, Copenhagen, Amsterdam.

2. For more about the history of the ITI tool and its application in Poland, please see Tosics, 2016.

Some of the cases have a long history histories boast extensive experience (especially Stuttgart and Greater Manchester), while others like Amsterdam and Copenhagen have recently undertaken restructuring in a departure from longstanding policies; finally, there are areas in an early phase of development, like Zürich. These five cases are analysed here in order to help Barcelona answer some of the challenges it faces in its own metropolitan development. In the case of Barcelona, a new metropolitan law was passed in 2010, giving rise to a new situation, as along with new opportunities for the development of this highly dynamic metropolitan area. Even so, it cannot be said that the metropolitan challenge has been solved: the debates continue as to the best ways to improve the functioning of the metropolitan area, both by enhancing the functional strengths of the present metropolitan governance structure and eventually by expanding the territory of metropolitan collaboration.

3.2. Metropolitan areas: state of the art

The current study aims to explore and systematically analyse ideas and practices which are applied in five metropolitan areas of Europe and highlight the lessons that are the most relevant for Barcelona.

The spatial focus of analysis was the metropolitan area as defined by the local actors. This scale is closest to the functional urban area (FUA) level defined by the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) -the functional urban area defined by the OECD seems to be smaller than the self-defined metropolitan areas in these five cases. In addition, attention was paid to areas of metropolitan cooperation that may have been a FUA

at one point in time, but by now the metropolitan scale has enlarged (e.g., Amsterdam and Copenhagen). Finally, cooperative practices beyond the functional urban area were also examined.

The information gathered came from desk research and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The following table summarizes the most important sources of information and data about the selected cities and metropolitan areas, along with data about the case of Barcelona (for the purposes of comparison). More details for the selected metropolis can be found in the respective case-studies.



Table 2. Comparative assessment of 6 metropolitan areas.

	Amsterdam	Copenhagen	Greater Manchester
Scale of the Functional Urban area according to OECD and ESPON estimates (Number of inhabitants)	2,452,659 (OECD 2014) 2,497,000 (ESPON 2006)	1,876,691 (OECD 2014) 1,881,000 (ESPON 2006)	1,935,559 (OECD 2014) 2,556,000 (ESPON 2006)
The metropolitan scale according to the self-definition of the metropolitan actors (the existing constellation regarding the number of inhabitants and municipalities)	2.388 million inhabitants, 33 municipalities (2015)	2 million inhabitants, 34 municipalities. Copenhagen Metropolitan Area (planning area) is one third of the national population.	2.7 million inhabitants (2011), 10 boroughs
The type of metropolitan organisation which is closest to the FUA	Common bureau (from 2017)	No organisation	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Legal foundations of the metropolitan organisation	Voluntary cooperation, a covenant is signed	No organisation	Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009) provided the opportunity; but the 10 boroughs created their own constitution
Type of representation on the metropolitan level	Informal, no defined representation	No organisation	Councillors of the 10 boroughs are the council members + directly elected mayor
Functions exercised on the metropolitan level	Forum for bi-, multi-lateral negotiations	Strong spatial plan (Finger Plan) elaborated on national level	Public transportation and highways, spatial planning, economic development, police, waste management, health care coordination, funds in social and housing topics
Scale of the budget on metropolitan level (annual)	No budget	No budget	Approx. 340 million EUR with direct competencies, about 2,2 billion EUR with all common services (in addition controls different funds and national sources) (2016)
Source of income on metropolitan level	No budget	No budget	Devolved funds, EU funds, tender funds, levy on council tax, mayor's own tax levying competence
Strengths of metropolitan cooperation	Historically strong culture of cooperation	Spatial plan is a strong tool to shape the area in a coordinated way	Historically strong metropolitan identity, joint political will of the 10 municipalities to work together. Increasing number of devolved competencies from national level.
Weaknesses of metropolitan cooperation	Partners cooperate only on win-win projects	Partners cooperate only on win-win projects	Challenge to create the 'spatial framework' – metropolitan spatial plan - which needs unanimous approval
Future aspirations regarding metropolitan cooperation	To elaborate metropolitan level spatial plan, to implement the "action plans" for the area. To sign city deals (devolution contracts) with the central state	To modify the spatial plan to provide more opportunities to rural settlements and make it more flexible	To finalise the spatial framework plan To involve more services (or coordination of more services) under metropolitan umbrella
Existing cooperation practices below/above the FUA level	Below: Transport Region of Amsterdam , 1.35 million inhabitants, 15 municipalities. Organises integrated transportation system. (Between 2006-2015 this level had extensive functions as City-region of Amsterdam .)	Below: Capital Region of Denmark (responsible mainly for hospital service): 1.7 million inhabitants, 29 municipalities, direct elections. Between 2000 and 2007 spatial scope was expanded to Greater Copenhagen Region with extensive competencies.	Above: Occasional cooperation with neighbouring metropolises and cities (e.g. in economic and transportation issues)

Stuttgart	Zürich	Barcelona
1,965,942 (OECD 2014) 2,665,000 (ESPON 2006)	1,246,968 (OECD 2014) 1,615,000 (ESPON 2006)	3,846,697 (OECD 2014) 4,251,000 (ESPON 2006)
2.7 million inhabitants, 179 municipalities Region Stuttgart covers 25.7% of the population of Baden-Württemberg.	1.94 million inhabitants (2006), 238 municipalities, one fifth of the national population	A) First Zone with Barcelona (AMB) 3.2 million inhabitants, 36 municipalities B) Second Zone with Barcelona: 4.8 million inhabitants, 164 municipalities
Region Stuttgart	Zürich Metropolitan Area Association (currently about 110 municipalities are members).	Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona for Barcelona and the First Zone
Act on the Establishment of the Verband Region Stuttgart on 7 February 1994 (by the Land Baden-Württemberg)	Voluntary cooperation	Law 31/2010, of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (by the region of Catalonia)
Directly elected members of the Assembly (election based on party lists)	Each municipality + 8 cantons are represented at the Metropolitan Conference. Metropolitan Council (executive): the eight cantons are represented by 1-1 member; the municipalities select eight additional representatives.	Metropolitan Council with 90 members (36 mayors + 54 councillors). The 36 municipalities are represented proportionally to their demographic weight and according to the political representation in the municipal elections. In addition to the mayors of the municipalities, additional councillors are appointed by the Town Councils.
Public transportation Spatial planning Economic development Branding	Spatial planning Lobbying the central government Pilot projects with metropolitan relevance	Territorial planning Urban planning (Metropolitan Urban Master Plan, land and housing policies) Services of metropolitan interest (water cycle, waste management; sustainable mobility and public transport, social and economic development, strategic planning and international relations).
Approx. 350 million EUR	Approx. 0.9 million EUR (2017)	684 million EUR for the metropolitan administration (AMB); 1,700 million EUR including all the metropolitan companies and institutions (2017)
Allocated from the county tax	Fees from the members and contribution to project costs from the members	Direct tax from citizens, contribution of municipalities, contribution of the regional government and certain taxes on public services provided by AMB
Directly elected region more efficiently represents metropolitan interests over the local ones	Spatial plan is a strong tool to shape the area in a coordinated way Local taxation system is already equalising	AMB was created by a law unanimously passed by the Catalan Parliament. AMB is a specialized administration in the development of their powers.
Lack of direct tax revenues. Strong restrictive power in planning but less power in initiating development	Fluctuating membership, smaller settlements tend to be left out (metropolitan agenda is not "attractive" enough)	AMB does not cover the full FUA of Barcelona. Competences are limited. AMB gets its resources from the municipalities and financial transfers for the provision of certain services, Lack of legitimacy with citizens due to lack of direct elections. Many administrations working in a small territory
To attain direct taxation rights Elections with not (only) party lists but individual election wards	To involve as many municipalities as possible Stronger roles in implementation	New competences with the legal and financial resources in territorial issues like management of the coastline. Lead the process of transformation of the economy from the industrial era to the new economy. Social inequality should be reduced in the territory. To become the environmental authority of the metropolitan territory, to have a say in big infrastructures such as the airport or the harbour.
Above: Metropolregion Stuttgart 5.2 million people, established in 1995, having no strong government structure	Below: Canton of Zürich . about 1.5 million people, containing 169 municipalities	Above: Metropolitan Region Barcelona : 164 municipalities, 5 million people, 3,200 sq. km, 8th biggest urban agglomeration in Europe. Polycentric structure: 7 subcentres. Covered by the Territorial Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona.

3.3 Comparative analysis of the metropolitan area case studies

3.3.1 Dynamics in the development of metropolitan coordination

Despite the differences in the evolution of the metropolitan areas in question, one may observe a certain path each of them follows, presented in Figure 2. In an abstract form, the following logic of ‘ideal-typical’ development could be outlined from the five cases: collaborations begin to develop in a procedural way beyond the borders of the administrative city through networking, and common activities like planning and marketing. After a time, these collaborations become somehow institutionalised, with new competencies most often devolved national legislation. In some cases, in time the area of the new institutional arrangements once again proves to be too small in light of real economic processes, and a new process of procedural collaboration-building is initiated, now on a new and enlarged metropolitan scale (sometimes, as in case of Amsterdam and Copenhagen, with the ‘downgrading’ of the former competencies of the former metropolitan area). This might again lead to an act of institutionalisation – and this cycle may continue each as long as metropolitan expansion remains feasible, i.e. until the enlarged area does not cover too large a share of the upper governmental level.

Among the analysed cases, the development of metropolitan coordination was the most straightforward in Stuttgart: it was established by a political act in 1994, in response to pressure from economic actors, and the institutional structure has remained virtually the same ever since. (Thus, Stuttgart has reached Step 2 in the process.)

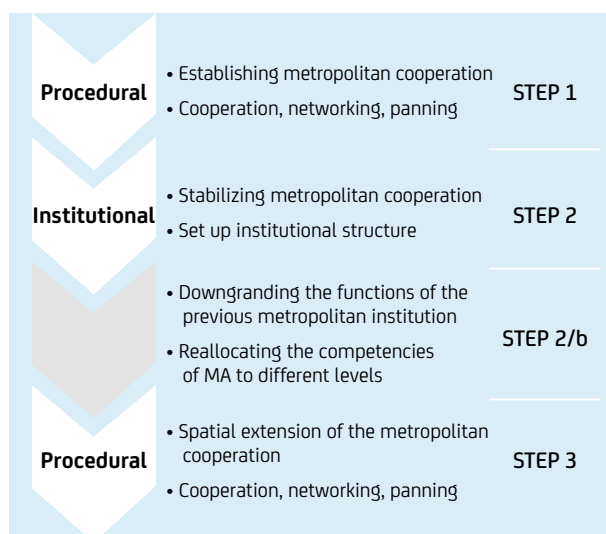


Figure 2: Model of the evolution of metropolitan areas in general

In the case of Zürich, the metropolitan idea has gradually evolved from metropolitan conferences into an association backed by national planning policy. (Zürich is currently at Step 1.)

In the other metropolitan areas, the history of the development of the metropolitan idea is more complex – or they have already taken further steps on the evolutionary ladder, not always in the same direction. In Amsterdam and Copenhagen, many ideas have surfaced in the past few decades with regard to improving metropolitan coordination, but some were never implemented, and some functioning forms were even dissolved. There are examples of strong metropolitan organisations which were “downgraded” to transport (Amsterdam) or hospital (Copenhagen) regions, giving way to new collaborations in larger areas, based on either a spatial planning framework and/or bi-lateral cooperation agreements. As a result, although these cities were once at the forefront of metropolisation, they are not any more, as the new cooperative practices – although may span a larger territory – are weaker than before. (Consequently, Amsterdam and Copenhagen went through Step 2/b and began approaching Step 3, but in the process they lost many of their previously obtained competencies.)

Greater Manchester is the case where the history of metropolitan collaboration is probably the most turbulent, and some of the recent solutions are very similar to structures that had been dissolved decades ago for political reasons. The metropolitan organisation (as Greater Manchester County) existed as far back as the 1970s and remained in existence until 1986, when it was abolished. Voluntary cooperation on services of metropolitan interest, like transportation, waste management and labour market, however, continued. In 2011 the Combined Authority was set up. This institution formalised the coordination on the common services and included new areas from the state, like policing and fire protection. (Thus, Greater Manchester is at Step 2 on Figure 2, but it has spent decades stabilising its position.)

Barcelona followed a similar path to Greater Manchester: a strong metropolitan cooperation existed till the end of the 1980s, when it was abolished and broken up into three voluntary cooperation organisations centred on the topics of waste and water management, coordinated transportation and spatial planning. These three organisations were unified in 2010 when the political will of the participating municipalities allowed for the necessary

consensus. (Consequently, the Barcelona metropolitan area is deeply into Step 2 in its development procedure.)

It is important to note that the acceleration of metropolitan cooperation (whether it is institutional or procedural) usually occurs as a reaction to crisis situations. Local actors feel the need for more cooperation if they experience the loss of either economic or environmental competitiveness. National level decision making can also act as a main driver of metropolisation, if previously public functions are devolved for financial reasons to lower levels of government (as happened with devolutions to the metropolitan level in the case of Greater Manchester). When the economy performs well, social services operate properly, and the traffic is managed efficiently, expectations for strengthened metropolitan cooperation usually do not emerge, and institutional improvements may be difficult to implement.

3.3.2 Strengths of metropolitan-level coordination

The strengths of metropolitan-level coordination can be measured by the range of functions and competences the metropolitan level exercises (either through its statute or the agreements with different partners) and the legitimacy they have attained through the institutional structure they have built.

Regarding the five case study areas, there is no clear hierarchy, as legitimacy does not necessarily go hand in hand with functions.

- Stuttgart has the strongest governance structure, directly running public transportation and exercising strong control over spatial planning. Greater Manchester has weaker legitimacy (with a hybrid system of delegated local representatives and a directly elected mayor), but stronger metropolitan identity, more competences in service provision, and a larger budget to spend on metropolitan strategic planning issues.
- The Zürich Metropolitan Area Association has common projects that to date have had limited influence, but it has an approved spatial plan, which is built already into cantonal plans and backed at the federal level (which controls cantonal plans).
- A somewhat weaker degree of cooperation characterizes Copenhagen, where a strong metropolitan spatial plan is created by a decree of the national government, but there is no institutional framework for further metropolitan cooperation in place. A similar level of cooperation

operates in Amsterdam, where the institutional structure is evolving incrementally, and new vision and action programmes are under development on the political and bureaucratic level, but they lack the proper spatial framework and cooperation is mostly based on bi- and multi-lateral negotiations.

Barcelona is the closest to Greater Manchester, as it has a limited legitimacy (delegated representation), but a wide scope of competencies and a significant budget.

Metropolitan-level coordination can be strengthened by institutionalisation, typically by establishing a metropolitan organisation with independent functions and competences. However, this is not the only way: similarly strong cooperation can be achieved by (bi- and multilateral) collaboration and planning agreements, especially if the higher administrative levels (national or regional governments) establish a framework within which the territorial bodies of the metropolitan area can, or are forced to, cooperate.

3.3.3 Leading actors/initiators in the development of the metropolitan level

In the analysed case studies there are numerous examples of national-level initiatives, which have had varying degrees of success:

- Greater Manchester, where the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009) provided the framework for the institutionalisation of the already existing voluntary cooperation (while the Regional Development Agencies were dissolved in 2012).
- Copenhagen, where the ministry retains strong planning control after the dissolution of the region.
- Zürich, where the Swiss Planning Act defined the spatial framework for metropolitan cooperation, and the government supports the plan as outcome result.
- Amsterdam, where several unsuccessful national level attempts were made to create functioning metropolitan institution.

In case of Barcelona and Stuttgart, the role of regional initiatives must be emphasised because regional legislation laid the legal foundations for the existing metropolitan organisations.

Public agencies serving specific sectors, especially transport associations, can become strong driving

forces behind metropolitan cooperation, as occurred in Stuttgart and Greater Manchester. However, this is not a general rule: transport associations can be formed and run independently from the issue of metropolitan cooperation, as happened in Copenhagen and Zürich.

The larger and more economically powerful an urban area is, the greater the role private economic actors can play in spurring metropolitan cooperation. This is clearly shown in the examples of Stuttgart and Greater Manchester – although the Stuttgart case shows that as the largest companies become increasingly multinational, their vested interest in the metropolitan area around the city that hosts their administrative headquarters decreases. The interest of economic actors is, however, in many cases not sufficient in itself: Amsterdam is a clear illustration of the barriers to lobbying. In the case of Amsterdam, the booming economy and the quick population growth would clearly justify stronger cooperation on the metropolitan level – in reality, however, a national political decision made the existing city-region structure weaker, while cooperation in the larger metropolitan area is only slowly evolving.

3.3.4 Tools to build up the metropolitan level

In some of our case study areas, a metropolitan organisation was established by a legislative action (as happened in Stuttgart at an exceptional moment of time, and in Greater Manchester via the Local Democracy Act and in Barcelona thanks to regional legislation). However, this might be more the exception than the rule. More often than not multiple layers of government already exist and tend to stand in the way of such efforts, considering the creation of an additional level of



government detrimental to their own agendas. In such cases, a lower level of institutionalisation (e.g., creation of an Association, like in Zürich) is nevertheless possible, and stronger procedural solutions to issues of metropolitanisation can be achieved, with planning and cooperation-building as the main functions. This can happen even without fixed territorial boundaries. Meanwhile, even if there are stable institutional structures in place, there is still room for negotiations and bargaining, e.g., even in the Stuttgart region, metropolitan actors have to negotiate their development ideas on a case-by-case basis with the settlements (especially if the region intends to accelerate growth). The situation is similar in the case of Greater Manchester, and also around Copenhagen regarding the implementation of the Finger Plan.

If metropolitan cooperation is based on planning, accepting a spatial plan might not be sufficient (as the case of Copenhagen shows). In order to achieve real metropolitan cooperation, strategic metropolitan capacity has to be built, dealing with issues concerning the whole of the metropolitan area and concentrating on the elements of cooperation where the advantages of joint thinking can be shown in the most salient way. A very innovative example of that is the new office of GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority), which brings together 200 people to engage in strategic functions and innovative tasks (including data collecting, preparing studies, building visions), that are clearly different from the usual tasks of municipal offices. The same is true of Stuttgart, where the approximately 120 employees of the Verband office work on planning and economic development issues.

In the process of establishing strategic metropolitan capacity, high importance has to be accorded to attracting all the municipalities of the area and involving all stakeholders, e.g. economic actors and higher education, which support (and have an interest in) metropolitan cooperation.

It is important to have a substantial budget on the metropolitan level for strategic thinking and planning on this scale. This part of the budget should be financed mainly by the core city and the economic players, and/or through a direct source via tax or state support. It is therefore not the total budget amount of the metropolitan level that is decisive in itself, but the budget spent on strategic thinking and planning on this level. In this regard the EUR 1 million spent on strategic planning in Zürich is not as small as it might seem in comparison with much larger sums in some other cities (which are, however, largely devoted to financing public services).

3.3.5 Types and functioning forms of metropolitan organisations

Once a certain level has been reached using the procedural approach to metropolisation, the need for certain types of metropolitan organisations (e.g. associations) arises. In their most typical form, such organisations consist of delegated politicians, elected on a lower level (as the cases of Greater Manchester, Barcelona and Zürich show). There are different methods for strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the new organisation, such as announcing prospective metropolitan-scale delegates at the lower administrative tier election (indirect election of metropolitan politicians); or direct election, at least of the leader of the metropolitan organisation, as is the case in Greater Manchester. These solutions can enhance the strengths and visibility of the organisation and its activities, without creating a whole new directly elected administrative level of government.

There are some further innovations in some of the case study areas to improve the functioning of metropolitan organisations. In Greater Manchester the delegated metropolitan councillors get specific portfolios of importance for the metropolis, ensuring that they are committed to the whole metropolitan level as well, beyond representing their own local constituencies. In Zürich representatives of groups of smaller municipalities are also included into the metropolitan body, to address the challenge of the very fragmented local government system (this way smaller municipalities might become interested in metropolitan collaboration even if they are not directly represented in the organisation).

Metropolitan collaboration is a difficult and complex process, in which different issues might need different levels of agreement. Innovative methods and elaborate voting systems are needed to ensure that the metropolitan level is vested with responsibilities in strict accordance with the wishes of the municipalities involved. In Greater Manchester, for example, most decisions are made with a simple majority vote. But on certain issues of greater importance, a stronger majority of 7/11 votes is required. For the most decisive issues involving the spatial framework, unanimity is required, meaning that all councillors have veto power. In the case of collaborations at earlier stages of metropolisation, special efforts can be made to help build trust: in Zürich there is an attempt to reach near consensus in all decisions, although majority voting would be enough based on the institutional framework alone – in this case, the preparation and comment phase on the creation documents is considered

key to the success of cooperation building, beyond just the voting procedure itself.

Across the five cases, the metropolitan level has the strongest position in Stuttgart in terms of tasks legally defined as metropolitan competencies (planning, transport, business development, and waste management). This strength comes from the direct election of the metropolitan assembly, based on party lists; the elected representatives are therefore not bound to any of the sub-territories and can fully represent the interests of the metropolitan region as a whole. The voting system in the Assembly is based on simple majority, but the goal is to reach consensus if possible.

This is close to the strongest position a metropolitan body can achieve – the only way it could be pushed further would be by establishing an independent source of financing at this level.

3.3.6 The financial structure of metropolitan areas

A wide range of financing schemes exist for metropolitan cooperation, depending largely on the approach to metropolisation. In the institutional forms, financing depends mainly on the functions; financial contributions come from one source or another to enable a given function. Even though metropolitan institutions have seemingly large budgets, it is important to ensure that a significant portion of the budget is addressed to an institution's strategic development capacity. In the procedural approach, financing usually depends on the agreed upon tasks to be carried out at the metropolitan level: in Zürich, for example, a membership fee covers the costs of the small organisational team, while separate sources of project financing are mobilised for additional tasks.

The room to manoeuvre at the metropolitan level is secured from different sources in the five case study areas. Where the cooperation is based more on voluntary agreements, membership fees are the dominant sources of financing (e.g. Zürich). If the cooperation is formalised to a larger extent, the organisation might have access to different funds (such as EU funds or national tenders), and might even be able to levy tax on its own, like Greater Manchester and Barcelona. Where the metropolitan area has strong service provision competencies, the fees for these competencies are provided by the transfer of local taxes e.g. levy on council tax in Greater Manchester for transport, police, fire and waste management services, or county sources

for financing the transport services in Stuttgart. AMB collects contributions from citizens, local and regional administrations to finance the environmental services and public transport services it offers.

Only a limited number of metropolitan organisations have the right to collect taxes directly from inhabitants. The directly elected mayor of Greater Manchester has this competence and is planning to implement it in 2018 for the first time. In case of Barcelona, some municipalities collect the part of the property tax that is transferred to the metropolitan organisation, while in other municipalities the metropolitan organisation directly collects this part of the property tax.

In metropolitan areas, special municipal finance rules should be applied. In a strong metropolitan governance setting, local taxes should be equalised to avoid tax competition. Attention must be paid to compensating municipalities whose growth is constrained by planning restrictions. On the other hand, support can be provided to municipalities which agree to accommodate new development in accordance with the metropolitan plan, to alleviate the growth pressure which otherwise would be concentrated only in the core city. Such a system of equalisation, however, does not exist in any of the five metropolitan areas (a certain level of equalisation exists on cantonal level in Switzerland only). This shows the difficulty involved in reaching such a high level of cooperation and mutual understanding between municipalities.

AMB's investment plan has a redistributive effect that benefits the less populated and more vulnerable municipalities.

3.3.7 Links to other stakeholders and the general visibility of the metropolitan level

In the metropolitan areas in our sample where some kind of formal organisation exists and there is a back office specifically for metropolitan cooperation (Greater Manchester, Stuttgart, Zürich), cooperation with the external actors is part of their strategy and everyday activities. Another advantage in Greater Manchester and Stuttgart is that in the course of their long history of metropolitan cooperation the main actors there have created specialised organisations (e.g. chambers of commerce, churches, and interest groups) at the metropolitan level, making it much easier to find a partner on the relevant scale.

Regarding cooperation with economic actors, the following ideas and good practices were identified (partly on the basis of other European metropolitan areas):

- Create a forward-looking metropolitan board or metropolitan-level economic development agency, which includes at least some of the space-bound large players (airport, harbour, chamber of commerce and industry, universities...), and accord this organisation a substantial role in representing the metropolitan area on the international scene. Many German cities and metropolitan areas, e.g. Hamburg³, have such agencies.
- Set up regular meetings with the largest taxpayers in the metropolitan area, to understand their interests and forward-looking ideas for metropolitan cooperation (sometimes in the form of 'business breakfasts,' as in some French cities).
- Ensure innovative surroundings for new economic players across the whole metro area, e.g., an economic agency for supporting start-ups, initiating innovative approaches with temporary uses of brownfield areas, etc. (e.g., German cities).
- Accept strategic planning and financing regulations (developed in collaboration with the major economic actors) to ensure that new economic investments happen in the optimal locations in terms of accessibility from all parts of the metropolitan area.

There are different tools for fostering cooperation in the planning as well as the operational phases. In Amsterdam, where the former metropolitan cooperation level was transformed into the Transport Region in 2015 and a new metropolitan cooperation attempt is currently taking shape on a larger spatial scale, the newly emerging metropolitan cooperation is based on an action plan approved by 800 politicians and local actors. The plan calls for implementation broken down into separate action groups. While a wider partnership also became part of the everyday operation of Greater Manchester Combined Authority, in this case a formal partnership has been created with relevant stakeholders from the field of health care provision. This partnership has been given decision-making power (GM Health and Social Care Strategic Partnership Board).

Regarding cooperation with stakeholders, directly elected politicians might have greater motivation to make extra

³ see e.g. <http://en.hamburg-invest.com/about-us/4478532/economic-development-council/>

efforts in this area. This is also true regarding the forging of links with civil society organisations to obtain their input. In Greater Manchester, the directly elected mayor establishes civil society partnerships and organises committees. Other cases illustrate how external actors can be drawn to participate in project-based negotiations or even through formalised committees and partnerships.

The forms these partnership-building efforts take are strongly influenced by cultural aspects: countries like the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands embed consultations and partnership building in all of their processes, whether on the city or the metropolitan scale. Others, like Switzerland or Germany, prefer a formal approach (like public hearings and meetings).

3.3.8 The role of the metropolitan level in tackling the main dilemmas of growth

All the analysed metropolitan areas have thriving economies, and their populations are growing dynamically. For these reasons, the metropolitan level takes on special importance, as the dilemmas and externalities caused by quick growth can only be effectively addressed on the metropolitan level.

In most of our cases (Copenhagen, Greater Manchester, Stuttgart, Zürich) the spatial concept/plan sets out clear guidelines about the desired spatial structure and has proven capable of restricting growth in certain areas.

However, none of the metropolitan areas has the proper tools (e.g. compensation, land buy-out capacity) to accelerate growth if local actors do not want further development. Even if metropolitan spatial planning is a strong competence in the metropolitan cases analysed here, the autonomy of local municipalities when it comes to local development and sometimes even to local spatial planning means that metropolitan actors must negotiate individual projects with the relevant local stakeholders and try to convince them in a piecemeal fashion. In some metropolitan areas in our sample, the metropolitan body can exert a direct influence on the spatial structure by initiating strategic investments (e.g. building major roads around Greater Manchester or building major facilities like the convention centre outside Stuttgart), while in others responsibility for coordinating development falls to the metropolitan level spatial plan (like in Copenhagen or Zürich).

One of the clear dilemmas arising from growth can be found in the relationship between economic development and environmental sustainability. The latter goal has usually been pursued by strict planning regulations regarding green areas, such as the Fingerplan in Copenhagen or other versions of green-belt regulations in and around other cities. However, the requirements of economic growth increasingly endanger the existing protected green areas. This is a dilemma which can only be addressed on the basis of the larger metropolitan area. It is not at all easy to find places where the economy can expand without coming up



Greater Manchester

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against environmental regulations. This can be resolved either by modifying the regulations of the green areas, by looking for alternatives in terms of site-selection of new economic activities, or by promoting new activities related to the green economy.

Such 'sustainable growth' debates have recently been unfolding in all of the analysed metropolitan areas. The task of metropolitan planning is to forecast the dimensions of predictable future growth in the economy, population, and all related aspects (transport, hard and soft infrastructure) and then develop scenarios for accommodating this growth in the metropolitan area without disproportionately large losses in environmental quality. The best example of this approach is probably Stuttgart, where the VRS has strong planning powers over the municipalities. In the case of Copenhagen, it is not a metropolitan government but a nationally enforced spatial plan that serves as the tool to steer development, and the case study of this area points to both the pros and cons of such rigid planning frameworks. The Zürich example can be interpreted as a more flexible planning framework which brings with it the difficulties associated with gaining approval from the lower-level administrative units, the cantons. In the case of Greater Manchester, the planning power of the GMCA is currently under development, while Amsterdam seems to be the

furthest away from a meaningful metropolitan plan, although the area faces an enormous population growth challenge.

It is clear that good answers to the growth dilemma are more likely to be found if the metropolitan area in question is clearly defined (covers sufficiently large territory) and there are appropriate mechanisms at hand (either through governance mechanisms, planning, or both) to reach satisfactory decisions. None our analysed cases, with the partial exception of Stuttgart, fully meets this second criterion. In other words, they lack the proper decision-making mechanisms. Moreover, in some cases, e.g., in Amsterdam, the territorial problem is also present: metropolitan thinking is only slowly expanding outward to reach a sufficiently large territory.

If no good metropolitan answer is found for the growth dilemma, the outcome will be a loss of competitiveness (potential investors will relocate to other urban areas where they can achieve better investment conditions), or a loss of environmental quality (economic growth is ensured, but it is accompanied by unacceptably damaging environmental externalities). The threat of losing economic competitiveness and/or environmental quality is probably the most important force pushing areas toward the metropolitan agenda.



AMB headquarters

4. Recommendations for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area

The present study systematically analyses five European metropolitan areas in order to explore the ideas and practices for the metropolitan-level steering of economic and population development. The recommendations presented below were formulated on the basis of this comparative analysis, highlighting the most relevant issues for the current dilemmas associated with metropolitan development in the Barcelona urban area.

In the past few years, a new institutional solution has been developed in Barcelona, which allows for effective metropolitan coordination in a territory inhabited by 3.2 million people. In some respects (e.g. having official competencies), AMB is a stronger metropolitan organisation than most of the other five metropolitan

areas analysed here. Beyond the positive aspects of this scenario, however, two main strands of problems are emerging. First, the institutional challenge stems from the fact that the competencies of AMB are limited: it lacks the resources necessary to develop regeneration policies, and to date it has not forged regular links with some of the key players in the metropolitan area (e.g. airport, harbour, big companies, etc.). Second, the present metropolitan area also faces a territorial challenge: the territory of the AMB does not cover the full functional urban area of Barcelona.

The results of our study indicate that these two main sets of problems emerging in the metropolitan area of Barcelona might require a combination of different approaches and the application of different tools.

4.1. How to strengthen AMB as an existing metropolitan authority

4.1.1 Direct election

The institutional challenge requires the strengthening of the AMB as the existing metropolitan authority. The case of Greater Manchester vividly illustrates the importance of directly electing the president of the metropolitan area (Zürich also plans to implement this change). This ensures greater legitimacy and wider visibility of the metropolitan level, as well as a stronger representation of metropolitan interests over local ones and greater opportunities to involve civil society and economic actors. When advocating for direct election of the president emphasis should be placed on the proviso that a directly elected leader does not make the metropolitan level a new general administrative governmental level, nor does it mean the direct election of the metropolitan council members.

The example of Stuttgart shows that it is possible to introduce the direct election of the metropolitan council members as an exceptional case, without adding a new level to the general administrative structure of

the country. The council members of Verband Region Stuttgart are directly elected, but this has not meant the creation of an additional regional level of government for Germany in general. Direct election obviously strengthens the legitimacy of the metropolitan area. The question of whether direct election should be organised using party lists or via electoral districts seems to be a secondary one.

It would remain to be seen the extent to which such a development would be assessed as a “political threat” by the upper government level, i.e. Catalonia, especially in light of the fact that AMB represents 50% of the inhabitants of Catalonia.

If the direct election of the metropolitan council members is considered unfeasible in the Barcelona area, then additional tools to strengthen the metropolitan authority might include measures such as announcing the proposed metropolitan delegates at the time of the lower-level election (indirect election of metropolitan politicians).

4.1.2 The promotion of the metropolitan identity

Metropolitan identity was not the strongest aspect of the cases studied in this research. Only Greater Manchester can truly boast a metropolitan identity in the eyes of the inhabitants and businesses, but this is due to a kind of “historic legacy”. Even in Stuttgart, where the metropolitan parliament is directly elected, it was apparent that the inhabitants are attached more to their individual towns than to the metropolitan area as a whole. The well-developed transportation service was mentioned as the most visible factor that links people to the area.

Metropolitan identity is greatly undermined when the spatial scale and the competencies of functional urban areas are in constant flux and many constellations with different spatial scales exist around the city (e.g., Amsterdam).

Thus, engendering a well-accepted territorial identity is not an easy task. For Barcelona, where several public services have been carried out on the metropolitan level for the past several decades, such a breakthrough cannot be expected to come about only by strengthening these services (e.g., with new competencies on housing or social services). Instead, identity may be strengthened by symbols and emotional attachment. A directly elected mayor would be an example of such a symbol (in case of Greater Manchester, one of the aims of directly electing the mayor was to raise the profile of the area, both to the outside world as a whole and inside, towards its own citizens).

Another additional way to go is actively looking for visibility on the national or international scale. In the case of Zürich, the Metropolitan Association is well-regarded on the national level. The Barcelona Metropolitan Area is moving in the right direction with its efforts to strengthen metropolitanisation on the EU level. The results that have already been achieved (AMB being one of the key actors behind the European Metropolitan Authorities movement) should probably be more efficiently communicated on the national and especially on the regional/local level.

4.1.3 Get more devolved and delegated functions

A key aspect of strengthening the AMB as an existing metropolitan authority is of course to take on more devolved functions from higher administrative tiers, as well as more delegated functions from lower tiers. The city deals reached in Greater Manchester are good examples of this: the metropolitan level may gain

competencies to coordinate a wide range of different actors through a devolution of national competencies if this move is likely to result in greater cost efficiency or a higher level of service provision. AMB has limited social competencies (mainly in social cohesion and housing), and currently is working on defining the contents of these competencies. The problem is that these competencies were not really devolved from the regional level or delegated from the municipal level, which is why AMB has to find its own path in order to create services that complement the already existing regional and municipal ones. The examples of Stuttgart and Greater Manchester show that the metropolitan level may also take on special intermediary tasks that could be difficult for actors on other levels of governance to implement. These tasks are more informal, focusing more on sharing knowledge and spreading information (e.g., the database developed and agency role created regarding housing in Greater Manchester, or the marketing activities of Stuttgart region in promoting the area).

Meanwhile, the case of Greater Manchester shows that it is possible to gain functions that are truly devolved from an upper level, taking on responsibilities for coordinating secondary education services, health services and social services that cannot be adequately managed on the local level. Barcelona Metropolitan Area should seek out competencies which could be more efficiently managed on the metropolitan level than by the Catalan government. It is of course crucial that any new functions are also accompanied by appropriate financing sources.

4.1.4 Strengthen economic development cooperation with the private sector

Barcelona Metropolitan Area has created a framework for channelling the reactions of external stakeholders into the area’s development process by setting up the Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan, a think tank that is tasked with gathering and communicating information, one that has attracted the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Still, it seems that the links with the economic actors and the private sector could be further strengthened and operated more effectively. According to examples taken from the five cases, there seem to be some potential changes to consider implementing:

- The strong identity of Greater Manchester ensures that this spatial scale is also on the “mental map” of the business actors. Consequently, the Chamber of Commerce operates on this metropolitan level, which makes cooperation between the governance entity and private sector representatives much easier. Thus, the organisation

of business associations on the metropolitan level may also lead to a more efficient partnership in Barcelona.

- This partnership could be created not only to address specific issues (e.g., creating an urban master plan or strategic plan), but instead could take the form of a permanent process. The example of Greater Manchester in creating formal partnerships (decision-making bodies that also incorporate partners from external actors) shows that in such a forum certain issues can be discussed and common decisions made on a permanent basis. For Barcelona, a formal partnership on some of the competencies may be advisable, perhaps a forum to face an issue like housing development or youth employment.

- Having staff members dedicated to the promotion of economic development is another important aspect. GMCA takes this task seriously, with an appointed deputy mayor for economic growth and business. GMCA has also developed specific tools (strategies, funds, networking, database development, guidance) to deal with economic actors. The example of Stuttgart also shows that special care should be taken with the largest economic players to ensure that they remain closely linked to the metropolitan area even when they successfully achieve a more global reach. Thus, it would be advisable to have dedicated staff in the Barcelona metropolitan office to keep in constant contact with the major business actors.

- Connections with the business sector may also be strengthened when investments are made in the private sector's direct interest. For example, the Stuttgart Region developed a convention centre that serves many businesses organisations at the same time.

4.1.5 Development of strategic thinking and positioning

The Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan, a non-profit organisation for cooperation, already offers a framework for cooperation and communication with a wide variety of stakeholders (economic and social actors, municipalities and administrations). This could further be developed using the pattern of partnerships from Greater Manchester, where in addition to a forum like the one in Barcelona, there are also a number of boards and committees, not only contributing to the creation of various concepts but also playing an ongoing role following monitoring their implementation.

Another innovative idea, also from Greater Manchester, is to develop significant strategic thinking capacity on

the metropolitan level, with the tasks of vision building, communication, and partnership building projecting outward towards the larger area. This could mean bringing together a significant number of strategic thinkers in an office, where people are allowed and even urged to develop ideas in new, innovative ways, and it can be a game-changer. The process should place a great deal of importance on attracting all municipalities of the larger area, and on involving all the stakeholders (such as the key players in the economy and higher education) who support (or have an interest in) this sort of metropolitan cooperation to foster strategic capacity. Thus, it is important to have a substantial budget on the metropolitan level to be spent on this kind of strategic thinking and planning. This part of the budget should be financed mainly by the core city and the economic players and/or via a direct source by tax or state support.

Regarding spatial planning, the lessons to be transferred to Barcelona are limited, as AMB already has quite strong planning competencies. However, because the major issue is often the balance between growth and values to be preserved, and because finding the tools to encourage growth in places where it is desired is an important task, some suggestions may still be formulated:

- Densification around the highly accessible sub-centres of the metropolitan area can be a priority with the conversion of brown field sites (such as in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework).

- Precise definition of preconditions to allow growth (requirements on the maximum distance from high-capacity public transportation, as in the Finger Plan around Copenhagen).

- Setting aside future development areas for different purposes (housing, business activities, transportation) can guide the actors, as in the case of Stuttgart.

- The definition of the profile of the different types of areas that place different limitations on growth, like in the Zürich Metropolitan Spatial Plan.

4.1.6 Financial tools to achieve metropolitan priorities

In order to achieve development priorities, innovation is also needed when it comes to seeking out income sources and to spending. Barcelona has already developed quite advanced methods of collecting funds (direct taxes, municipal contributions, and contribution to service fees). The example of Greater Manchester points to another

interesting way to increase the power of the metropolitan organisation, namely through an influence on the allocation of some national resources: Greater Manchester has a say in how national health care funds are spent in its territory, although the GMCA budget does not directly control this annual expenditure of 6 billion pounds. Thus, should AMB take on a role as an intermediary with regard to some regional functions, it may have access to funds that may not be part of its budget, acting as an entity responsible for coordinating certain resources. This may happen, for example, in case of social or educational services.

Metropolitan cooperation can result in a need to provide financial compensations to areas that have less growth

potential (or are restricted in their growth due to environmental regulations). In this respect Barcelona metropolitan area is already advanced, as it has already developed a redistribution mechanism based on the Strategic Investment Plan.

Another challenge is to develop a system of financial incentives to accelerate growth in areas where it would be feasible from a metropolitan perspective, but where the plans face local resistance. Although a new urban plan is currently being developed in the hope that land-use conflicts can be handled via negotiations, it is better to prepare for the possibility that active land policy may be required, and this will require financial backing.

4.2. Bigger action and impact: how to enlarge the territorial scope of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area

The analysis of the spatial extension of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area clearly shows the insufficient spatial configuration of AMB: the area of 3.2 million people does not cover the whole FUA/metropolitan area of Barcelona, which is much larger, with a population well above 4 million.

Regarding this problem, one possible approach is to strive for further institution building in a larger fixed area, i.e. to enlarge the AMB to include the Second Ring of municipalities. This process, however, might prove extremely difficult as the enlarged area would cover almost two-thirds of the total population of Catalonia.

Our study has shown that institution building is not the only option: close-knit cooperation can also be achieved through collaboration and planning agreements, especially if the higher administrative levels (national or regional governments) establish a framework within which the territorial bodies of the larger metropolitan area can cooperate. In this regard, the approach of Amsterdam towards network governance in a flexible area is highly relevant to Barcelona. The case of Zürich is also interesting, as there the national government initiated the requirement for planning on the larger metropolitan level. In both cases, the first, seemingly weak procedural attempts resulted in the establishment of certain metropolitan institutions, with no further aim to develop this level into a strong administrative layer of government.

To achieve these kinds of procedural metropolitanisation efforts, it is crucial to win the support of the higher administrative level, i.e. the government of Catalonia. Various types of trust-building tools must also be deployed to gain (step-by-step) the cooperation of the settlements and existing lobbying organisations in the Second Ring, in order to reassure them that this procedural cooperation would not lead to any administrative merger against their wishes.

Some further more specific innovations from the five analysed cases, regarding territorial aspects, are the following:

- Indirect planning power to the metropolitan level through higher-level regulations, as in Zürich: a Catalonian plan/regulation could help enhance AMB's cooperation with the surrounding metro areas;
- Encouraging bilateral cooperation among the stakeholders in the framework of a loosely defined strategic plan (as the example of the Action Plan in the Amsterdam metropolitan area shows);
- Creating a loose framework for economic cooperation as in the case of the Öresund area around Copenhagen.

4.3. Lobby for the metropolitan agenda of the EU

EU policies have increasingly adopted a regional and urban dimension. However, the metropolitan approach is not yet fully enshrined in the EU Agenda. A meaningful metropolitan dimension would require assigning a greater role to the EU in creating the framework within which the national regulators could accord a larger role to the metropolitan level.

The introduction of a Metropolitan Agenda by the EU would require a substantial increase in the share of the territorial dimension, Sustainable Urban Development (SUD). More weight should be given to integrated development on the metropolitan level, allocating block grants on that level, replacing the thematic concentration. For all this to work properly, the EU should support the idea that metropolitan authorities and organised agglomerations (represented by a politico-administrative institution with at least delegated competences) should be eligible to bid directly for EU Cohesion Policy funding. Such an idea would, of course, only function in practice if the national government agrees with it – i.e. it would also need a push/lobbying from below.

An easier (and probably more realistic) option would be for the EU to provide financial incentives to metropolitan-level programmes and projects, thus creating an initiative for the national level to consider the metropolitan scale in a more serious way.

The EU should also support metropolitan-level planning: metropolitan areas should become not just final beneficiaries but real partners in strategic planning, and they should be engaged in designing, managing and evaluating programmes for their development (including the possible topics and projects within an ITI). The EU should develop tools and guidance to support planning on the metropolitan level, with the aim that such plans be accepted on the next directly elected administrative level (regions above or municipalities below the metropolitan area).

Through knowledge sharing programmes the EU should give governance-oriented support to metropolitan areas and grant them more freedom to choose the support they need and how to use the money. Such an agenda would also give an impetus to non-organised metropolitan areas to establish an institution which fulfils the criteria.

It is very important to emphasise that even within an eventual Metropolitan Agenda the establishment of

metropolitan areas should be the product of voluntary efforts, even if within top-down national frameworks. The higher level – EU initiated and nationally regulated – metropolitan framework should be filled up from below, avoiding the traps of political use of the national framework, and blockage by unwilling national and regional regulators. It goes without saying that larger cities have to lobby on both the EU and the national level for the appropriate Metropolitan Agenda on the EU level and in their countries.

Without the Cohesion Policy it is not possible to build a common Europe. An EU Metropolitan Agenda could be a potential way forward to overcome the recent political and financial crisis of the Union. This idea was raised at the October 2017 Warsaw Conference of the European Metropolitan Authorities organisation. Barcelona plays a key role in the European Metropolitan Authorities network (EMA⁴), having been the organiser of its first conference in 2015. The Warsaw Declaration of EMA⁵ requested a significant increase in the percentage of EU funds earmarked for Integrated Urban Development in the post-2020 Cohesion Policy and additional EU support for programmes and projects which are planned and carried out at the metropolitan area level, particularly by formal metropolitan area governance authorities.

4 European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) is a forum for leading politicians from Europe's main metropolitan cities and metropolitan areas. This initiative was founded in 2015 by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, and it has become a platform for political dialogue among metropolitan areas and cities, European institutions and national governments. The main goal of EMA is to provide a space to discuss the challenges of European metropolitan governance and define the baseline for a common partnership. This joint work is reflected in studies, meetings, projects, and an annual Conference concluding with a political declaration adopted by the participants, advocating for a metropolitan dimension of policies. EMA has also become an active platform for advocacy, and so far has celebrated meetings with high representatives of the European Commission, Parliament and Committee of the Regions. More information: <http://www.amb.cat/en/web/amb/area-internacional/ema>

5 <http://www.amb.cat/documents/11696/2235914/Warsaw+Declaration.pdf/24fef4ef-e816-4c2b-923a-cd34be97fcd>

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