

NEWS



Metropolitan Governance

European metropolises: strategies and governance

Tuesday 31/05/2016

The city of Paris, in collaboration with INTA (International Urban Development Association), organized a seminar last May 23 and 24 in the French capital, under the theme "European metropolis, strategies, governance," which aimed to discuss the phenomenon of metropolization in major cities in Europe, following the recent creation of the metropolis of Greater Paris (*Métropole du Grand Paris*).

Organized annually since 2012, the fourth edition of this conference has focused the debate on the relationship of the metropolises with their surroundings and their citizens, and especially the challenges of a polycentric management.

Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris and President of *Métropole du Grand Paris*, opened the day revealing her concern about the possible loss of the democratic features of the city of Paris. With the creation of an institution of metropolitan scope, the population of 2.3 million inhabitants of the city extends to 7 million, and according to the mayor is essential that the democratic traditions are maintained.

During the conference, several European cities shared their visions on metropolization. Alfredo Fioritto, Professor of the University of Pisa, said that, in Rome, the relationship between the center and the periphery could be an issue of identity; Pierre Mansat, representative of *Métropole du Grand Paris*, said that the position of Paris in relation to the peripheral belt cities reveals a balance of power due to the centralization of the state in favor of the capital city.

Mireille Ferri, director of the International Workshop of Greater Paris (*Atelier International du Grand Paris*), a scientific group of architects, planners, researchers and experts whose mission is to conduct research, development, improvement and animation related to the issues of the greater Paris, has a special vision of the metropolis: for her, "the city is a space for projects and strategic thinking without limits, where the streets are meeting places and travel routes of daily movements."

Finn Geipel, professor from the Technical University of Berlin, said the challenges of rebuilding a city like

Berlin after World War II has been a real problem, especially after the destruction of the Berlin Wall, which left two completely opposite cities in terms of urban planning.

The city of Amsterdam presented its metropolitan area, which was established about ten years ago, and explained the difficulty of developing a city located 6 meters below sea level, and the challenges of affordable housing for all, when the center city it is very expensive and inaccessible.

Gemma Calvet, from the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, presented the transparency agency that she directs, which was created from the will to fight corruption, to control the finances, and to share information from the metropolitan institution and entities connected therewith.

Finally, at the closing plenary session, the speakers noted that there is a general tendency to speak of breaking between a metropolis and its metropolitan area, but they are rather continuous. One of the clear conclusions of the phenomenon of metropolization is that although the political space of the metropolis is constantly changing, its administrative structures are not yet able to accompany these changes.