

NEWS



Metropolitan Governance

Third EMA Conference consolidates leadership of metropolitan areas in Europe

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On 20 October, Warsaw hosted the third edition of the European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA) conference, an initiative led by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. Topics such as metropolitan solidarity and the role of metropolitan areas in EU cohesion policy post-2020 were discussed, and good practices for collaboration between metropolitan areas were shared.

The Metropolis Secretary General, Octavi de la Varga, moderated the session called “Metropolitan Solidarity: spreading income and inducing development”, with the participation, from our membership, of the

Barcelona Metropolitan Area and the Metropolis of Lyon, and also of Nice, the Silesian Metropolitan Area and Tirana.

The Mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, welcomed the participants and representatives of European institutions, who provided keynote speeches to the event's program. Jan Olbrycht, member of the EU Parliament, shared a clear position on how metropolitan areas gain from institutionalization: "Do we need an institutional framework for metropolitan areas, or the functional cooperation is enough? Experience shows that when there is a government, there is less sprawl. We can do it without, but we can do better with an institutional framework".

The keynote speeches were complemented by the lively experience of leaders from the European metropolises, who joined round table discussions moderated by the leading European and global networks of metropolitan areas and cities (in addition to Metropolis, the program counted on the participation of Metrex and Eurocities).

For instance, Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, helped bringing metropolitan governance to the ground: "We manage mobility, waste, parks, and also significant infrastructures which are officially headed by the central national government: the harbour, the airport... And we don't have a saying in these infrastructures, although we are the first affected when they suffer some kind of disruption. We need to have a saying in that". The round table discussions served to identify that the metropolises are facing all types of risks in their territories, such as air pollution, violence in public spaces, to name a few.

Most of the leaders coincided in the importance to bring together the different perspectives of the metropolises, identify their common challenges and solutions, and unify their voice. "Events such as the EMA are essential for us", said Renaud George, Vice-president of the Lyon Metropolis. Octavi de la Varga leveraged this debate to the global scale: "All around the world, metropolitan areas concentrate the population and represent the engines of the development of entire nations. To promote the voice of the metropolitan areas in the global agendas, we need to act globally", he concluded.

The conference culminated with the signature of the Warsaw Declaration by all the participants. This document supports the continuity of the cohesion policy beyond 2020, and calls for a more prominent role for metropolitan areas. [Click here to read the Warsaw Declaration.](#)

The EMA is an initiative promoted by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, which has become a consolidated forum for dialogue between the political leaders of Europe's major metropolitan areas. The forum had its first edition in Barcelona in 2015, and has become a platform for political dialogue between metropolitan areas and cities, EU institutions and national governments. This year's meeting brought together mayors, presidents and elected representatives from Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brno, Brussels, Budapest, Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot, Haarlem, Lyon, Lodz, Madrid, Mannheim, Milan, Marseilles, Nice, Oslo, Porto, Poznan, Rhine-Neckar, Silesia, Stuttgart, Thessaloniki, Turin, Tirana, Warsaw and Vigo.

The host of the fourth edition of EMA, in 2018, will shortly be announced.

**With information from the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.*