

Metropolis Observatory

A Study on the Evolution of Metropolitan Governance

CONTEXT

The world is becoming increasingly urbanized and the fast-track expansion of metropolitan regions is a progressively more visible phenomenon in the 21st century.

In 1990, less than 40% of the total population lived in a city, but since 2010 more than half of all people are based in an urban area. Estimates put the figure of people living in a city at seven out of every 10 by the year 2050.

The economic, social, cultural, and environmental transformations of the past two decades have resulted in new and in-depth processes of territorial reorganization involving everything from new patterns for localizing urban activity to the appearance of major shifts in the role played by metropolitan areas.

We are in a process of reconfiguring the space in which the metropolitan and urban scale must coexist, a process that will have a major impact on large cities and their surrounding territory.

How today do we find the balance needed to prioritize global affairs without sidelining local ones and ensuring this doesn't negatively affect people's daily lives, while at the same time respecting the autonomy of each neighborhood, place, or city that comprises the metropolis?

WHY HAVE A METROPOLIS OBSERVATORY?

This is the context in which the Metropolis Observatory was established in late 2015, a project aimed at bringing together different stakeholders in a reflection space on the transformations that characterize contemporary cities and metropolitan areas today, while considering the current context of the implementation of the Habitat III New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose goals and objectives will stimulate action in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet over the next 15 years.

One of the project's priorities is to offer reference frameworks for the cities in our Association and the whole of the world regarding the need to include the metropolitan viewpoint in the governance of cities and the territory.

We want to use the Observatory to build a communication space for the knowledge that the technical tools and policies needed to tackle these change processes will provide.

The end goal of the tools will be to identify the impact the phenomenon will have on sustainable development, space management, mobility, equality, safety, and housing.

SPHERES OF ACTION

1. Data Collection

The study spheres will focus on quantitative aspects such as the collection and comparison of geographic, demographic, institutional, and political information, as well as qualitative ones concerning the multiple challenges facing cities and metropolitan areas.

The collected data will enable us to pinpoint current city trends, compare collected data and define city types as a benchmark.

2. Knowledge Capitalization and Generation

a) External Content

The Observatory will be the cross-cutting tool for all of the Association's activities and make it possible to capitalize all the content on metropolitan governance in order to provide cities with an important reservoir of knowledge.

b) Internal Content

This will principally involve the experiences of the Association's cities and the Policy Transfer Platform (a growing source of case studies), but also those of metropolitan institutes and observatories to collect data and forge partnerships.

3. Compilation of Information on Metropolitan Governance

Declarations that our members make on this issue will also be compiled to shore up knowledge regarding the metropolitan areas of the Association's cities and showcase their commitment to the growth of metropolitan areas, providing a frame of reference and cooperation for other local governments.

4. Internationalization of Knowledge and Skills Training

Another option being considered for the Metropolis Observatory is to drive an exchange of knowledge that goes beyond data comparison and case studies to involve skills training on metropolitan governance.

Working with the Training Institute's regional centers, types of training sessions on governance will be tapped through publicity events, courses and written productions.