

# Seminar on International Strategies in Metropolitan Areas

July 4-5, 2019 Barcelona



***Seminar on International Strategies in Metropolitan Areas* includes the conclusions of the international seminar held in Barcelona on 4 and 5 July 2019, organised by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and the Euro-Latin American Alliance of Cooperation between Cities (AL-LAs), in collaboration with the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) and the World Association of Major Metropolises (Metropolis).**

The **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)** is the administrative body serving Barcelona and the surrounding area, a geographical region that covers 636 km<sup>2</sup> and is made up of 36 municipalities with a total of over 3.2 million inhabitants. AMB's international activities are aimed at uncovering new opportunities for progress, innovation and the expansion of knowledge in municipalities and institutions, as well as for the economic and civil society stakeholders that are active within its territory. These activities are also designed to boost the AMB's international presence in its role as a leading institution in the fields of metropolitan governance and the providing of quality services to citizens.

The **Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB)** is a Barcelona-based independent think tank dedicated to the study, research and analysis of international affairs. Since its foundation in 1973, CIDOB has cherished the high quality and social utility of research and fostered direct contact with actors and dynamics examined, which have revolved around 5 main research areas: migrations, development, security, global cities and intercultural dynamics, and 4 regional areas: Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean and Middle East zone.

The **Euro-Latin American Alliance of Cooperation between Cities (AL-LAs)** is a cooperative alliance of European and Latin American cities with the goal of improving its members' international relations in order to better their public policies and development within their territories. The project is co-financed by the European Union thematic programme called «Non-state actors and local authorities in development» and by contributions from the participating cities.

The **Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)** was founded in 2004 as an inter-university institute made up of five public universities from the Barcelona metropolitan area that came together in a joint initiative to promote postgraduate education and research in the field of international relations. Five more institutions would later join the institute, sharing in its mission and its belief in the importance of promoting scientific knowledge for the purposes of advancing in the understanding of the governability challenges facing the contemporary world. The IBEI is now a consolidated institution whose academic research has gained widespread recognition in Europe and around the world.

**Metropolis** is the global network of major cities and metropolitan areas which counts with 138 members worldwide and has been operating as the metropolitan section of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) since its foundation. It serves as a space for world political leaders, policy-makers and practitioners to gain experience, explore practices and share knowledge in order to advance metropolitan interests and to improve the performance of metropolises in tackling those challenges inherent to the urban reality, focusing efforts on conducting urban diplomacy based on agreed principles and developing urban capacities based on a knowledge platform of tools and resources.

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# 1. Foreword

I see metropolitan areas as hubs helping their respective nodes, the cities within them. These hubs must be interconnected for them to truly be useful. That's why the review of international strategies is a key priority for us.

The Seminar on International Strategies in Metropolitan Areas took place in Barcelona on July 4 and 5, 2019. It was organised by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), the Barcelona Institute for International Studies (IBEI), the World Association of Major Metropolises (Metropolis) and the Euro-Latin-American Alliance between Cities (AL-LAs).

The seminar started with an open session featuring the presentation of the "International Action of Metropolises" study, which had been carried out by the CIDOB. The report includes five case studies, examining the metropolises of Durban, Medellin, Seoul, Montreal and Vienna, and it goes on to issue recommendations as to how the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) can meet its own internationalisation objectives. After the presentation, representatives of metropolitan areas like Amsterdam, Manchester, Medellin, Montreal, Mexico, Liverpool and Montevideo, and local stakeholders, offered feedback on the issue.

The workshop and the study focused on the following strategic areas: the economic dimension of international metropolitan action, metropolitan internationalisation through human capital, and the construction of international metropolitan strategies along with local actors. Some of the important issues addressed during the discussion included the need for a shared territorial vision.

This seminar continued down the path of discussions held during another international event also organised by AMB in Barcelona in 2016. At this

earlier event, 40 experts and representatives of 15 global metropolitan areas analysed international action as a matter of public policy, international strategies, the various policy instruments used for international activities, and the way metropolitan governments can exert influence on global agendas like the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III), adopted in Quito in 2016.

This seminar underlined the indispensable role played by political commitment, without which areas are unlikely to be able to move forward in their internationalisation strategies. It also highlighted the need for strong coordination and solid links between all the local actors involved in the process, as this offers a way to create strong, long-lasting alliances capable of approaching issues from a broad, comprehensive point of view. Internationalisation is not an end in itself, but rather a tool that can be used to promote social, economic and environmental development in cities and metropolitan areas. The involvement and engagement of local stakeholders, including citizens, is a key factor if we are to formulate a broad-based metropolitan internationalisation strategy.

AMB's international strategy is constantly evolving. We rely on the contributions of leading metropolitan governments and other international and local actors as valuable resources to help us improve the way we deliver services to our community. The conclusions of the seminar and the study should help lay the foundations for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area's future international relations strategy.

**Ernest Maragall i Mira**

*Vice-president for International Relations and Cooperation of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area*

## 2. Presentation



**Oriol Illa**, Director for International Relations and Cooperation at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

The purpose of this conference is to present the study carried out by the CIDOB global cities team with the aim of comparing the international strategies of five different metropolitan areas: Seoul, Medellín, Durban, Montreal and Vienna. We, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area are hosting this conference along with the CIDOB, the Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI), and the Metropolis and AL-LAs networks.

The study we will present today touches upon the important aspects in the role of diplomacy of cities and networks, the work of international action, the attraction of talent, the role of international cooperation and the participation of different actors involved in metropolises. This study should

lay the foundations for improvements that go beyond the international action currently carried out by metropolitan governments.

I would like to highlight some of the results of the governing term that is now coming to a close at the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. In this period, we have formed an international action centre focused specifically on metropolitan management matters such as mobility and transport, water and risk management, urban and public space, housing and social and economic development in metropolitan governance, and supra-municipal management. We have strengthened our connections with two networks, Metropolis and MedCities, and we have sought out new responsibilities within them. We have also helped the European Metropolitan Authorities network (EMA) to consolidate its role.

We have been awarded European funding for more than 20 metropolitan projects, and for the first time we have come to an agreement with the Catalan government allowing us to manage thirty million euros of the Operational Programme of the European Regional Development Fund for Catalonia. Meanwhile, we have approved a master plan for development cooperation, and for the first time we have managed to set aside 0.7% of the AMB budget for international cooperation. Finally, we have contributed to forging a

position on the issue of metropolitan governance with specific activities such as the international congress of the new Urban Agenda, the Metropolis observatory for governance, and cooperation with institutions such as CIDOB and IBEI.

I'm sure that the results of today's session will be very useful in helping us to innovate and to plan a future strategy for the AMB government's international actions.

### 3. Presentation of the CIDOB Study on “International Strategies in Metropolitan Areas. Case Studies: Durban, Medellin, Montreal, Seoul and Vienna”

**Antoni Segura i Mas**, Director of CIDOB

It is a great pleasure for us at CIDOB to have you all here. This seminar will touch upon the work we all do regarding the internationalisation of our actions in metropolitan cities. This morning, we will present a study on the international action of five different metropolitan areas, all of which are models for their respective regions with regard to this issue. We compared and contrasted them in order to identify characteristics that might help us improve the internationalisation processes of all metropolitan areas.

The study has attempted to approach internationalisation from an overarching, integrated perspective. We accomplished this by analysing four different factors with regard to each metropolitan area: how they perform their governance activities, how they interact with other cities, what international actions they undertake, and how they prioritise the incidence of international urban agendas. We have also analysed their internationalisation strategies. Barcelona's internationalisation process as a global city still faces important challenges. As such, it is

important to ensure that a range of metropolitan stakeholders are involved in the process, including the private sector, academia and civil society.

**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, the Barcelona City Council and the people who worked actively on this study, Eva García Chueca and Diego Álvarez.

This study is an analysis of the action of five metropolitan areas located around the world, all of which are dynamic and integral and work with transfer of knowledge and articulation through city networks and decentralised cooperation. We took four factors into account to build this analysis: governance, city diplomacy, the economic dimension and decentralised cooperation. We have made a comparison between, on the one hand, what all these metropolises are doing, and on the other, what we are doing in Barcelona, in terms of actions being taken in the metropolitan area and the involvement

of metropolitan stakeholders. One of the issues that we have to tackle is the lack of coordination between institutions in metropolitan areas, even those with strong internationalisation strategies. This is the case of Barcelona.

We have also analysed the degree to which these cities engage in resource investment. The governmental structures of most of these cities tend to place a priority on internationalisation and to allocate resources and human capital to internationalisation efforts. The study revealed that some of these cities have metropolitan actors with international agendas of their own, priorities that are even broader and stronger than those of the metropolitan governments. Therefore, we need to work towards generating synergies. The majority of these cities have understood this, and they operate with these concerns in mind. When we talk about metropolitan actors, we are referring to the private sector, academia, civil society and other spheres of government, and for this reason it is so important to forge strong links.

It is relevant to note that none of the cities in the study has carried out an analysis of the externalities of internationalisation, and this issue should be on our agenda, especially with regard to the economic dimension. We should analyse some of the negative externalities of internationalisation, things like gentrification, cruise ship pollution, etc., because currently we are not drawing links between the ways we assess internationalisation and the negative

externalities of this phenomenon. We need to do this if we are eventually going to create strategies to mitigate these negative effects.

We have observed that knowledge is at the centre of city diplomacy. All the city networks of which Barcelona is a member, and all those that are based in the city, work to exchange knowledge and to share urban strategies to tackle the common challenges they all face. A perfect example of this is how ACI Medellín has an area exclusively devoted to the generation of knowledge within its international cooperation department.

Regarding international cooperation, it is important to point out that it is the third big pillar of a city's internationalisation processes, after talent and resource attraction. This issue has seen a very fast process of evolution. Cooperation has moved in the direction of a decentralised model, away from providing assistance and toward more horizontal and participative practices, ones in which knowledge is the key resource. We are immersed in a reality of global cities that are competitive, that are allocating resources to the international agenda, that are aware of the need to build connections with other cities in order to create synergies, as well as the need to report back to the citizenship on their strategies. We still have a long way to go to develop the international action of cities as a public policy, in order to translate these efforts into positive impacts in terms of social, economic and environmental development.

## 4. Metropolitan Areas Panel discussion and lessons for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area



Moderator: **Paola Andrea Arjona**, Deputy Director at AL-LAs Alliance

The aim of this panel is to discuss and to gain first-hand knowledge of all your experiences concerning the internationalisation of metropolitan areas: What is it about? What are the main challenges? How have you established internationalisation strategies in your own metropolitan areas?

Following the presentation of CIDOB's study on the international action of metropolitan areas, we believe that this exercise will be particularly interesting, because even though there are cities represented in this room with clear and comprehensive internationalisation strategies, we also have experiences directed specifically to migration with public policies, strategies and specialised areas on this particular matter such as Manchester and Amsterdam. A middle ground might be ACI Medellin, which has with two important areas with regard to

internationalisation: international cooperation and investment. The metropolitan area of Barcelona and Montevideo are metropolises who have based their internationalisation strategies on their international cooperation areas.

*Why do you believe you have to be more open to the world? And how are your internationalisation strategies structured?*

**Martin Bekker**, Senior in Economics and Labour Market at the Metropole Region Amsterdam

It is our history, we have always been for internationalisation. Although our international history has not always been very nice with our colonies, we are working on creating an atmosphere in which internationals can feel at home in our region, and that is what we have been doing during the last year. Over the past two years we have started to try to move the international

organisations from the city centre to the more distant parts of the region in order to dynamise the area adjacent to Amsterdam.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

For the city of Medellin, the relationship with the rest of the world is very important, because it is a way not only to share the good practices that we have in the city, but also to learn from other global metropolises and big cities, which have a lot to teach us. We are always looking for ways to improve the citizens' quality of life, and in order to construct a society in which we all benefit, it is important to open up and be available to listen and learn from what other cities have to teach us. For us, internationalisation is the path to follow, not just to learn, but also to share and teach others about many of the things we are doing well when it comes to urban planning, mobility and climate change. All of this has been very relevant and important for the city.

**Véronique Doucet**, Director of the Economic Development Department of the City of Montreal

We need to be international mainly for our businesses. The city of Montreal has 60,000 SMEs and almost 50% of them have fewer than five employees, so the market in Montreal is not big enough, and in fact the market in Canada is not big enough. We also need to learn, because we all share some problems such as sustainability. We need to reach out to one another to learn more about what we can do and what ideas we can incorporate from other cities in order for all of us to grow faster together. We need to attract foreign interest. This is very important for Montreal.

**Nelson Fernández**, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the city of Montevideo

I have two answers, one very brief, which is that we need internationalisation because of our history, because of our culture and out of necessity, and one a bit longer, and it's that for us internationalisation it's not an end in itself but a means to achieve the local government's strategic objectives, a process that can translate into improvements in citizens'

quality of life. The case of Uruguay is very close to that of Amsterdam. We are a small country with small population. Montevideo has only one and a half million inhabitants and a small market, but there are a few conditions that make us different: we are one of the nine most digitalised countries in the world, between 87% and 88% of the population have smartphones, and we have a 98% literacy rate. We could say we act like a sponge in soaking up knowledge from other realities, but at the same time we too have something to offer.

Also, because over 25 years of Montevideo's history with internationalisation, we have moved from the old concept of internationalisation for development, where the donor country decided what you had to do and how you should do it, to a decentralised cooperation model, one which is much more supportive, equal and cooperative, and I think that the challenge is that in the future the decentralised cooperation needs cities' internationalisation to be fully present as a public policy.

**David Rogerson**, Principal for Strategy and Policy at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

The internationalisation strategy of Manchester shows what we need to do. Underpinning everything we as a city do is our aim for an approach to growth, one that lets us boost the economy in the city and region, and also carry out reforms to services. Internationalisation is a key way of doing that. We need to attract investments, we need to attract skills, we also need to attract talent, and we need to do profiles, but also, internationalisation is the way that we learn from other places, beyond purely economics. For instance, we only recently elected a mayor of Greater Manchester, our city region. Our mayor has agreements with the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), looking at interesting things related to trade. We also have common objectives, one of them being a desire to provide better services. We wish to tackle problems such as what to do with an aging population and homelessness. I think we'd also like to add some of the new ways of thinking about how to provide good governance, so in terms of citizen participation how do we actually engage citizens at the most equal level so that they feel included. Internationalisation also refers to the history of Greater Manchester,

which is the home of the industrial revolution. It once encouraged people from across the globe to come to Greater Manchester, and I think that is a tradition that we wish to look back on and then project into the future.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanacas**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

I would like to present a few ideas, the first one being that it's true that Barcelona is a city, a metropolis, that is becoming more internationalised, a city that has such a wide range of actors participating in its internationalisation process, a city that is "on the map". However, in the particular case of the Metropolitan Area, this internationalisation is possible because there is a political will to achieve it. Because if there is no political will or means to attain internationalisation goals, is very difficult to accomplish them. Having said that, our international action is particularly focused on the policies and services developed by the AMB in a joint effort with metropolitan governance. The phenomenon of "metropolisation" is a recent phenomenon, and models such as our own are worthy of sharing with other, but in broad terms, we perceive our international activities as a means to an end, allowing us to be more innovative in our services and policies and to attract opportunities for our organisation and our metropolitan stakeholders. We count with different instruments, our European projects not only to attract funds but also as a mean to innovate, all the bilateral actions that we develop, the work that we develop within our networks which is very important for us. These networks are critical instruments that we use in our activities. Another instrument we employ is international cooperation, an area in which we have our own plan for the years 2017-2019. This framework has allowed us to allocate 0.7% of the AMB budget to developing countries. The international economic dimension of AMB is another important aspect and an area in which the Barcelona Metropolitan Area is doing major work in cooperation with other types of administration and stakeholders.

Moderator: **Paola Andrea Arjona**, Deputy Director at AL-LAs Alliance

We can highlight a few main ideas after these first rounds of questions:

Internationalisation is not an end in itself, the importance of having the political will to advance and promote policies and strategies, the importance of the involvement of different actors in the internationalisation process.

*Who are the strategic actors in the process of internationalisation? What is their role within this process?*

**Martin Bekker**, Senior in Economics and Labour Market at the Metropole Region Amsterdam

In the region of Amsterdam, we now work with different economic actors, mainly corporations, universities, organisations. These stakeholders are focused mainly on private cooperation, but they are also present in the international arena. We also collaborate with a network of several municipalities from the region. All the partners in the region agreed to use the platform called "I Am Amsterdam", which is a very useful tool for matters such as tourism, international organisations, etc.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

In the ACI Medellin, we are working on two different fronts: international cooperation for development and attracting foreign investment. These two spheres are both very connected with the internationalisation process, but each of them involves different actors. In the case of international cooperation, multilateral actors are our main allies, while in the case of foreign investment we have to work hand-in-hand with the private sector in the city as well as academia, since they're in charge of creating strategies and helping us to appeal to people who are considering coming to Medellin to invest. We work in concert with a number of stakeholders and allies, and the whole public sector is involved in looking for opportunities

outside of the city. The city's different public sector departments and entities are committed to the city's internationalisation process.

**Véronique Doucet**, Director of the Economic Development Department of the City of Montreal

The region of Montreal contains 82 municipalities and close to 500 elected officials, which explains why it's not always easy to build alliances among all the administrations. But we do have some partnerships and alliances, for example with Quebec and all the officials they have all over the world. The city of Montreal and the 82 municipalities have signed the "Montreal International Plan". There are also 65 international organisations based in Montreal, and we work very closely with them, as well as with non-profit organisations.

**Nelson Fernández**, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the city of Montevideo

The internationalisation process in Montevideo is based on the work we are carrying out within the networks we belong to. As a small city, we decided to reach beyond the borders of South America and work within city networks such as Metropolis, UGLG and AL-LAs. The first step in this process was to make a long-term commitment by creating and professionalising the international team within our local government. An international and global city needs human and financial resources, and we understood the need to obtain and share knowledge rather than focusing only on monetary resources. As of today, the international area reports directly to the Mayor's Office, the culmination of the first phase of our internationalisation process. We also believe in validating this process with organised civil society institutions: academia, labour unions, etc. as well as reaching out to the rest of the population in order to ensure that the strategy we are currently implementing can live on after this government's mandate.

**David Rogerson**, Principal for Strategy and Policy at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Part of what we did in the city was to take as our organising principle a belief in involving the Greater Manchester districts, companies, the national

government. These stakeholders are already involved in a wide range of programmes: business, tourism, investments and, of course, the private sector. Overall, those are the main actors who participate in our international strategy. In terms of delivery, the private and public sector work closely with universities to raise the profile of the city and to attract more talent. As we advance in our efforts, civil society progresses with us.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanca**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

Even though the Barcelona Metropolitan Area does not have a written strategic international plan, the strategy is very clear. AMB has a plan for its four-year political term, a document featuring highly specific and detailed language on international and cooperation activities. The AMB international relations team is very comfortable working within the framework of this planning instrument. Regarding stakeholders, for us the support and involvement of all the different technical areas and departments of our institution (AMB) are critical, and it is crucial for these departments in turn to have the support of elected or politically appointed officials. The 36 municipalities that are part of the Metropolitan Area are also very important. Although some of them take a more active role in international activities than others, they can always rely on our support. Other economic actors, universities and NGOs are also very active in Barcelona and Catalonia. We do collaborate with these entities, but currently we don't have with a specific framework that encompasses all our work in this area. Meanwhile, an important role is played by networks such as MedCities, Metropolis and EMA, all of which are key parts of our strategy. In Catalonia, there are lots of institutions acting on an international scale, but we do not have enough cooperation mechanisms in place to allow us to closely collaborate and share with each other. I believe this is something that we can work further on.

Moderator: **Paola Andrea Arjona**, Deputy Director at AL-LAs Alliance

*What strategies are you developing to demonstrate that the work on internationalisation has an impact on citizens' quality of life?*

**Martin Bekker**, Senior in Economics and Labour Market at the Metropole Region Amsterdam

Two years ago, as a result of Brexit, many companies moved from London to Amsterdam, sparking a political debate. We started a process to try to convince those people who came from London to invest in our region and to show them how to look for housing and schools. There was a campaign to convince them to move to Amsterdam region, and it worked, because now more than half of Amsterdam's population is foreign born. We also have started to create new international schools in cities outside of Amsterdam without large populations.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

Most of the time, citizens don't realise all that the internationalisation process does for them. This year, we signed the most important international cooperation agreement the city of Medellin has ever had, and it will help us invest in the kind of mobility projects that will positively influence our transport system, benefitting the quality of life of everyone in the city. All the citizens can consult the numbers presented in our international cooperation plan, where they can see all the foreign enterprises that have come to the city and are creating jobs.

**Nelson Fernández**, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the city of Montevideo

Measuring the effects of international action is a challenge, and we should not limit ourselves to measuring them in solely financial terms. This assessment process should be based on the strategic objectives of the institution, because international action is at the service of the institutions. We should show how our international actions have helped achieve the strategic objectives of our institutions.

**David Rogerson**, Principal for Strategy and Policy at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

In terms of making sure that people understand the positive outcomes of internationalisation, we have

confidence that our strategy has shown benefits in terms of investment and jobs and attracting skilled workers. Internationalisation needs to go hand-in-hand with local people in order to ensure that they complement each other. Our strategy is not very longstanding, so it is hard to specifically measure the impacts of the initial actions taken. England remains a highly centralised country, and we need to work on gaining more powers and greater flexibility for our cities. Given the current uncertainty around Brexit and the UK's future trading relationships with the rest of the world, there is a need for flexibility around the timing for the completion of the new strategy.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanca**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

International action is usually measured by indicators such as the funds obtained, the number of companies present in the territory, and figures on investments and events, but there are other factors that have to be taken into account, including lobbying and knowledge creation. These factors end up influencing public policies and the services offered by our organisations. The changes generated by the implementation of international cooperation projects in developing countries are difficult to measure, and that is why it is important to come up with indicators that make sense to the people who will end up making the decisions.

*Questions and comments from the audience:*

**Octavi de la Varga Mas**, Secretary General of Metropolis

The international strategy we apply in our territory is based on investments, innovation, and talent. In order to create better strategies to benefit a given territory, it is very important to decide what kind of actors you would like to cooperate with, as well as whom you will be competing with.

**Eugene Zapata Garesché**, Managing Director for Latin America at 100 Resilient Cities

We have spoken about how the city's openness to the world and the public policy of internationalisation can benefit the city. Nevertheless, I think that the step

that Metropolis should take is to determine why all these cities are gathered today to open themselves up to the rest of the world. Is it only to benefit themselves? I think that there shouldn't be only a two-way rather than a one-way international strategy. A city should attract investment, culture, students, etc., but it should also contribute to improving the conditions of the planet. This is a more long-term perspective. I know that this is a controversial issue because politicians have a mandate to improve the quality of life of their immediate constituents, but nowadays they can't just do that.

An example of this is Mexico City, which implemented the Cultural Agenda 21, a plan that made culture one of the axes of its international strategy. Montevideo also made the fight against discrimination one of its international priorities. Madrid is committed to the struggle against urban violence, not only to benefit Madrid, but also to place this issue on the global agenda.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanacas**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

There is an obligation for cities to maintain networks and international relations. It makes sense to seek out the best practices and ways to address the existing problems.

The international agenda and the actions of any local or regional government should be accompanied by a huge communication effort and by accountability measures. Citizen engagement is also very important, but it is more difficult to implement. At the same time, there has to be some pedagogy inside your own organisation, where sometimes even your colleagues are sceptical about international relations.

**Mariana Flores Mayén**, General Coordination of Advisors and International Affairs of the City of Mexico

I think it is important to understand that our role in cities has to do with how do we orient and articulate our strategies to benefit not only our cities themselves, but also the rest of the world. I think it is not so clear that we are moving towards building a steady and long-term internationalisation for the world's cities. I've seen cases where international action has ceased to be an important matter to metropolises. We have to make a constant effort to ensure that the tendency we are witnessing is not reversed. We can do this not only via our international action, but also through many other public policies. Our capacity as metropolitan areas is today more dynamic. Our capacity for action and for forging connections is easier than at the national level, and we have to use this capacity to focus attention and efforts on the kinds of topics that are harder to introduce at the national level.

## 5. Expert sessions



### **Session I: The Economic Dimension of Metropolitan International Action**

Moderator: **Eva García Chueca**, Senior Research Fellow and Global Cities Programme Scientific Coordinator at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

What new alliances can be built to boost economic development through internationalisation?  
How can we channel the benefits of economic internationalisation to enhance quality of life and at the same time foster economic development? And what strategies can institutions and governments put in place to that end?

The main goal of this session will be to discuss the impact of stakeholders like economic development agencies, international business, and clusters and hubs on internationalisation strategies. The session will also include a reflection on the economic effects of international activities such as fairs, congresses and activities held in the major international cities in the world.

*What new alliances can be forged to boost economic development through internationalisation?*

**Diego Guri Fernández**, Deputy General Manager of AEMEC (Association of the Internationalized Industrial Enterprises)

The first question that arises is whether international action is an instrument or an objective.

International action, in my opinion, is a question of public policy. The main problem is that most of the time, people give more importance to outputs than to outcomes. They focus on the number of foreign companies or investments without considering why attracting investment and promoting exports is necessary. To do so, a change of logic is needed, as we must think first about our main objectives and goals in order to pursue the proper solutions.

Internationalisation is good for a territory, and therefore as an instrument, it must be evident in public policies. Internationalisation is good for the country *per se*, but it is also crucial to take into account the negative externalities of internationalisation. We should not refer merely to making connections between stakeholders, but instead should talk about an ecosystem of actors who work together to reach a common objective.

In the case of the private sector, competitors have to collaborate and compete at the same time. This is why coordination and complementarity are necessary. Being involved means being generous and receiving value at the same time, putting common interests at the centre. Common challenges are impossible to face without collaboration. Collaboration makes sense within a strategic approach where all the private and public stakeholders have a holistic and comprehensive vision of the internationalisation process.

Internationalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon involving tourism, technology, knowledge and events, so gathering the interest of all the stakeholders benefits the territory. It is important to determine how we want to be known abroad, what values, strengths and assets we want to communicate internationally. This international image has to be in harmony with the types of activities we want to host.

The final phase is evaluation. Normally when evaluating, we look for successes, but it is also

important to look for mistakes and create systems that allow us to learn from them.

**Mario Rubert Català**, City Promotion Director at the Barcelona City Council

In order to internationalise businesses, two bodies of expertise need to be defined. One is aimed at helping companies to go abroad, and the other is about attracting companies to the territory. Some governments prefer to address these two goals together within a single entity, but in order to have the different kinds of expertise you need to tackle different challenges, these two areas should be covered by separate agencies. In the same way, a digital hub alliance has been created by the Barcelona City Council and other associations to tackle two main goals. The first one is focused on trying to grow talent inside the city, and the second one is focused on how to go abroad to attract talent.

In the case of the city of Barcelona, in order to align all the assets and all the players involved in international relations, every three months a roundtable discussion is held to bring together the main regional players such as the airport, the port, the free trade zone, etc. During this discussion, the main challenges and actions are presented so that everybody knows what the other players are doing. Present and future actions are shared. Moreover, there is another body called the “Consell de Ciutat” that every year brings together the big players in the city. This is an opportunity to explain the city’s strategic plan “on a more political level,” to discuss future actions and to make connections between shared initiatives.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanca**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

Sometimes city promotion and the economic side of international relations go in only one direction, and these activities are not always fully coordinated with institutional strategy. For instance, in the case of branding, when the Barcelona Metropolitan Area goes abroad, it needs to know what the brand is. It is important to highlight not only the characteristics of the city, but also those of the greater metropolitan region. Therefore, closer cooperation between the city and the metropolitan institutions is important

in that it allows us to work closely to define an international and economic strategy. When thinking about Barcelona's branding, I believe that besides the five principles that define this brand (connection, initiative, soul, contrast, talent and commitment) we should add healthy and green.

**Véronique Doucet**, Director of the Economic Development Department of the City of Montreal

In the case of Montreal, when talking about internationalisation of the city, only one brand is used, with the name of Montreal. However, when it comes to investment, the companies interested in investing in the region must decide in which metropolitan municipality they want to settle. The brand is good when the region goes abroad, but within the region's borders it becomes much complicated. In this way, when talking about attracting investment in the Montreal region the brand is Montreal International. Montreal has two levels of branding, depending on the purpose.

**James Sharples**, Policy Manager at the Liverpool City Region

Liverpool City Region has an internationalisation strategy that benefits around one-and-a-half million people. It is very focused on economic development and the organisation that led its development, the Local Enterprise Partnership, is an economic development body. Our strategy may also be economically focused because our indicators suggest we need to do it this way: we are behind the national and European average on GDP/capita and other measures.

We are increasingly working on internationalisation at a metropolitan level. Our strategy focuses on how businesses can expand their profits and investment and how they can improve. The capacity of a place to internationalise is very much linked to the wider economic situation of that place.

We also have a cultural approach, as well as a focus on tourism. Liverpool has become the 5<sup>th</sup> most visited city in the UK after having been 18<sup>th</sup> in the ranking. We have a festival for business in which the government has invested about 5 million pounds every two years.

**Alexander Heichlinger**, Co-Founder & Chair CEFG Group Expert & Manager at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)

Each city or region needs an identity. This identity is based in two or three elements that show the appeal of the territory. These elements should answer the question "What do you know about \_\_\_\_\_?", so the answer to this question are the elements and aspects to sell internationally. Once the identity is determined, the territory can go on to position itself in the international arena.

**Mariana Flores Mayén**, General Coordination of Advisors and International Affairs of the City of Mexico

The integration between Mexico City and its metropolitan area has come about naturally. Some examples of metropolitan coordination can be cited, for example, when it comes to environmental issues. However, no institutional decision has been taken to commit to a holistic, metropolitan institutional way of thinking. Because of that, there is not a functioning metropolitan strategy regarding transportation or water issues. An international strategy for the metropolitan region of Mexico is still far off.

When thinking about an international strategy that a city uses to attract investments and talent, the first step is to have a clear idea of what we want. Therefore, when creating the strategy, some specific areas where the government wants to invest and attract investment were underlined. It is important to make sure that the city performs well in those areas. The next step was creating a common narrative to talk to the different stakeholders and tackle the common issues that had been decided on, topics such as mobility, sustainability, climate change, etc.

**Marta Almela Salvador**, Open Government and General Services at Sant Feliu de Llobregat City Council

The metropolitan area has an important role in the internationalisation process of small metropolitan municipalities. It helps them to get the resources they need to build an international strategy. The metropolitan area should assist metropolitan municipalities to build something more beyond the

Barcelona brand. Thus, when a company is thinking about moving to Barcelona, the company knows that it is not necessary to be in the city but that it could also work to be in the surrounding municipalities.

**Diego Guri Fernández**, Deputy General Manager of AEMEC (Association of the Internationalized Industrial Enterprises)

Local authorities should work together like elements of an ecosystem. Therefore, generosity between the metropolitan municipalities is needed in order to work collaboratively toward common objectives and goals. Export promotion is a good opportunity for metropolitan areas to internationalise. It is not necessary to create an export promotion agency. However, metropolitan areas have the opportunity to at least act as observers of the opportunities and threats companies face in the territory. In this way, metropolitan municipalities have the opportunity to help companies and boost economic development in the territory. To succeed in international promotion, soft skills such as good relations, a cultural dimension and adaptability are also crucial.

**Gemma Garcia Faura**, Strategy Analyst at the Port of Barcelona

The Port of Barcelona is a public company that belongs to the Ministry of Public Ports. It manages the port area that spans two municipalities, Barcelona and El Prat de Llobregat. The board of directors includes representatives of both municipalities. More than 500 companies are part of the Barcelona port community, which is an international community in and of itself. The Port cooperates with the cities and the region when it comes to international strategies.

The Port of Barcelona's mission is to provide sustainable infrastructures and services to make our customers competitive in the global economy. The international strategy is focused on helping customers to be competitive in the global market. To do so, the Port establishes cooperation agreements with other ports and shipping lines in order to have the fastest maritime services. The current goal is not to grow in terms of passengers, but to grow in terms of quality of passengers. That means increasing the number of passengers that may start and finish

their cruise in Barcelona, rather than the ones that spend only a few hours in our city. The cooperation between the Port and the cities regards issues as sustainability and international affairs.

Currently the work is focused on the 2020-2025 strategic plan. This plan will have three main axes: sustainability, collaboration and competitiveness. The goal is to determine which sectors will grow the most in the coming years and to identify the differential factors that can help Barcelona and the area to attract businesses from these sectors.

**Marta Galcerán Vercher**, Programme Coordinator at the Smart City Expo World Congress

Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC) is one of the largest and fastest-growing events taking place in the city of Barcelona. In only nine years, it has doubled its number of participants. The last edition drew more than 20.000 attendees, among them representatives of more than 700 cities. Barcelona uses this event as a strategic tool to promote the local ecosystem of companies abroad, as well as to establish a leadership position in key policy areas (e.g. digital rights, housing and the sharing economy). Besides, Barcelona has used this event to launch a number of coalitions of cities wishing to work and collaborate further on some of these topics (e.g. Cities Coalition for Digital Rights). The growing number of cities attending the SCEWC attests to its value for local governments and metropolitan areas. Indeed, going abroad provides for an excellent opportunity for cities to promote their brands and exhibit their strategies. At the same time, cities are also promoting their local economies when they attend the event with local companies. When developing and showcasing a brand, the local innovation ecosystem should be included. For local companies, going abroad along with their local governments constitutes an opportunity not only to network with other companies, but also to publicize themselves as part of a city's brand. In short, events like SCEWC are a tool that cities can use to internationalise and to promote their values and goals.

Moderator: **Eva García Chueca**, Senior Research Fellow and Global Cities Programme Scientific Coordinator at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

To what extent can economic promotion and city branding strategies serve as spaces that allow us to build city narratives? City narratives are frameworks that emphasise certain values or political priorities. Economic promotion is a technical but also a political issue. We have to tackle the issue of externalities, in the belief that internationalisation is good *per se*.

*How can we measure or address these externalities related to internationalisation?*

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanacas**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

Some of the main externalities for the metropolitan area of Barcelona are traffic, pollution, air quality and logistics, among others. The territory of the AMB houses important infrastructures like the port, the airport, high-speed rail and motorways, all of which can be connected to externalities. The main problem is that the metropolitan area lacks a voice regarding these infrastructures at both the institutional and the strategic level. In my opinion, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area should be made aware of Barcelona city's priorities, and so the two institutions need to share their priorities and create a common narrative that allows them to face global externalities and other challenges together.

**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

Externalities are not only linked to internationalisation. The Mobile World Congress for many years has been promoting a platform economy, and we have an ecosystem of start-ups and some relevant companies wanting to move to Barcelona. At the same time, there is a certain contradiction, because Barcelona has a big problem with some start-ups coming to the city and sparking some negative consequences for the citizens. The contradiction is the fact that Barcelona hosts two major events to promote the city but at the same time, these events cause large negative externalities.

The question is how to manage these negative externalities. We need to forge links between policy makers and the people that are trying to measure the impact of such events, and we must link our efforts to meet these kinds of challenges with our broader international strategies. It is feasible, but nobody is doing it, because it is really hard to explain that something that attracts so many international companies, students and talent can also bring negative consequences.

**Eugene Zapata Garesché**, Managing Director for Latin America at 100 Resilient Cities

Who are the allies of cities and metropolitan areas in international strategy? In the 100 Resilient Cities programme, we have learnt that access to international media can really benefit a city's efforts to boost its internationalisation. When a city that is not the capital appears in the national press, it is mostly because of bad news. But if it is something good, it is not going to appear on the front page. Since the mandates of city authorities are local, it is sometimes hard for them to gain access to the international press. Articles in international newspapers about local activities in certain cities can be a good first step for those cities to start getting involved in the international arena. But they often lack the capacity, the will or the means to engage with an internationalisation strategy.

**Josep Borràs Martin**, Economic development officer at the Economic Development Agency of the AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

The Economic Development Agency of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area is of recent creation. At this moment, the goal is to gather data on the impact of ongoing projects. With this initial aim in mind, the main focus has been on building partnerships. For the Agency, it is very important to have a network of contacts with local stakeholders, but at the same time to be in touch with international stakeholders. The Agency cooperates with the Barcelona City Council and the Government of Catalonia in building a territorial brand to attract businesses (Barcelona Catalonia Project). At the same time, it is important to highlight our programmes for the retention of business that are already working in the metropolitan area.



## Session II: Metropolitan Internationalisation through Human Capital

Moderator: **Carlota Rosés Montesinos**, International Relations Project Officer at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

In today's session, we will focus on Human Capital and look at why attracting talent and companies such as start-ups is a key to our metropolitan areas' International reputations. Some of the issues that we want to discuss today are included in the methodology.

*How do our cities benefit from hosting global companies? How does this spill over and benefit the rest of the citizens in the city and in the metropolitan area? How do we attract this talent? Is it only by attracting investments, or can it also be done through other tools such as cultural events? What is the role of universities and research centres, and how do we work with these institutions so that the talent we attract stays with us. The latest trends and tools being used to attract talent are practices*

*like scientific diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Finally, how do we make sure that the talent we are attracting doesn't generate externalities, and if it does, how do we manage the burden this might cause?*

**Alexis Roig**, CEO of SciTech DiploHub

The concept of science diplomacy refers to all sorts of scientific, technological and academic collaborations between cities, countries and regions undertaken with the aim of addressing common issues and building sound partnerships. It means both using diplomacy and international relations as a way to achieve scientific progress through cooperation between regions, cities, etc., and the other way around, using science as a tool of softer power to facilitate relationships among territories. The new approach using soft power views science as a neutral, transparent, universal language and considers how science might make it easier to build relationships. Present challenges such as global health and climate change have placed science and technology at the centre of international relations. Considering that cities and urban areas concentrate

most of the world's scientific production and most of its universities and talent, it was about time that some cities started to put together city diplomacy and science diplomacy.

Some of the initiatives Barcelona has started to implement regarding science diplomacy are also supported by private-public partnerships. In 2018, a group of scientists, researchers and people involved in international organisations based in the city came together to launch what they have called the SciTech Diplohub strategy. Its aim is to design and implement a science and technology diplomacy strategy for Barcelona, one that represents our knowledge and innovation ecosystem abroad with the ultimate goal of positioning Barcelona as a more influential geo-political actor.

One project we are working on called is "Barcelona Alumni." It is a talent retention project with a kind of different approach. The main concern of those who invest in talent and human capital is that this talent eventually leaves, and this is especially true in the globalised world we live in today. Our approach was to say, "Let's retain this talent wherever the talent goes," and we launched this platform for the whole city. Barcelona Alumni is a global network of highly achieving professionals in science, technology and innovation from any origin that have spent a substantial time of their lives studying at our universities. Now, they're the diaspora of our knowledge ecosystem, highly achieving professionals who occupy important positions around the world. These people are keen to help us find opportunities and open doors, and they are eager to give back to Barcelona. This project shows us that we should not talk about the brain drain, but about brain mobility, because this network is very useful for all of our different projects. Our approach is always to partner with the government of whatever city we visit and with local universities in order to bring about a win-win situation.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanacas**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

This is a public-private partnership, and institutions should have a bigger role. The challenge is to what extent this initiative can merge the research and innovation that we are developing in our

governments and to what extent we can work together to build alliances.

**Hannah Abdullah**, Researcher at CIDOB's (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) Global Cities Programme

I think we need to ask ourselves how science diplomacy relates to city diplomacy, and how it can become an integral part of city diplomacy. The work SciTech DiploHub is doing in this regard is very important. They are helping city governments to recognise the potential of city-led science diplomacy and supporting them as they develop their own strategies. However, the city governments they work with also have a responsibility to integrate science diplomacy into their broader internationalisation strategies. For example, they need to raise awareness of new efforts to develop city-led science diplomacy strategies within the city networks of which they are members. Currently, there are few to no city networks explicitly working on science diplomacy. But the international structures that city networks constitute could be used very effectively to further develop city-led science diplomacy. At the same time, city networks need to understand that city-led science diplomacy can greatly contribute to efforts around the localisation of the SDGs.

**Alexis Roig**, CEO of SciTech DiploHub

I agree that the AMB should join our board. As we see it, Barcelona as a global city is not just the city itself, but the whole regional area of Barcelona and Catalonia. We try to see the world this way: a set of global cities. How do we get the most out of the knowledge we generate? I am not completely sure how often this knowledge is gathered and brought together via a tool so that it can be shared in the same way universities or research centres do. Much as many other good practices can be shared in city networks, this could be a practice that could be implemented. Regarding funding, our board includes private and public members who are helping us design the strategic lines of this science diplomacy strategy and contributing some of the project's financing. We work with the city council, several institutions from the Catalan government like the Trade Agency, the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, Barcelona Tech City (the city's main

association of start-ups), private foundations such as La Caixa Foundation, Banco Sabadell Foundation, Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation, as well as other private and public partners from the fields of science, technology and international relations. We also seek out sponsorships for specific projects and initiatives.

We also do capacity building for science diplomacy. We train people about its role and inform them about what cities, regions or metropolitan areas can do in this sphere. We have helped a number of other cities to implement science diplomacy strategies, and we are currently helping the cities of Boston, Paris and Geneva. Every other month we organise events where we bring together 100 diplomatic representatives in the city with our research and innovative ecosystem. We also work with UNESCO, and we are currently collaborating with them to design a UNESCO network of cities with science diplomacy strategies. Finally, we are also working with the UNDP in Asia Pacific to design a strategy for Bangladesh and with the OECD in Latin America on how to introduce the issue of science as a priority in the work they do with cities.

**Marta Galcerán Vercher**, Programme Coordinator at the Smart City Expo World Congress

For the Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC), we collaborate with the innovation ecosystem of the city, including most of the universities and research centres in Catalonia, start-ups, and all sorts of citizen-led initiatives. Events such as SCEWC provide an excellent platform that can be used by the city to attract talent, because these events attract some of the key players involved in science and innovation.

**Alexis Roig**, CEO of SciTech DiploHub

The UK is probably the country doing the best job of applying science diplomacy, but they do not have a unified document specifying what they are doing. In the case of Barcelona, we should talk more about a science diplomacy action plan. We have drafted some guidelines with our board members, and these standards have continued to be adapted and expanded over time. Science diplomacy strategy plans rely on having a diplomatic network of embassies and consulates. In the case of cities such as Boston, it will

probably be a more specific strategy, because they have little metropolitan area governance.

**James Sharples**, Policy Manager at the Liverpool City Region

Liverpool's economic level is considerably lower than the rest of the UK, and we have struggled a bit to make our city known internationally. Despite this, our university is one of the major research centres in the UK and one of the biggest in terms of number of students. We have a big concern with regard to keeping our students in the city and region and also have faced obstacles when it comes to commercialising a lot of the research that is being done in those universities.

Culture is important because it helps to enhance the liveability of the city, which then helps to make it an attractive place for those people to stay. Liverpool has become known as a "festival city". In terms of culture, Liverpool was the European Capital of Culture in 2008, and we used that as an opportunity to focus a lot of the key infrastructure development in the city and to transform the way the city looked. It was a very successful year for public engagement at all levels of society with an international programme. It allowed us to create a city network with other cultural capitals, and it helped take our tourism sector from being the 18<sup>th</sup> destination in the country to the 5<sup>th</sup>. We have held onto that position while at the same time diversifying our tourism with more European tourists. We host the UK's biggest combined music festival and music conference called "Sound City", a visual arts biennial and an international business festival.

We have done a lot of analytical work around the impact of culture on our economy and society. This started with the Impacts 08 study on the impact of the Capital of Culture, and it continues today. The university is instrumental in this.

**Mercedes Giovinazzo**, Director at InterArts Foundation

We have almost 25 years of experience in international cultural cooperation and 10 years of experience with development cooperation through culture. I believe that audience engagement is indeed one of the issues that should be addressed

to help us understand how cultural activities can facilitate a sense of ownership among citizens and real participation in public life within a social context. There are instruments such as the Faro Convention on cultural heritage, a document that enshrines the idea of governance of heritage, a way to promote a sense of ownership and real participation in rehabilitation processes that makes it possible to integrate heritage sites into the territory. I feel that cultural diplomacy is often understood as the prerogative of central governments and their national cultural institutes because it can be a complex issue to tackle. Therefore, there might be a need to facilitate dialogue with the national cultural institutes to come to an understanding of who does what without any conflicts.

Moderator: **Carlota Rosés Montesinos**, International Relations Project Officer at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

*How do the cities or metropolitan areas you represent link themselves with the universities present in your territory? How do they form these kinds of partnerships?*

**Nelson Fernández**, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the city of Montevideo

The Montevideo Group is a partnership with the public university in Montevideo. We do not need any other help to keep researchers and scientists because they have their own systems of cooperation and of exchanges for students and professors. The city and the public programme and strategy is only one. We try to do horizontal work between the different areas of our institutions. Outside of them, we have a lot of new initiatives that we need to hear and understand.

**Mariana Flores Mayén**, General Coordination of Advisors and International Affairs of the City of Mexico

Mexico City is part of the commission of culture of UCLG, and when we decided to become a part of this group, we decided that we wanted not only to benefit from other cities but also to help the group to become a platform to share knowledge and cultural activities with other cities. Culture is a very important part of our overarching strategies and one of the main sources of tourism. This has given

Mexico City the opportunity to show off some of its cultural initiatives. Overall, culture has been very important in our dialogue with other cities, mainly in Latin America. In 2021, we will be the Ibero-American capital of culture.

**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

The relationship between universities and metro cities has always existed, and it doesn't start with international relations. The challenge now is how to imbue those relationships that already exist and are very important to universities with an international dimension. Initiatives such as the EU Horizon 2020 programme have been in place for many years, and decentralised cooperation has also been practiced for a long time. We have to look back and be aware that there is a tradition of cooperation and try to reinforce these alliances.

**Hannah Abdullah**, Researcher at CIDOB's (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) Global Cities Programme

The EU launched its new cultural diplomacy strategy in 2016. The preparatory study that was commissioned before this mentions cities as one of the "under-explored potentials" of EU external cultural relations and important partners. In particular, cities could contribute to developing a kind of cultural diplomacy that is not so much about soft power and exporting cultural values, but more about intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and joint capacity building. While this still seems to be a paradigm shift at the EU and national level, this is really how European cities have been working for some time now. Unfortunately, the action plan that the EU adopted in April this year only mentions collaborations with Member States and their national cultural institutes. While there are a number of reasons for the sidestepping of cities, an important one is that cities generally do not frame the work they do in the area of international cultural relations as "cultural diplomacy", and often they do not even recognise it as part of their internationalisation strategy. Of course, this then makes it difficult to position this work in relation to external cultural action at the national and EU level.

**Alexander Heichlinger**, Co-Founder & Chair CEFG Group Expert & Manager at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)

Barcelona and Catalonia in general are extremely attractive, but the issue we face is that there are not enough tools to retain this talent, and there is not enough spending on research, development and innovation. There is a lack of coordination and communication between all the different actors present in the territory, and there is no strategic framework, particularly for funding. Barcelona is particularly attractive in the education sector, and funding and money should be allocated to this sector.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanças**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

I believe that we have to make the most of the institutions and organisations present in Barcelona. There has not been a whole lot of assessment or efforts to increase the visibility of the impact these organisations have for the metropolises in which they are present. Here is where we need political decisions and where politicians have to act, whether by punishing the organisations that are not working or by providing those that are acting effectively with additional support. Many of these organisations get strong support from the public sector, but there is a need for greater and more engaged participation from the private sector. An important example of how we are attracting resources for universities and research centres within the metropolitan area of Barcelona is the Horizon 2020 programme. It has made investments in a lot of projects based in Barcelona. We need a platform where we can capitalise on all these experiences and on the research centres that are present in our territory.

**Eugene Zapata Garesché**, Managing Director for Latin America at 100 Resilient Cities

Regarding the importance of cities hosting and being the centres of international organisations, you have positive and negative externalities. There are cities that are attractive places for international organisations due to their political neutrality, and hosting these institutions has branding advantages for the city. An externality is that locals sometimes do not like hosting these organisations, because

the cities become more expensive, and when there are big events mobility and everyday life become difficult. This is the case of New York City, for example. However, it also brings economic benefits to the cities, as well as branding and status. Other city leaders focus more on attracting international corporations into the city, due to the positive impact they have on locals in the form of job creation, development of urban areas, etc.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

Medellin has a steering committee that meets once a month, with representation of private companies, universities, members of the government and representatives of the most important research centres in the city. This is how the city of Medellin coordinates and works together with all the sectors.

**Narcís Serra**, IBEI President

The IBEI would not be possible if the city of Barcelona wasn't the city and metropolitan area that it is. Without being in such an international city, our institution would not exist, because only 20% of our students are locals, and the remaining 80% are foreigners. Sharing best practices and coming up with solutions to problems that we all share is important, but there is another task that we should engage in, namely convincing the public opinion and the authorities of the approaches that should be adopted by a big city or metropolitan area and the solutions needed at this level. Metropolitan areas are important platforms for growth and technological investment, education, etc. and we have to invest in these areas to enhance the role of metropolitan areas as such.



## Session III: Building International Metropolitan Strategies with Local Partners

Moderator: **Paola Andrea Arjona**, Deputy Director at AL-LAs Alliance

The main focus of the session is how to build international metropolitan strategies with local partners. The agendas of local actors such as companies, universities, knowledge centres, think tanks, etc. can be more influential than the agendas of local governments. International affairs offices and economic development offices are not the only main drivers of internationalisation. Many other government sectors, the private sector, civil society and universities all also take part in the overall strategy. The big challenge is to coordinate and organize all the efforts at the local level to shape a broad, inclusive and transversal internationalisation strategy.

The main challenge addressed in this session is how to learn from experience in order to discover ways to coordinate and involve different actors in building a strong international strategy.

**Eugene Zapata Garesché**, Managing Director for Latin America at 100 Resilient Cities

How can a metropolitan region internationalise itself? This is the first question we need to discuss. The internationalisation of a metropolitan region is like a game of “variable geometry”. This means that there are a lot of different shapes of actors, processes and contexts that interact at different moments. It is made up of moving pieces that come together to form a complex puzzle. There is not a one solution/way to internationalise. This flexibility can open up myriad approaches for public policy since we have a rainbow of responses and different examples.

In the case of Medellin, the city approached its internationalisation strategy from an institutional and legal perspective. On the other hand, Lyon created a single brand called *Only Lyon* that encompasses actions of both the city and the metropolitan region. Their internationalisation strategy focuses mainly on the city name and

brand. Meanwhile, Mexico City has a legal basis for its engagement in international affairs, since its Constitution has an article (Article 20) calling on the city to get involved globally.

In summary, for the purpose of international affairs of a metropolitan region, it seems that what matters is the name or the brand of the main city, as it is easier to go out into the world with only one name or one brand. Also, a formal and legal commitment where actors and priorities align is crucial to success in creating and implementing a successful internationalisation strategy.

Considering that internationalisation is a moving ecosystem, how do you coordinate? How can we know that our internationalisation actions do not only benefit the main city (brand city), but that the rest of municipalities in the metropolitan area can also see the benefits. When the strategy is being built, we really need to think about all the metropolitan municipalities.

Three things need to happen to make internationalisation a real public policy that goes beyond the centre:

1. Explicit political will to seek out stakeholder engagement.
2. Formal understanding and communication among the local actors.
3. Survive political change

**Mariana Flores Mayén**, General Coordination of Advisors and International Affairs of the City of Mexico

In 2015-2016, Mexico City started a project called “Dialogues and Capacity for a Global Mexico City” with the intention of overcoming political changes and having a coherent internationalisation strategy. The main goal was to engage all the different stakeholders and determine the main axes to pursue. The five main axes of work are:

1. Attractive city: economy, tourism, the brand
2. Sustainable city
3. Mexico City as a city of rights
4. Creative diverse city, cultures strategy
5. Mega urban laboratory, transportation, innovation, etc.

This first phase of this exercise helped Mexico City determine what path to follow. It allowed us to identify the regions in the world with whom we want to work, with Latin America, Europe and North America as our priorities. The second phase of this exercise consists of creating a public policy on internationalisation. The focus is on listening to all the local actors that already engage in internationalisation activities in order to build our own internationalisation strategy. Learning from local stakeholders and their previous experience on international action is crucial to building a strong, inclusive strategy.

**Véronique Doucet**, Director of the Economic Development Department of the City of Montreal

It takes a long process to bring all the local actors together to build a strong international strategy. The first part of Montreal's strategy was to work on international relations, and thus we first started working on a framework rather than a strategy. The idea was to really determine what had to be done and identify the next steps. These frameworks must be built upon values such as peace, human rights and sustainable development.

The first step to create the framework consisted of a lot of consultation with consulates, embassies, non-profit organisations and international organisations, all with the goal of finding out their needs and the problems we had to face. The second step was a focus on the economic aspect of international relations. To this end, we consulted over 500 people. The consultation was divided by activity sector: transport, technology and life sciences, digital, culture and the creative industry, cleantech, and universities. We also consulted big and small companies to gather information on the obstacles they have found in their efforts to grow internationally.

The outcome was the publication of eight action plans detailing the mechanisms to be used and the path to follow. One of the most significant examples is the plan called "Moving Montreal Forward" related to economic and international affairs.

The biggest lesson learned during the process was the importance of good coordination between all the actors

and stakeholders and of making sure all the parties involved are willing to follow the same path and adopt the same priorities.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

The city of Medellin does not have an international strategy, but it does have the ACI (Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín), which started in 2002. The ACI coordinates and works on the overall international strategy. A large number of actors are involved, including the local government and many other local stakeholders. ACI also forms international alliances through twinning agreements with different cities around the world. In these agreements, the city council is the body involved in defining the guidelines to be carried out and how to partner with the other cities.

**David Rogerson**, Principal for Strategy and Policy at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Manchester has a different scenario than what has been described elsewhere. Manchester has a city region government in the form of a combined authority, including the Mayor and ten leaders of the ten districts. Nowadays, there is coordination between municipalities and the city region. However, before the creation of the combined authority, municipalities had been working together voluntarily for over 30 years. The internationalisation strategy has always been a key driver of economic development and has focused on attracting talent and investment. Beyond this, we believe that it is important to change so as to have greater opportunities to develop city-to-city relationships.

**Martin Bekker**, Senior in Economics and Labour Market at the Metropole Region Amsterdam

The coordination of Metropole Region Amsterdam is only based on the signatures of 32 mayors. This allows us to work in a concept that we call "the coalition of willing" that lets us work on clear goals and missions. It has also been agreed that transparency is an important pillar, and we are committed to sharing all the steps among the parties involved so others can join if they find them to be interesting.

The Metropole Region Amsterdam is determined to be a competitive international region. This involves comparing ourselves to other EU regions and observing them to replicate the same models in the Metropole Region Amsterdam. Moreover, we want to present ourselves as a responsible capital, meaning that we are not only working for ourselves but also help other actors that need to use the name of the region to succeed in their international actions. For instance, the University of Agriculture in the eastern part of the Netherlands can use the name to publicise itself to the world.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanacas**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

The current AMB metropolitan law is from 2010. This law should be changed in the near future if there is a commitment by political parties in the territory. This legal adjustment presents a good opportunity to place the international dimension and our external action in a legal framework, and it would also signal further political will. Currently, AMB is able to take external actions because there is a degree of political will, meaning leadership, budget and resources. Another significant issue is the relation between the capital city and the metropolitan area. Barcelona is clearly the brand abroad, but the reality in Barcelona is quite different from the other metropolitan municipalities. This is an important fact to take into consideration when thinking about an internationalisation strategy. When the Barcelona ecosystem goes abroad, it is the voice of the city that is heard, meaning that from the institutional side we should build a common strategy for the metropolitan region with common voices and goals. Therefore, Barcelona city, the actor who is projecting its voice internationally, should be flexible enough to share projects, initiatives and conferences with the rest of the metropolitan territory. This initiative requires political coordination and will.

AMB should think about specific strategies to consult with the metropolitan municipalities to reach common goals, considering the close proximity to local stakeholders. The strategy to build should be shared with the metropolitan municipalities and local actors such as universities, research centres, companies, development agencies, etc., engaging them in the process in order to shape a range of

strategies with different characteristics for all the metropolitan actors.

**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

Stakeholders' engagement is a key to building a strong international agenda. Some stakeholders have extraordinary international strategies that go far beyond the agendas of cities or metropolitan regions. In Barcelona, this is the case of the Barcelona football club. In the case of AMB, the significant feature is that this local authority has a role recognised by the metropolitan municipalities and the local actors.

Thus, the first step toward creating a public internationalisation public policy is definition, meaning defining the needs of the territory and the actors involved. This is followed by implementation, engaging local stakeholders with strong international agendas and creating synergies to work together. There should also be evaluation, consisting of accountability measures and tools to assess short-term results.

**Alexander Heichlinger**, Co-Founder & Chair CEFG Group Expert & Manager at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)

In all kinds of cooperation, there is always a leader. When actors go abroad, they should go with one voice, and normally the capital city is the actor with the strongest leadership capacity. Regarding government structures, the solution is either to work together or to merge. Métropole de Bordeaux is a good example of merging. The metropolitan authority has become the body in charge of all the departments since all the governments merged. For instance, there is only one director for international relations. In some cases, merging is impossible. Then, informal partnerships are an outstanding solution.

**Octavi de la Varga Mas**, Secretary General of Metropolis

When talking about city-regions, we are talking about an enormous complexity with many different

models. Metropolitan spaces are complex, and the administrative borders do not match the reality. The nature of metropolitan areas is changing all the time, in terms of movement of people, priorities and development. In this sense, metropolitan areas are agents of disruption, overlapping with other actors in the territory and with other public institutions.

Regarding the relation between metropolitan areas and stakeholders, the main driving problem is that the way of working is old-fashioned. Stakeholders have their own ecosystem and they take international actions with a large degree of coordination. However, looking at local public actors, there are a lot of coordination problems because the agendas are different. This is why political will is the key to moving forward toward an internationalisation strategy. Another obstacle is the large number of administrative levels local authorities must interact with. When a metropolitan area hosts a high percentage of the GDP and population of the broader territory, in the making of an international strategy it is important to think not only about the local stakeholders, but also about the upper levels of public administration. This type of contemporary complexity means we need to seek out new models. Our current models are very static, and we need more flexible ones. Therefore, local administration must focus on goals and issues instead of institutions and frameworks.

**James Sharples**, Policy Manager at the Liverpool City Region

A key point was how to manage any transition to a new model of working on internationalisation, including how to ensure that there is no loss of expertise, links and contacts when, say, a new local organisation takes over this agenda. LCR's Internationalisation Strategy is an example where there is now a much clearer focus on a city-regional cooperation model with significant local expertise.

We have to ensure our internationalisation strategies have weight and are taken seriously locally. We also need to consider mainstreaming internationalisation into our other strategies. For instance, in the UK, our city regions are currently producing Local Industrial Strategies, which are a statutory requirement and to which devolution of powers and funding is linked.

This extra strategy is not an internationalisation strategy *per se* – yet it could have a major impact on our internationalisation.

**Isabel Arnet Vilaseca**, Municipal Office for Airport Monitoring, Gavà City Council

Gavà City Council has an internationalisation strategy to be implemented over the next four years. In this context, we have had a lot of meetings and conversations with all the local stakeholders (companies, regional governments, associations, educational and research centres, etc.). This means that the internationalisation plan of Gavà City Council is a strategy that involves the City Council and other local actors. Meanwhile, the Gavà government knows that the brand is Barcelona when it comes to international affairs. Every metropolitan municipality has its own concerns and targets, but the main issues are common, so they should be confronted together under same larger brand: Barcelona.

**Sara Angrill Toledo**, Economic Development Officer at the Economic Development Agency of the AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

Listening to the municipalities is crucial if we are to find out what they need and see how the Economic Development Agency of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area can meet all these needs. To feed all the strategies, an analysis needs to be done. This is the case of the “Barcelona brand”. The city council of Barcelona carried out an analysis of the perception of how the Barcelona brand changed the different economic and social actors. At the Metropolitan Economic Development Agency of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, we decided to expand this analysis to the rest of the metropolitan area. The main conclusion is that all of the metropolitan municipalities agree on the Barcelona brand, but at the same time they do not want to lose their own identity on the local level.

Moderator: **Paola Andrea Arjona**, Deputy Director at AL-LAs Alliance

*What do you think is the main challenge for the internationalisation strategy of a metropolitan area?*

**Marta Almela Salvador**, Open Government and General Services at Sant Feliu de Llobregat City Council

The most important challenge is coordination. As problems become more and more complex, we need a holistic vision of metropolitan areas. We cannot implement the same project in each one of our municipalities, but we should build one project for the metropolitan area as a whole. This coordination will make it easier to export the initiative to foreign countries to ask for more resources and funds.

**Mariana Flores Mayén**, General Coordination of Advisors and International Affairs of the City of Mexico

One of the challenges that I find is thinking about having one strategy for the metropolitan area. Identifying these shared values and priorities lays the groundwork for this international strategy.

**Véronique Doucet**, Director of the Economic Development Department of the City of Montreal

The international strategies that we build should be long-term and try to stay operative as long as possible. The main challenge is to overcome economic and political changes to keep the focus on the goals that we want to achieve. Another important challenge is how to put cities at the centre of all administrative levels.

**Carolina Bernal Sierra**, Director of Knowledge Management at Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellín and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)

The main challenge is political will and being able to overcome changing budgets.

**Octavi de la Varga Mas**, Secretary General of Metropolis

The main challenge is moving from creating institutional visions to a territorial approach where all the different actors can contribute with their different powers, competencies and levels. Developing a shared territorial vision.

**Xavier Tiana i Casablanças**, Head of International Relations at AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area)

The main challenge is developing our strategy in a different way with stronger partnerships and alliances, and for sure accountability.

**Eugene Zapata Garesché**, Managing Director for Latin America at 100 Resilient Cities

The main challenge is international visibility in the media, raising awareness of the importance of our actions. It is not only about bringing investment



or tourism, but rather it is about getting the main metropolitan areas and cities together to become actors and players on the international scene with their own agendas. Internationalising cities is game-changing and transformative. It is important to communicate to the people what are we doing, as most do not see the opportunity yet.

**Marta Galcerán Vercher**, Programme Coordinator at the Smart City Expo World Congress

The main challenge is creating a sense of ownership. Thus, in order to build and maintain strong partnerships, the partners involved must believe in the value of these alliances and their sustainability over the mid- and long term. By creating this sense of ownership, you will be able to maintain your internationalisation and make it more successful.

**Martin Bekker**, Senior in Economics and Labour Market at the Metropole Region Amsterdam

The main challenge is how to link your international activities with the “negative sentiment” of the inhabitants. Building a nice place for international visitors also means building a nice place for locals. Maybe we should start by building a nice place for the locals first.

**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

For AMB it is very important to have a strategy that is really linked with real needs, global challenges and threats. The strategy should be shared by engaging stakeholders, citizens, elected officials, etc. Having elected officials would be an indication that we are in touch with the problems, needs and aspirations of citizens.



## 6. Conclusions

The study has shown the need to approach internationalisation from a holistic and integrated perspective. Different factors have been analysed, including governance, city diplomacy, the economic dimension of internationalisation, and the interaction with local stakeholders. Based on the study of the six metropolitan governments and the debate featuring more than thirty experts, we can draw the following conclusions:

- Political will and proximity to the Mayor's Office is the key to moving forward toward an internationalisation strategy, together with strong coordination and articulation between all the actors involved in the process. However, in some of the cases, we see a lack of coordination between institutions in metropolitan areas with strong internationalisation strategies.
- The creation of an international relations plan for a metropolitan government can be a challenge, but an even greater challenge is to ensure that the plan will be effective and move in the right direction. These plans and their narratives should include sectoral strategies dealing with the international actions of the territory (economic dimension, international cooperation, scientific diplomacy, etc.).
- Some metropolitan actors have international agendas that are even broader and stronger than those of metropolitan governments themselves.

Therefore, we need to work towards the generation of synergies that allow us to match up those with complementary interests and find opportunities for collaborations. At the same time, metropolitan municipalities and economic stakeholders can benefit from the attractiveness of the capital city, and vice versa. The approach should involve an ecosystem of actors that work together to reach a common objective, rather than represent a mere articulation of these stakeholders. The challenge we face is how to move from creating institutional visions to a territorial approach where all the different actors can contribute with their different specificities.

- The attraction of investments must be done together with the attraction of skills and talent; the existence of a city brand with a strategy is an asset for internationalisation. However, city and metropolitan governments need to measure and react to the externalities that their international attractiveness produces (mass tourism, pollution, lack of housing and gentrification, loss of local identities, etc.).
- Holding big global events like the Smart Cities Congress or the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona allows us to create and promote abroad a local ecosystem of companies, as well as to establish a leading position in key urban and metropolitan policy areas (e.g. digital rights, housing and the sharing economy).
- New waves of city diplomacy strategies are emerging in some metropolitan governments in fields like scientific or cultural diplomacy, and cooperation with the private sector and other civil society organisations is crucial for the success of these initiatives.
- International cooperation has shifted from a traditional assistance approach to a decentralised model, one that is more horizontal and participative, where knowledge and capacity building are the key resources. It is important to recognise those governments allocating 0.7% of their budgets or even more to international cooperation projects.
- A bigger effort has to be made to increase the visibility of international action and to ensure accountability. Media can be an ally in efforts to showcase the success of a metropolitan government. The number of investments, missions or international funding are classical indicators, but metropolitan governments need to invest in identifying better indicators to measure the impact of their international actions on their local policies or on the improvement of the quality of life of citizens.

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## ANNEX

# The international action of metropolitan areas. A comparative analysis of the international strategies of eThekweni (Durban), Medellin, Montreal, Seoul, Vienna and Barcelona

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Barcelona, June 2019

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# 1. Introduction

This study is part of the collaboration between CIDOB and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB). Its objective is to analyse best practices in international relations developed by the governments of metropolitan areas and large cities. Five metropolitan areas and cities from five regions that have established relevant and internationally recognised strategies have been selected for analysis: **eThekweni (Africa), Montreal (North America), Medellin (Latin America), Seoul (Asia) and Vienna (Europe)**. The study compares the five cases with the strategies of the AMB and the Barcelona City Council (and where relevant it also makes reference to the actions of other local governments in the Barcelona region).

The study is structured along four key themes that are fundamental to understanding the international action of the five metropolitan areas and cities. Firstly, it analyses how they govern their exterior action. Secondly, it looks at how they approach relations with other cities and what importance they give to advocacy work aimed at influencing global agendas. Thirdly, it examines their strategies for international projection, asking how they manage their reputation and how they link their internationalisation with local economic and social development. Finally, it focuses on how, through decentralised cooperation, they operate as actors in international development cooperation.

Following the analytical structure described above, the study seeks to identify the added value of each case study. Taking a comparative perspective, it points to the main experiences and lessons learned from each case, and how these can inform the external action of the metropolitan area of Barcelona and other metropolitan areas around the world.

The five case studies are described in more detail in the Annex. Each case has been developed according to the same structure. They are based on information obtained from interviews with city officials responsible for international relations at the respective local and regional governments, as well as the analysis of secondary sources.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Towards governance models for more strategic and inclusive international relations

For some years now, cities and, in particular, large metropolitan cities have been operating as recognised stakeholders in the system of international relations. However, unlike nation-states, they do not always do so on the premise that this international action constitutes public policy, which is to say, policy that must be governed, and that must answer to well-defined strategies oriented towards approaching the interests, needs, and aspirations of the city and citizenship.

Nevertheless, increasing numbers of cities are defining their strategies for international action and tools to ensure better governance. The latter involves defining mechanisms that foster an integral approach to external action, effective coordination among the different levels of government operating in the city, and adequate organisation of the city's stakeholders. Many cities have organisational units that are tasked with managing international action, complete with professional teams and specific budgets to make this action possible.

### A metropolitan or municipal policy?

As the analysis of the five case studies presented reveals, metropolitan realities can be complex when it comes to governance. In general, one finds **situations of institutional fragmentation, scant clarity with regard to responsibilities, and a dispersal of government resources and mechanisms**. To date, few areas or metropolitan regions have a metropolitan government and, even when they do, it is not always well equipped to manage the external action of the metropolitan area considered as a whole, so this work is done by the different municipal entities and especially the main city that heads them.

If Barcelona is added to the five metropolitan areas under study, three different scenarios appear with regard to management of international relations:

**Scenario 1:** international action managed by the metropolitan government (the cases of Durban, Seoul, and Vienna);

**Scenario 2:** international action is undertaken by the main city (Montreal and Medellin);

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<sup>1</sup> Due to time and resources limitations it has not been possible to conduct fieldwork for the study. The information provided derives from interviews and the analysis of secondary sources and might be incomplete.

**Scenario 3:** the metropolitan government and the towns and cities making up the metropolitan area or region work together in a more or less coordinated manner in the international sphere (Barcelona).

Although it is possible to identify these three scenarios, each city has its own specificity. Seoul's international action is managed by its Metropolitan Government while, in Durban, it is the responsibility of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The case of Vienna is peculiar as this is a state in a federal country. Medellin is also peculiar inasmuch as the Agency for Cooperation and Investment Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI) is constituted as a decentralised entity of the municipality of Medellin, which funds it, although its action embraces the whole metropolitan area of the Aburrá Valley. In the case of Montreal, it is the city government that drives internationalisation. However, in certain areas, such as economic projection, the city government also supports cities that make up the metropolitan area.

The reality of international action in Barcelona clearly reflects the institutional fragmentation characterising many metropolitan areas. Both the Metropolitan Area and a good number of the municipalities comprising it, including the Barcelona City Council, have their own (more or less planned) external action strategies while the mechanisms for coordination and cooperation are, as yet, not very highly developed or formalised.

## The strategic dimension of international action

As noted above, there are few cities that have developed strategic instruments for planning their public international relations policy. Among the cities analysed, four different scenarios emerge:

1. Cities that have a specific plan for international action.
2. Cities that do not have a specific plan for international action but that include international action among the objectives or priorities of their strategic or development plans.
3. Cities with plans that address internationalisation but from a sectorial perspective (e.g. plans for economic internationalisation, international cooperation, etc.).
4. Cities that engage in international action without any prior planning.

Montreal and Seoul are in the first group. **Montreal** has a **Strategic Framework for International Relations**<sup>2</sup> (Urban Diplomacy at the service of the inhabitants of Montreal and the communities of the world) approved in 2017 and which displays lines of work in the field of city diplomacy (bilateral and network relations), international political advocacy (on specific issues such as democratic metropolitan governance, sustainable development or inclusive economic development), international projection and attractiveness, and international solidarity. This comprehensive plan is reinforced by an international economic action plan 2018-2022 (which is part of the Moving Montréal Forward 2018-2022 Economic Development Strategy).

In 2018, **Seoul** approved its **Master Plan for Seoul's City Diplomacy: Seoul Global Sharing City**, a transversal initiative addressing the mission and vision of the public diplomacy proposed by the city by means of its status as a "sharing city". The Seoul plan gives great importance to knowledge and establishing mechanisms through which it can be shared with other cities; relations with international organisations; public-private cooperation for the city's international projection (including a strategy of having ambassadors); and contributing to peace and development in northeast Asia.

The second group of cities consists of those which, lacking a strategic instrument for their international projection, recognise external action as being a priority or goal in their strategic and development plans. This is the case of **Medellin**, whose Development Plan, "Medellin cuenta con vos" (2016-2019),<sup>3</sup> includes a specific internationalisation programme linked with the commitment to construct an innovative city offering high-quality education and employment. The internationalisation programme includes developing a city brand, promoting tourism, attracting events and investment, encouraging alliances in international cooperation, access to international knowledge, sport as a driver of internationalisation, and working with the diaspora (Antioquians living abroad).

<sup>2</sup> [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/prt\\_vdm\\_fr/media/documents/strategie\\_relations%20internationales\\_administratif\\_tableau\\_hr\\_vf.pdf](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/prt_vdm_fr/media/documents/strategie_relations%20internationales_administratif_tableau_hr_vf.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/pccdesign/SubportaldelCiudadano\\_2/PlandeDesarrollo\\_0\\_17/Publicaciones/Shared%20Content/Documentos/2016/Proyecto%20de%20Acuerdo%20Plan%20de%20Desarrollo.pdf](https://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/pccdesign/SubportaldelCiudadano_2/PlandeDesarrollo_0_17/Publicaciones/Shared%20Content/Documentos/2016/Proyecto%20de%20Acuerdo%20Plan%20de%20Desarrollo.pdf)

**eThekwini** has no integral or strategic plan for internationalisation but it does have an Investment Promotion Strategy<sup>4</sup> (for Durban) which aims to position the city among South African and international frontrunners in terms of attracting investors.

Finally, the city of **Vienna** has no integral or specific written plan for the city's internationalisation. But it does have a very clear, well-defined strategy focused on its position as a location for headquarters of multilateral organisations; participation in networks for political influence, especially at the European level; functioning as a connecting city between Eastern and Western Europe; constructing alliances with other cities; attracting investment, events and other opportunities; and international solidarity.

Although the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)** does not have an internationalisation plan, it does have a good, but not formalised strategy, and a sectoral plan for development cooperation. All of this is based on what is established in its Metropolitan Action Plan,<sup>5</sup> which includes two lines of work covering its international action: 1) encouraging metropolitan networks and bolstering outreach; 2) promoting a policy of solidarity and progress in cooperation projects.

Neither does the **city of Barcelona** have an integral plan for internationalisation, although it does have a very well designed strategy and sector-based plans in the area of international cooperation for global justice<sup>6</sup> and economic internationalisation<sup>7</sup> (recognised by the *Financial Times* as the best European strategy).

Several municipalities of the metropolitan area of Barcelona, among them **Esplugues de Llobregat, Gavà, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, and Viladecans**, have their own internationalisation plans, and this reflects both the dynamism of the territory and fragmentation of strategies in a key area. Many of them also have master plans for international cooperation.

## International action in the municipal structure

Recognition and the growing importance of the international action of cities have led more and more local governments, and especially metropolitan governments and those of big cities, to establish **units or specialist organisational structures, dedicated professional teams, and specific budgets for this area.**

As may be seen in the following table, five of the six metropolitan cities or areas analysed in this study have specific units, professional teams, and budgets. Despite the more or less appreciable differences, all of them except for Durban (which has a person in charge of international relations who answers to the mayor) have teams and significant budgets.

	Management Unit	Nº professionals	Budget
<b>eThekwini</b>	-	-	-
<b>Medellin</b>	Agency for Cooperation and Investment	53	€1.75 million
<b>Montreal</b>	International Relations Office	18	€2 million
	International affairs team in the Department of Economic Development	4	€0.55 million
<b>Seoul</b>	International Cooperation Bureau	40	€8.79 million

4 [http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource\\_Centre/edge/Documents/EDGE21Apr18\\_2604b.pdf](http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource_Centre/edge/Documents/EDGE21Apr18_2604b.pdf)

5 <http://www.amb.cat/web/amb/actualitat/publicacions/detall/-/publicacio/pla-d-actuacio-metropolita--pam-/5699582/11696>

6 [http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/pla\\_director\\_cooperacio\\_2018-2021\\_cat\\_vweb\\_\\_0\\_0.pdf](http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/pla_director_cooperacio_2018-2021_cat_vweb__0_0.pdf)

7 [http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/Mesura\\_gover\\_Barcelona\\_ciutatoberta.pdf](http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/Mesura_gover_Barcelona_ciutatoberta.pdf)

<b>Vienna</b>	European and International Affairs	10	-
	Department 27 European Affairs	40	-
	Representation in Brussels	5	-
	EuroComm-PR	40	-
	Vienna Business Agency	12	-
<b>Barcelona (AMB)</b>	Department of International Relations	18	€1.97 million
<b>Barcelona (city)</b>	Department of International Relations	16	€2.6 million
	Department for Global Justice and International Cooperation	14	€10.2 million
	Department of International Outreach	12	€1 million

Source: by the authors (Spaces marked with “-“ indicate that information is not available)

Since 2002 **Medellin** has had a specialist office, the **Agency for Cooperation and Investment of Medellin and the Metropolitan Area (ACI)** which, working with a highly effective team of professionals, has acquired significant prestige in the region and at the international level. The ACI has an approximate budget of \$2 million and is structured into four departments covering different areas of the city’s intervention in the international arena.<sup>8</sup> One highly significant and innovative fact in this case is that one of the departments is devoted to knowledge management. Medellin has understood that cities connect internationally to learn about and gain access to experiences and knowledge that could be fundamental in developing more effective solutions to local problems.

**Seoul** works in the international sphere through the **International Cooperation Bureau**, a structure employing 40 professionals, with a budget of \$8.79 million and organised into two divisions: the International Relations Division and the Global Urban Partnership Division. **Montreal** has an **Office for International Relations** directly answering to the city manager, a team of four people who manage international economic action, and the **Montreal International agency** (working towards the city’s international outreach).

**Vienna**’s external action is carried out by means of two departments, one tasked with managing bilateral international relations with multilateral organisations, networks and cities on a bilateral basis, and the other concerned with European affairs with a focus on legal matters and funding. Vienna also has the support of official representation in Brussels through which it organises its dialogue with European institutions and some city networks that are also present in Brussels (Eurocities). Moreover, it has a municipal enterprise, **EuroComm-PR**,<sup>9</sup> with which it fosters its relations with Eastern European countries and cities. With a strong team of 40 staff members, it has branch offices in Belgrade, Bratislava, Budapest, Cracow, Ljubljana, Prague, Sarajevo, Sofia, and Zagreb. Furthermore, the economic dimension of the city’s international projection strategy is managed through the **Vienna Business Agency**, which has a specialised department with a staff of 12 professionals.

From the above, it is possible to highlight some patterns that are applicable to a considerable number of big metropolitan cities:

- They have significant professional teams and substantial budgets.
- They structure their international teams by spheres of speciality (international relations, international economic promotion, European affairs, cooperation, knowledge management, etc.).
- They create special agencies, usually multi-stakeholder by nature, for international economic outreach, knowledge management and international cooperation.
- They establish offices of representation in global capitals (for example in Brussels) and other cities (as happens with EuroComm-PR, which is also an initiative of Vienna).

<sup>8</sup> Local and International Relations; Knowledge Management; Cooperation and Investment Management; and Communications.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eurocommpr.at/de/Unsere-Bueros/Headoffice-Wien>

The **Barcelona City Council** has three organic structures for managing international relations. First, the Department of International Relations manages Barcelona's relations with other cities, its participation in networks, and its contacts with multilateral organisms. Second, the Department for Global Justice and International Cooperation promotes the city's strategy in the domain of international cooperation for development with a focus on global justice. Third and finally, located in Barcelona Activa, the Department of International Economic Promotion is concerned with furthering the city's strategy for an international economic presence. The budget the city government has set aside for its international activity—more than €13 million—is notable.

The **AMB** has an International and Cooperation Department that operates under one of its Vice Presidencies and is structured in three services, one managing European and international relations (networks, bilateral relations, the international metropolitan agenda, European projects, etc.), another working on international cooperation and a third focused on strategy and knowledge management.

**Barcelona Provincial Council** also works in the metropolitan territory, with a team of some 40 professionals and a budget of approximately €4 million. It should also be borne in mind that many of the other metropolitan councils (apart from the leading Barcelona City Council), also have international relations teams working on European affairs and cooperation, as well as specific budgets.

## Developing internationalisation strategies with other metropolitan stakeholders

Good organisation among the different stakeholders that work to enhance the internationalisation of the metropolitan area is key to strengthening impacts and results. The international agenda of the different spheres of government (local, metropolitan, provincial, regional, national, etc.) working in a metropolitan area or region tends to be an important factor. The agenda of other stakeholders—including companies, entrepreneurial organisations, civil society entities, universities and research and knowledge centres—can even be much more effective than those of local governments. Hence, coordinating and organising efforts and seeking complementarity and synergies are crucial.

The five metropolitan areas analysed have taken this reality into account when defining and promoting their international action strategies. All of them interact with a range of stakeholders, through more or less formalised channels and in accordance with well-defined criteria. The following image shows the main groups of stakeholders working together with the metropolitan or city government in the area of external action.



In none of the cases analysed is there a transversal space where the totality of the external action of the metropolitan area is considered in an integral way. In general, organisation occurs by sectors, which might be economic outreach, education, or international cooperation for development. Surprising as it may seem, coordination among the different spheres of government operating in the metropolis can sometimes be more complex than connection and working with private stakeholders.

Analysis shows that working with city's operators can occur in accordance with different logics:

– The logic of **coordination of and collaboration among the different spheres of government.**

It would seem evident that the international action of a national government can have a major impact on the external action of cities like Vienna or Seoul, the capitals of their respective states. However, this is also important for the rest of the cities analysed, as is the relationship with intermediate governments (of regions, provinces, or departments) or with other cities in the setting (metropolitan, regional, or national). What is significant is that intergovernmental or inter-administrative coordination occurs more through informal than formal channels. When the relationship is formal it tends to be sector-based or, in other words, linked with specific interests, which are usually economic, rather than based on a desire for comprehensive coordination.

As it will be described below, national governments participate in the structures of international projection and attracting investments, as happens with Montreal (**Montreal International**)<sup>10</sup> and Durban (**Invest Durban**).<sup>11</sup> In the case of Medellin, the ACI acts as a space for coordination with the national government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others), the office of the Governor of Antioquia, and the metropolitan area (including the towns and cities that comprise it) in order to support international cooperation projects in the framework of the **Antioquian Network for International Cooperation**.

– The logic of **citizen participation.**

The definition of the internationalisation strategy can be connected with participative processes. Particularly significant in this regard are the efforts made in Montreal to link up citizens and the city officials in the process of drawing up the Strategic Framework for International Relations. **Ten consultative meetings were held with approximately one hundred organisations** (public bodies, private companies, universities, and civil society organisations). Meanwhile, **Seoul has an e-government mechanism** to connect citizens and civil society organisations with the process of defining internationalisation strategies.

– The logic of **public-private collaboration.**

This is certainly the most widespread logic among the cities analysed and in others as well. There are some highly relevant experiences of cities that have promoted mechanisms for working together with private operators of the city, usually companies, in order to boost the international projection of the city and to attract investments, head offices, research projects, events, and tourists.

Durban's investment agency (**Invest Durban**) provides a structure for public and private partnerships bringing together local (Durban), metropolitan (eThekweni), and national governments with the city's leading economic players in order to enhance its appeal and attract strategic international investment. Montreal has the platform **Montreal International**, an organisation that carries out major internationalisation work from the public-private sphere with the primary aim of contributing towards the economic development and international status of the Metropolitan Community of Montreal. This is a non-profit organisation and is financed by public and private sources (the Canadian government, Quebec, the Metropolitan Community of Montreal, and above all the city of Montreal).

The **ACI** has channels of communication with Medellin's business and productive sector, as well as with universities and civil society organisations. The agency is well established as a platform for economic promotion linked with different stakeholders and working in permanent coordination with the aforementioned sectors.

**Seoul** does not have formalised channels of communication, although it does work in keeping with a logic of cooperation with the private sector (and, accordingly, the city's big companies have a strong presence in defining its international strategy), the collaborative economy sector (Seoul is presented as a Global Sharing City), universities, and civil society. A good example of this is the **Seoul Solutions Agency** which, as will be shown below, promotes public-private partnerships to transfer solutions that have been developed by the private sector in Seoul to cities in other countries.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.montrealinternational.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.invest.durban/>

Barcelona does not have a comprehensive structure for coordination among the different spheres of government or with agents of the metropolitan area. Nevertheless, as is the case with other cities analysed here, it does have a number of sectoral mechanisms linked with some dimensions of its external action. Notable among them are:

- **The Council for Cooperation of the City Council of Barcelona.** This is a consultative, participative body aiming at promoting activities of international cooperation for development and consisting of representatives from the municipal government, NGOs based in the city, universities, trade unions, migrant associations, and professional bodies.
- **Barcelona City Promotion Advisory Board.** This body is comprised by representatives from the business sector, the social economy, universities, research centres and the city's economic and social institutions. Its function is to advise the city administration in defining its strategy for international economic projection.

## Mechanisms for follow-up, evaluation, and accountability

Applying a framework of advanced governance to the international action of cities entails defining and working with **systems for monitoring and evaluating** the strategies being promoted, as well as reviewing mechanisms for accountability. Although, for the purposes of this study, it has not been possible to obtain a detailed review of available instruments, or evaluation and accountability reports, there is clearly a desire to measure the results obtained in certain areas and also to communicate the reality of the city's interaction in a transparent way.

One way or another, all the metropolises analysed offer data concerning the results obtained through their international action. In general, they measure some of the following **variables**:

- investments attracted (and their evolution);
- new headquarters established (e.g. of companies, science and research centres, and international organisations);
- projects and financing acquired;
- international talent attracted;
- jobs generated;
- visitors to fairs and congresses;
- number of tourists

Some cities like Vienna and Medellin carry out follow-ups on their positioning in **international rankings** and use the results as a tool for communication in their external outreach.

However, what none of the cities analysed in this study does or describes is an exercise of gauging the **negative externalities** that international action might incur for the city, and when measures to mitigate their effects are taken, they are not explained either. These externalities would include gentrification caused by access to the city by international real-estate investment funds, conditioning of the job market as a result of disproportionate specialisation (in tourism, fairs and congresses, for example), and the contamination caused by heavy traffic in ports and airports.

As for accountability, the quality of information provided by Montreal International in its annual review of activities<sup>12</sup> is particularly relevant. The review contains very detailed and graphic data on the impact of the agency's international action in terms of attracting investments, as well as fiscal impact, job creation, headquarters, international students, etc. The information that Vienna<sup>13</sup> and Medellin<sup>14</sup> provide on specific webpages dedicated to their international action is also interesting. Both cities provide detailed information on their external action, especially their strategies, organisational structure, projects they participate in, bilateral and multilateral relations they manage and the contact information of the responsible managers.

12 <https://www.montrealinternational.com/fr/publications/bilan-activites-2018/>

13 <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/politics/international/>

14 <https://www.acimedellin.org/>

Barcelona has a web page, **Barcelona Ciutat Global**,<sup>15</sup> which offers detailed information about the city's international activity, for example concerning projects financed with European Union funds, bilateral relations established by the city, the city networks, and active cooperation projects, while also giving an account of the City Council's cooperation activities together with an evaluation of the indicators of the previous Master Plan.<sup>16</sup>

The AMB international relations web page also provides information of interest concerning its international activities, especially with regard to its participation in city networks, and European and cooperation projects which it funds and participates in.

### 3. City diplomacy as an organising principle of international action

Metropolitan areas relate with each other in the international arena with a significant variety of stakeholders. This occurs at the city-to-city level with the construction of **bilateral or multilateral relations**; with **other public operators**, which may be multilateral organisms or national governments; and with **transnational institutions**, from the private sector, civil society, or academia. Management of these relations is what is referred to here as **city diplomacy**.

Usually, these relations respond to different objectives. They are concerned with exchanges of knowledge and experiences, developing joint initiatives for working on new solutions for shared problems, and political influence in global agendas. In this context, these relationships work directly, through bilateral or multilateral alliances, or under the auspices of international networks.

The metropolises discussed in this study show significant dynamism in this regard. All of them are strongly represented in the main international networks. They also have more or less formalised alliances with other cities. Furthermore, they are in direct conversation with high-level staff at international organisations, national governments, and transnational stakeholders.

#### Networks as a primary instrument for city diplomacy

Studies suggest that **there are currently more than 200 city networks operating at the global level**.<sup>17</sup> Cities interact with one another in a **complex, rich, and diverse ecosystem of networks** through which they seek to influence international (either regional or global) political agendas, and also to share experiences, learning, and knowledge.

The metropolises analysed in this study are present in the main networks, in which they play major roles. The following table shows the **networks prioritised** by each one, and the kind of links they have with them.

Metropolis	Networks	Main link
<b>eThekwini</b>	UCLG	Includes the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders (UCLG Congress)
	C40	Member of the Steering Committee
	AFUS	Presidency
<b>Medellin</b>	UCLG	Member of Executive Board
	C40	Member of the Steering Committee
	ICLEI	Headquarters in Colombia

15 <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/relacionsinternacionalsicooperacio/ca>

16 <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/relacionsinternacionalsicooperacio/ca/elaboracio-del-pla-director-2018-2021>

17 Acuto, M. and S. Rayner, "City networks: breaking gridlocks or forging (new) lock-ins?". *International Affairs*, 92 (5), 2016, p. 1147- 1166.

<b>Montreal</b>	Metropolis ICLEI C40 AIMF	Co-Presidency Venue of the World Congress 2018 Signing of several cooperation agreements
<b>Seoul</b>	UCLG Metropolis ICLEI CityNet C40 GSEF WeGO LUCI	Member of the executive bureau Regional vice-president Co-president of ICLEI Leaders Network and member of the Global Executive Committee Headquarters and presidency Member of the steering committee Headquarters and presidency Headquarters and presidency Member of the executive bureau and presidency
<b>Vienna</b>	UCLG Eurocities	Member of the executive bureau Member of the executive committee
<b>Barcelona</b>	UCLG Metropolis Educating Cities MedCities CIDEU Eurocities	Headquarters of world secretariat and co-presidency Headquarters of world secretariat and co-presidency (AMB) Headquarters of world secretariat Headquarters of secretariat (AMB) Headquarters of secretariat Member of the Executive Committee

It is noteworthy that participation in international networks of local governments is a priority feature of the internationalisation strategies of some of the metropolises analysed, as occurs with the cases of **eThekweni** and **Montreal**. The former has sought to link up with the main global agendas (Agenda 2030, New Urban Agenda, COP, which they hosted, etc.) and has aligned its development plans with all of them (in particular with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs). **Montreal** has opted to work for a clear leadership role in its priority networks (Metropolis, ICLEI, C40, AIMF and the International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together) and clearly defines the spheres in which it does advocacy in global political forums (living together, inclusive economic development, sustainable development and metropolitan governance).

Although it has no formalised programmatic document for its international action, **Vienna** has a very clear, well-planned strategy in which participation in international networks plays a key role. It has opted for networks as an instrument for influence in international agendas (and most particularly in Europe) and as a means of exchanging experiences. **Medellin** values networks as spaces for exchanging experiences and learning and also for international promotion of the city by means of capitalising on good practices to encourage recognition of the city and enhance its reputation.

In keeping with the importance they give to being present in these networks, all five metropolises have made an effort to participate in their governing bodies. They have also opted to host secretariats, both international and regional, as well as institutions and associated projects, and also the main events they organise.

**Seoul** hosts the presidency and secretariat of CITYNET,<sup>18</sup> the leading network of local governments in the Asia Pacific Region and shows a strong commitment to Metropolis as the headquarters of the International Training Institute. **Medellin** hosts the headquarters of the ICLEI office for Colombia, while **Durban** will be prominent this year in the networks ecosystem since it will host the triennial UCLG World Congress, the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders.

<sup>18</sup> <https://citynet-ap.org/>

On the world scale, Barcelona is probably the city that concentrates the greatest number of headquarters of international cities networks. As shown in the table above, it hosts the secretariats of UCLG, Metropolis, Educating Cities, MedCities and CIDEU.

**Vienna** has a notable presence in Eurocities, the network through which it promotes its entire strategy for political influence at the European level. By means of the network, the city has developed its political initiatives in Brussels in strategic areas such as funding for cities, access to social housing, water regulation, urban mobility (an area in which it advanced the Green Paper on urban mobility), and has worked to include the right to cultural diversity in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Moreover, Eurocities is a privileged platform in which Vienna exchanges experiences and engages in knowledge transfers as well as forming strategic alliances with other cities. The city has a very significant number of government departments working on networks activities, through commissions, working groups, or specific projects.

In spite of everything, the five cities analysed, as well as other big cities on the international scale, are to some extent affected by the oversized offer resulting from a tight ecosystem of networks in which competition takes precedence over cooperation. Accordingly, the international agenda in the networks is becoming difficult to follow for the mayors of the main cities who either make an effort to work with priorities, as Montreal has done, or they start losing interest in the networks and start looking for other channels.<sup>19</sup>

The AMB has promoted the **EMA (European Metropolitan Association)**,<sup>20</sup> an informal platform bringing together around thirty European metropolitan authorities. Every year the EMA organises a conference in which the main metropolitan challenges are discussed, projects are developed, solutions are shared, and measures are proposed for improving EU policies in the area. At the 2019 meeting in Lyon, the EMA furthered reflection on the role of the metropolis in the European Pillar of Social Rights and considered how the EU Cohesion Policy should strengthen metropolitan contributions.

## Cooperation with other cities

Apart from networks, cities also build relationships among themselves. These relations take in different formats, **from twinning, innovation gateways, and political alliances, through to cooperation agreements**. A very significant part of the relationships cities build are based on the **exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge and innovation** as their main *raison d'être*.

The cities analysed here are also very dynamic in this domain. All of them have formalised relations with other cities and teams that are working to facilitate these exchanges.

Some cities like **Durban** and Montreal have opted to focus their efforts on exchanges and capitalising on experience in particular areas. Durban's efforts give attention to cooperation with other cities in the struggle against climate change and to preserve the environment. In this matter, in which the city is a reference at both African and global levels, Durban offers highly innovative experiences which it shares with other cities in neighbouring countries and in the international domain through C40 and ICLEI. **Montreal** has chosen to focus on the aforementioned areas of living together, economic development, sustainable development, and metropolitan governance, and its strategies for political influence are concentrated in these domains.

**Medellin** has a very extensive network of cooperation with other cities. It is presently focusing its exchange efforts on the struggle against climate change, sustainable mobility, education, and childhood. The ACI has promoted a very interesting experience of south-south cooperation which includes exchanges of experience and knowledge with other cities in Latin America. As noted above, knowledge management is one of the city's priorities together with innovation in the solutions it offers the city through its public policies. The ACI has made an effort to systematise and socialise the city's experience of its urban transformation. For this purpose it has distributed informational and promotional material with a view to making its initiatives known to an international public. One example is the document *Laboratorio Medellín: Catálogo de 10 prácticas vivas* (Medellin Laboratory: Catalogue of 10 Living Practices).<sup>21</sup>

19 For further information on this subject, see Fernández de Losada, A. and H. Abdullah (eds.), "Rethinking the Ecosystem of International City Networks: Challenges and Opportunities", Barcelona: CIDOB, 2019. [Online] [Accessed on 01.07.2019]: [https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication\\_series/monographs/monographs/rethinking\\_the\\_ecosystem\\_of\\_international\\_city\\_networks\\_challenges\\_and\\_opportunities](https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/monographs/monographs/rethinking_the_ecosystem_of_international_city_networks_challenges_and_opportunities)

20 <http://www.amb.cat/en/web/amb/area-internacional/ema>

21 <https://proyectoallas.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Laboratorio-Medell%C3%ADn.-Cat%C3%A1logo-de-diez-pr%C3%A1cticas-vivas.pdf>

**Vienna** also has a significant set of relationships with other cities around the world with which it basically works on matters including quality of life, urban development and planning, strategies for intelligent cities, education, and technology. One interesting feature of the exchanges promoted by Vienna is that it facilitates the establishment of agreements between the city's institutions and their counterparts in other cities. Furthermore, as seen above, Vienna has made a strong bid to share knowledge with Eastern European cities, working in this regard through its company EuroComm-PR.

However, **Seoul** is the city that has the most solid and highly developed strategy with regard to cooperation with other cities. In recent years it has become a reference in the domain of the collaborative and social economy, although its strategy goes beyond this to embrace many other areas of urban management with an emphasis on public-private collaboration. The government has a specialist unit, the **Global Urban Partnership Division**, which manages the extensive network of cities with which Seoul has signed collaboration agreements and by means of which it effectively shares knowledge and experience. It also offers its partners the "**Seoul Solution**"<sup>22</sup> platform through which it shares the knowledge and experience it has acquired in working on solutions in the fields of urban planning and sustainable development on the basis of collaboration schemes with other public and private stakeholders (from international organisations through to companies, universities, and civil society).

However, Seoul has gone one step further and has created a research centre, the **Seoul Institute Global Future Research Centre**<sup>23</sup> (under the auspices of the Seoul Institute), which promotes studies on sustainable urban development with an emphasis on the solutions Seoul has been working on, the challenges faced by megacities, and international cooperation. At the same time, the metropolitan government is also promoting the **Seoul Urban Solutions Agency**,<sup>24</sup> through which it provides support to cities around the world by contributing urban solutions in the format of public-private collaboration that generates opportunities for South Korean private companies of the sector.

In 2018, the Barcelona City Council and **CIDOB**,<sup>25</sup> the city's leading think tank in international relations, launched the Global Cities programme, which seeks to analyse the main challenges faced by cities around the world, the solutions they formulate, and how they operate in the international sphere to improve their standing and have an influence in international agendas.

Another not insignificant element related with cooperation among cities is the question of how to manage **international delegations**. A major part of the work of international relations teams of cities, both those analysed here and around the world, is devoted to dealing with delegations. These may be representatives of other cities (or other institutions like multilateral organisations, national governments, universities or enterprises) that want to know more about the solutions developed, or municipal managers (or other urban stakeholders), who travel to learn about the projects and initiatives of other cities.

The five cities analysed here are very dynamic in this domain and make remarkable efforts, both human and budgetary, to give visibility to their experiences. In this context, Montreal offers an especially germane experience whereby it organises its missions in a collaborative framework involving the city's leading stakeholders. The aim is to offer an image of a "Montreal team" (Équipe Montréal) that is broadly representative and variable in accordance with the nature and destination of visits, and also the areas of interest that are being reinforced in each one.

**Barcelona** has an extensive network of bilateral relations channelled through 22 twinning and 27 collaboration agreements. The tendency, however, will be not to formalise bilateral relations but to manage them flexibly with very specific aims, resources and deadlines. In general, twinning is a somewhat outdated instrument that all too often ends up with no content or activity when there are changes in governments or teams.

By contrast, the **AMB** continues to entertain privileged bilateral relations and technical cooperation with some metropolitan areas outside Europe such as San Salvador, Valle de Aburrá, Montevideo, Maputo, Montreal and the metropolitan area of Seoul. In Europe, it manages most of its relations and partnerships through EMA and other networks such as ACR + and UITP, and MedCities<sup>26</sup> in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

22 <https://seoulsolution.kr/en>

23 <http://global.si.re.kr/>

24 <http://www.susa.or.kr/en>

25 [www.cidob.org](http://www.cidob.org)

26 <http://www.medcities.org/es>

## Relations with multilateral organisms and other transnational institutions

Apart from bilateral or multilateral relations with other cities, diplomatic (or para-diplomatic) action also includes links with **diplomatic missions** and other **transnational organisms**, which might be international bodies, enterprises, knowledge centres, or civil society organisations.

The five cities analysed devote a significant part of their work to managing these relations. As the capital of Austria, **Vienna** is where the diplomatic representations in the country are located. However, the city also hosts more than 40 international organisations, among them the United Nations Information System,<sup>27</sup> the United Nations Industrial Development Organization,<sup>28</sup> the International Atomic Energy Agency,<sup>29</sup> the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries,<sup>30</sup> and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>31</sup>

Also a capital city, **Seoul** houses the headquarters of more than 30 widely varying international organisms, from organisations of the United Nations System to networks of regional cities and international projects.

Moreover, besides governmental organisms, many cities also host transnational organisations ranging from civil society and business bodies through to others linked with the knowledge sector. One good example of this is **Montreal** which is the headquarters of the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**,<sup>32</sup> the main mechanism for cooperation among the world's airlines.

Contact with diplomatic authorities, international organisations, and transnational institutions that are present in the city is a very useful tool for the international outreach of cities but this kind of contact also requires resources and specialist staff.

Barcelona is the headquarters of **Union for the Mediterranean**,<sup>33</sup> the multilateral organisation created as a result of the Barcelona Process and which works in the Euro-Mediterranean area. The city also hosts project offices of a range of international organisations like UN Habitat, the World Health Organization, and the European Commission. However, the most important international body operating in the city is **Fusion for Energy (F4E)**<sup>34</sup> which is the organisation that manages the EU's contribution to ITER, the world's largest fusion project, and which also works with Japan on fusion energy R&D projects.

## 4. International outreach as a tool for the city's socioeconomic development

External outreach in the economic domain is a core element of the internationalisation strategy of many cities. **They aim to enhance their visibility, reputation, and "brand" in order to attract opportunities that would boost their economic development.** They define strategies for attracting investments, governmental and business headquarters, and international projects, as well as talent, tourists, events, and fairs. International outreach usually has an economic basis. At present, most metropolitan areas strive to link their image and reputation with **quality of life, sustainability, creativity, knowledge and innovation.** Some also opt for emphasising social values like **inclusiveness, solidarity and new forms of the social economy** as elements of added value in projecting their image.

The strategies of international outreach of most cities are structured on the basis of an effort to gain visibility and enhance their reputation as attractive places. The great majority opt for having, managing and spreading a **"city brand"**, ensuring that it is associated with positive values like creativity, diversity, tolerance and solidarity. Efforts tend to be focused on acquiring or attracting opportunities for socioeconomic development and, as the below figure shows, they take very different forms.

27 <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/>

28 <https://www.unido.org/>

29 <https://www.iaea.org/>

30 [https://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/index.htm](https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/index.htm)

31 <https://www.osce.org/>

32 <https://www.iata.org/>

33 <https://ufmsecretariat.org/>

34 <https://f4e.europa.eu/>

## Conceptual framework for the international outreach of cities



## Reputation as a factor for improving the attractiveness of cities

The **reputation of a city** is certainly a key element for its international outreach and for managing to attract opportunities. The five cities analysed, like most metropolises of the planet, are very much aware of this and they have strategies and resources for enhancing their standing.

As noted above, the strategic framework of **Montreal's** international relations has planned a strategy for the city's international outreach based on communication and territorial marketing with a clear emphasis on attracting individuals (talent) and organisations. Montreal uses its intrinsic characteristics as a platform for achieving international recognition. The existence of high technology clusters, a cosmopolitan, university environment, and notable indicators for sustainability and social cohesion – all of which create a favourable image of the city as a venue for big congresses, sports and political activities, and so on –, shows that it is, above all, a city where creativity and innovation are evident in many areas of human activity.

**Durban** highlights its position as African's main port and its organisational capacity for hosting international events. **Medellin** presents itself as the most innovative city of Latin America, while **Vienna** opts for drawing attention to its status as a sustainable and cohesive city, where people live well, as home to leading international organisations, and as a meeting point between east and west. Finally, positioned as one of Asia's leading metropolises, **Seoul** is recognised for quality and innovation in the urban solutions it has been able to produce and share.

**Medellin** has placed communication at the heart of its internationalisation strategy. In fact communication is one of the chief organising principles of the ACI since, by this means, it can make its objectives, priorities and activities known to local citizens and to the rest of the world. The agency has a very effective web page that provides information and publishes a weekly bulletin as well as a monthly internal magazine to help civil servants to embrace the city's international action. Likewise, the ACI's Communications Area attends to and monitors national and international media as well as creating alliances with hundreds of journalists every year.

Montreal and Vienna also have highly effective instruments of communication. **Vienna's** website for international and European affairs<sup>35</sup> (in English) offers a wide range of information about the city's international action. Among other initiatives, Vienna makes a considerable effort to explain why it is an appealing, successful city, and how this fact is reflected in its international positioning in **city rankings**. In recent years, Vienna has received several awards for its good

35 <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/politics/international/>

reputation and it is situated among the top cities in the main rankings. Working for its presence therein, Vienna has managed to become associated with quality of life, innovation and business, science and academia, culture and tourism. The city's good positioning is product of a well-designed strategy and a considerable effort to participate in prizes and other forms of recognition of good practices by cities.

**Montreal** has a similar showcase, the web page of **Montreal International** which offers information about the city and its metropolitan surroundings for anyone who wishes to invest, settle, work, or study there. It provides not only practical information and news about what is happening in the city but also lists arguments as to why Montreal is a good place to establish business headquarters, an international organism, scientific projects or, simply, to work and study.

Barcelona has a similar instrument, **Meet Barcelona**,<sup>36</sup> a space providing practical information and many arguments in favour of discovering the city, visiting it, and studying, researching and doing business there. Meet Barcelona has been launched by the City Council without the participation of the AMB and, therefore, does not necessarily include information about what is happening beyond the municipal limits of the city.

The Economic Development Agency of the AMB has created the portal **Discover Metropolis Barcelona**,<sup>37</sup> to provide similar information on the metropolitan area of Barcelona.

### Attracting investments, headquarters, and international events: talent, creativity, and science as the most desired factors

As noted above, a very significant part of the efforts made by cities in the international domain aims at **attracting investments, headquarters and international events**. Although most of the world's main cities follow similar guidelines, which is to say they **focus on knowledge, creativity, innovation, sustainability, and quality of life** as the main lines of their strategies, each city seeks to identify and strengthen its added value elements.

The five cities analysed are among those with the best developed strategies and best positioned with regard to **attracting investments**. The role of **Medellin** is notable here since it is deemed by the *Financial Times* to be fourth—after Chicago, New York, and Montreal—among the cities of the Americas in terms of the best strategy for attracting investments. The city offers advantages like tax incentives or free economic zones for Industry 4.0 companies as well as for the creative sector, especially cinema.

Similarly, **Durban** is positioned as one of Africa's most attractive cities and, as mentioned above, it has a highly effective instrument for managing the work of attracting investments, namely **Durban Invest**. The city is also well communicated and has an internationally prestigious International Convention Centre in which top-ranking conferences have been held, among them the 2011 United National Climate Change Conference (COP17).

As also shown above, **Montreal** uses **Montreal International** to manage its strategy of attracting investments, headquarters, and international projects. Founded in 1996 with the aim of attracting direct foreign investments, international organisations, and strategic international workers, its results include more than 15,000 million dollars in investments, 65,000 jobs created or maintained, 65 organisations established in the city, and more than 10,000 international workers. The city focuses in particular on attracting headquarters of international organisms, international events—and is second in the Americas in this regard—and international students. On the global scale it has been rated the world's most attractive city for international students.

**Seoul** applies important efforts in attracting international investments. Through the platform Invest Seoul,<sup>38</sup> the metropolis provides information and support for organizations interested in establishing themselves in the Korean capital, with emphasis on innovative sectors, from biotechnology to ITC, fintech, digital contents and fashion. The city also offers all kinds of facilities to international institutions wishing to establish themselves there, including the **Seoul Global Centre**,<sup>39</sup> a space that has been constructed to offer them all sorts of services and advantages. Today it is home to thirteen institutions.

36 <https://meet.barcelona.cat/en/>

37 <http://barcelonaopportunity.amb.cat/>

38 <http://investseoul.com/>

39 [http://global.seoul.go.kr/index.do?site\\_code=0101](http://global.seoul.go.kr/index.do?site_code=0101)

The city also gives special attention to international citizens who live or have lived in Seoul and who can contribute knowledge, resources, and agendas for improving the city's international outreach. This is the underlying logic of the **Seoul Club**, a platform by means of which the metropolitan government remains in permanent contact with professionals and students who have lived in the city.

Finally, the city of **Vienna** also has its own investment agency (**Vienna Business Agency**),<sup>40</sup> an organization that seeks to attract foreign investments, especially in the creative and innovative sectors. This agency offers information and support for potential investors, as well as partnership opportunities, incentives, financial support and advice to companies that decide to establish themselves in the city. As part of this collaboration with the private sector, the city also has an Expat Centre, dedicated to attract qualified foreign professionals and offer personal support to them and their families, to facilitate their arrival, adaptation and integration.

From another side, **Vienna** is the headquarters of many multilateral organisations, which makes it one of the world's top destinations for congresses and international events. Vienna is second in the ranking for cities that organise the most international gatherings worldwide, surpassed only by Paris and ahead of Madrid and Barcelona. It also has a solid strategy for sustainable tourism, a key factor for a city in which cultural tourism is a dynamic and important sector.

Indeed, tourism is a key element in the international outreach strategies of cities. Like Vienna, the other four cities analysed here are making exceptional efforts to attract tourists. Nevertheless, in a situation with a certain degree of mass tourism, concerns with sustainability and quality constitute an increasing goal for cities, towards which they invest considerable efforts, without necessarily achieving short-term results.

The *Financial Times* considers that Barcelona has the best investment strategy of all the European cities. It highlights the effort the city makes to position itself in the start-up scene as well as in the areas of knowledge, science, and creativity (for example it houses the headquarters of such cutting-edge projects as Fusion for Energy, the world's leading scientific partnership).

In addition to the efforts of the AMB and the City Council, Barcelona has two platforms, one private and the other public-private, which also work to enhance the international positioning of the city. The first is **Barcelona Global**, a private, independent and non-profit association made up of 200 of the city's leading companies, entrepreneurs, research centres, universities, business schools and cultural institutions, and more than 700 professionals, committed to "make Barcelona one of the world's cities for talent and economic activity".<sup>41</sup> The second is **Scitech Diplohub**, the Barcelona Science and Technology Diplomacy Hub, a non-profit public-private partnership that works to turn Barcelona into a global hub for science and technology.<sup>42</sup>

Barcelona now occupies the fourth place among the cities of the world that organise international meetings and in 2017 it headed the list. The city has high-quality infrastructure in this regard, especially the **Fira de Barcelona** precinct.

The modernist **Hospital de Sant Pau** has a space<sup>43</sup> designed as a venue for international institutions promoting projects with a major social impact in the areas of innovation, sustainability, health, education, and culture. At present, ten institutions, projects linked with international bodies, and civil society organisations are operating from the Hospital de Sant Pau.

40 <https://viennabusinessagency.at/>

41 <https://www.barcelonaglobal.org/about-us/>

42 <http://www.scitechdiplohub.org/about/>

43 <https://www.santpaubarcelona.org/en/knowledge-centre>

## 5. Decentralised cooperation and solidarity as pillars of the external action of cities

Cities are recognised actors in international cooperation. They have spent years forging solidary alliances and defining mechanisms for mutual cooperation. **Decentralised cooperation**, which has become a common practice among metropolitan cities, has developed markedly in the last few years, changing from assistance-based relationships—whereby more developed partners transfer resources to less well-endowed cities—to take the form of transversal associations between counterparts where experience and knowledge (technical cooperation) in the management of urban challenges have become crucial elements.

**Today, decentralised cooperation is a powerful tool for the international action of cities.** One highly relevant example of this is **Medellin** which, on the basis of cooperation, has built up a much broader, transversal, and successful strategy. Over the years, the ACI has been able to weave a strong mesh of relations with other cities and multinational organisms, which has enabled it to attract not only considerable funding for infrastructure and key projects but also knowledge and experiences that have enabled it to improve the quality of its public policies.

As described above, the ACI has made a major effort to build alliances to boost its international cooperation strategy. The latter include alliances with the main stakeholders of the city and metropolis, the office of the Governor of Antioquia Governor, and the Government of Colombia (in the framework of the Antioquia Network for International Cooperation), and with other cities, either directly or through networks and international organisations. A good example is a project to improve sustainable transport, which was funded to the amount of €12.5 million as part of a cooperation initiative with South Korea, and in which the City Council, the metropolitan area and the Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport also take part. Also noteworthy, is Medellin's commitment to south-south cooperation to support, by means of technical cooperation, other Latin American cities as well as those in other countries of the global south.

**Seoul** also bases a good part of its international work on technical cooperation, knowledge transfer, and solutions for other cities. The efforts being made by the metropolitan government to contribute to the peace and prosperity of cities in northeast Asia should be emphasised. Seoul has planned the creation of an organisation that aims to foster alliances of cities of the region and to organise periodical conventions for mayors. Significantly, this initiative includes Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, although so far the project has not advanced very much.

**Vienna** also plays a decisive role as a hinge city between Eastern and Western Europe. By means of EuroComm-PR the city has close ties with several cities of Eastern Europe and has opened offices in Belgrade, Bratislava, Budapest, Cracow, Ljubljana, Prague, Sarajevo, Sofia, and Zagreb. Cooperation with these cities is essentially based on technical projects although it has recently extended to other more traditional spheres of international outreach.

Moreover, the government of Vienna promotes cooperation projects with international organisations that have their headquarters in the city. For example, it contributes towards several projects carried out by the United Nations Information Service by promoting and making known the Sustainable Development goals and the New Urban Agenda. It is also involved in international cooperation projects funded by the European Commission, for instance the “LOS\_DAMA” initiative that aims to contribute towards preventing the disappearance of green zones in urban areas, while at the same time making them more appealing for recreational activities.

**Montreal**, too, has opted for international solidarity. It has working programmes in the Francophone framework, especially in countries like Haiti where, together with the Federal Government of Canada, it is engaged in major projects. Like the rest of the cities studied, Montreal focuses its cooperation on exchanging experiences and knowledge transfer (technical cooperation). Although **Durban** does not have a specific strategy with regard to development cooperation, it does practise south-south cooperation with other cities in Africa and around the world. In this regard, the city operates through international networks of cities, in particular the UCLG, organising training activities and exchanges of experiences. One good example of this is training organised with UCLG Learning whereby African and Sri Lankan municipal personnel are trained.

The great majority of local governments working in the **metropolitan area of Barcelona** promote international cooperation projects. Almost all of them have specific plans, management units, professional teams, and a budget (in most cases deriving from the commitment of the 0.7% development aid target) but these evidently vary in accordance with the size of the administration. Hence, the city of Barcelona has a budget of €10.2 million,

the Barcelona Provincial Council €3.5 million, and the AMB €1.5 million, while the budgets of other towns and cities are well below these figures. In all cases, there is a working dynamic with stakeholders in the sector (DNGOs) involving other key actors (universities, the third sector, trade unions, professionals, companies, the media, and so on), technical cooperation activities are simultaneously carried out with other partner cities, projects are funded, work is carried out in the area of education for development, and initiatives of emergency and humanitarian aid are funded.

## 6. Conclusions

The study clearly shows the **international dynamism** of the five metropolitan areas analysed in addition to Barcelona (the AMB, the city, and other metropolitan municipalities). This vitality could extend to a good part of the big metropolitan cities of the planet as well as to international municipalism as a whole. Nevertheless, apart from this finding, which is relevant in itself, there are other lessons to be learned and several recommendations that should be borne in mind.

The first element of note is the complexity associated with the processes of **institutional fragmentation** characterising many metropolitan settings and that can negatively affect their internationalisation. As seen above, the analysis of the six realities presents three distinct scenarios, going from international action channelled through a single metropolitan agency (eThekweni, Seoul, and Vienna), through the predominant action of a leading city (Medellin and Montreal), to a situation of fragmentation where each city of the metropolis and the metropolitan government itself promote their own internationalisation strategies (Barcelona).

Starting from the premise that situations like those of Vienna (capital of a federal country), Seoul, and eThekweni are uncommon, the **example of ACI**, where a decentralised entity of the municipality of Medellín—in which the metropolitan area also participates—coordinates all the international action of the city, the Aburrá Valley and even the department of Antioquia, would seem to be a good model to follow. **It represents a coherent commitment to joining forces, skills, and resources**, which has had very good results in recent years and has not been affected by changes of government.

Second, the **strategic and public policy dimensions of international action** promoted by metropolitan cities should be stressed. Particularly pertinent in this regard is the experience of **Montreal**, which has a comprehensive strategic plan for international relations covering all the city's external activity and every dimension thereof, from political influence in global agendas and participation in networks through to cooperation with other cities, international solidarity and strategies of external outreach, attracting investments, headquarters, events and innovative projects.

As the case of Montreal suggests, having a comprehensive strategy does not preclude the existence of parallel strategies in specific areas, for instance in international economic outreach or decentralised cooperation. Nevertheless, it is important to **ensure that the city is accountable to citizens for everything done abroad, and to measure and evaluate the results obtained, as well as assessing the ways in which international action contributes towards the socioeconomic development of the city**. In some situations, like that of Barcelona, there is a certain tradition of evaluating policies of cooperation for development, while those of international relations and external outreach are less subject to social monitoring and control.

In this regard, it would also seem relevant to stress the need, when measuring the different kinds of impact of internationalisation, to pay attention to **negative externalities** which, as shown, can be important and can even come to distort the economic and social realities of cities (gentrification, contamination, precarity in the job market, etc.). In this sense, it would seem highly recommendable to tie internationalisation strategies to others aimed at mitigating these negative externalities.

The analysis also indicates the need to advance in a framework of **coordination and cooperation among stakeholders**, both public and private, working in the international sphere from the city. In this regard, some relevant mechanisms appear among the experiences studied, for example the participative process launched by Montreal when planning its international relations strategy, or the Antioquia network for international cooperation, or the Barcelona group for international economic coordination. Also very interesting is the support for science and technology diplomacy in Barcelona (see above, Scitech Diplohub), the agencies for international outreach (Montreal) and for attracting investment (Durban) in which the different territorial spheres of government (local, regional, and national) and private actors participate.

However, except for the participative process introduced by Montreal, most coordination and/or cooperation efforts are sectoral and **there are no mechanisms that can be used to follow up external action policies from an overall perspective and with all the relevant stakeholders of the metropolis** (private sector, academia, research centres, civil society, professionals, etc.). In the case of Barcelona, there is no mechanism, either, for coordinating the international action of the various municipal governments, of the AMB itself, and of other stakeholders influencing the international agenda, among them the Barcelona Provincial Council and the Government of Catalonia. Such a mechanism is highly recommendable and it would clearly enhance the international action of the city.

Moreover, **the importance of resources mobilised** by metropolises in order to carry out their strategies for international action should also be recognised. With the exception of Durban, all of them have **specific departments, high-profile professional teams and relatively large budgets with which to operate**. The budget of the city of Barcelona, for example, exceeds €13 million, while that of Seoul is almost €9 million. Ensuring proper internal coordination among the different departments or agencies managing international action (international relations, cooperation, economic outreach, and so on) is essential for guaranteeing efficient, synergetic action. So, too, is coordination with other government departments or units. In the present context, besides specialist departments, practically all the units of a metropolitan government have international dimensions and activities.

In three of the cases analysed there are **structures external to the government's organisational chart** and designed to operate more flexibly or with a view to collaborating with public and private entities (Durban Invest and Montreal International). Vienna, by contrast, while also having a dedicated investment agency (Vienna Business Agency), has opted for establishing **representation** in several European cities, and specifically in Eastern European countries with which it has strategic relations, and also **Brussels** where it monitors the public policies promoted by the European Union. Having an office in Brussels is a widespread option among European regions and one that is starting to appeal to several big cities (Stockholm, Helsinki and the Provincial Government of Barcelona are three good examples of this).

**Influencing (regional or global) international policy agendas** is a very important part of the internationalisation strategies of the metropolises analysed. In this regard, all of them have a high-profile presence in **city networks** and make a far from insignificant effort to prioritise those in which they have a more significant and committed presence. Nevertheless, they are also affected by processes that are causing tensions in the international ecosystem of networks in a context of oversupply that could end up being counterproductive. **Ensuring that the main networks progress towards more collaborative and efficient frameworks is precisely in the hands of city administrations**. Barcelona, Seoul, Montreal, Medellin, Vienna, and Durban have a considerable presence in the government structures of the leading networks. They even host their headquarters and their main congresses. Hence, they are in the best possible position to influence their functioning.

Networks are also an ideal scenario whereby cities can reinforce their **strategies for cooperation and for exchanging and transferring knowledge**, among themselves or with other operators (universities, civil society, and the private sector). **Knowledge**, as described above, is an increasingly central concern in their international relations strategies. Cities like Medellin, Vienna, and Seoul are making a major effort to **systematise and capitalise on the most innovative and efficient solutions** towards which they have been working. This effort aims not only at reinforcing their work with other cities but also at enhancing their reputations and outreach at the international level.

In fact, **reputation** is a key element in the international strategies of most metropolitan cities. They seek to position themselves in such a way as to be able to attract opportunities that will strengthen their socioeconomic development. In this regard, communication is essential for **making known the elements of added value they offer**. **The cities analysed clearly opt for linking their image with knowledge, innovation, science, creativity, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion, but they also present themselves as open, diverse, tolerant, and solidary**.

This is because, for some time now, cities have been active in the domain of solidarity, working together and sharing solutions. Today's **decentralised cooperation** goes well beyond the aid-oriented schemes that once characterised it when richer cities transferred resources to poorer ones. Nowadays, **they operate in a framework of association**. **Cities work together sharing knowledge and resources, jointly facing the challenges they must face, and building bridges so that societies can meet**. Hence, thanks to this and the ability to foster technical cooperation, they have become recognised stakeholders in the system of international cooperation.

**The framework of cooperation and collaboration is the logical one that must structure the internationalisation strategies of the metropolises**. It is clear that it no longer makes sense to compete and that it is much more relevant to **construct shared spaces** where synergies are generated, knowledge shared, and joint solutions developed. The networks

can play a decisive role in this. Yet cities cannot act alone. The international space is presently one in which a great diversity of stakeholders coexist, and cities must be able to construct alliances with all of them. **They have much to contribute**, especially the knowledge deriving from their close contact with reality, **but they also have much to learn**.





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