

Metropolitan challenges in the post 2020 European Union

10th March 2020

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Organised by: CIDOB's Global Cities Programme with the support of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB)

The 7th Report of Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion emphasises that metropolitan areas across Europe are gaining relevance as hubs of welfare and opportunities and drivers of innovation and productivity. Metropolitan areas have become laboratories for solutions to some of the most pressing challenges linked to globalisation. They play a crucial role in fighting the causes and consequences of climate change, managing the disruptive impacts of technology and mitigating the effects of growing inequalities linked to financialisation processes. However, in most of Europe, the lack of efficient metropolitan governance structures, political recognition and access to funding undermines the ability of cities to respond to these challenges.

The new Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027, currently under negotiation, will provide the European Union (EU) with a new sense of direction and determine the overall size of the budget, the balance between policy areas and the requirements attached to funding opportunities. To what extent will the role and contribution of metropolitan areas be part of these discussions? Further, the capacity of metropolitan areas to deliver a wide range of policies (e.g. on mobility, climate change, research and inequalities) will also determine the development of the Strategic Agenda of the European Council.

Aware of the growing importance of metropolitan areas, the European Commission is proposing a post-2020 Cohesion Policy that strengthens the urban dimension of regulations for territorial development. In particular, it foresees to dedicate 6% of European Regional Development Funds to sustainable urban development and to a new networking and capacity-building programme for urban authorities (the European Urban Initiative). Similarly, the revision of the *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* (2007), which will be adopted this year, presents an opportunity to enhance institutional coordination and a multilevel governance framework that includes metropolitan areas.

To what extent do these windows of opportunity sufficiently address the needs of metropolitan areas? The seminar will examine this question by focusing on two of the main challenges European metropolises face at this moment: firstly, how metropolitan areas can contribute to, and have a voice in, European climate governance in the form of the newly launched European Green Deal; and, secondly, how they can tackle growing socioeconomic inequalities that concentrate in urban areas. The objective is to assess how EU policy frameworks and financial assistance are supporting metropolitan areas in the effort to tackle these challenges. The seminar will also elaborate recommendations on new EU tools and policies that can potentially improve the support provided to metropolitan areas.

- 09.00 **Welcome remarks**
Ernest Maragall, Vice-President, Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB)
Antoni Segura, President, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- 09.15 **Introduction to the seminar. Key elements for the discussion**
Moderator: **Milagros Pérez Oliva**, Journalist, Director of Barcelona Metropolis
Keynote: **Nicolas Brookes**, Executive Director, CPMR
Mariona Tomàs, Professor, University of Barcelona
- 10.00 **Panel 1. The metropolitan dimension of the European Green Deal**
The objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD), to halve emissions by 2030 and make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050, will require that almost every aspect of European policymaking is re-evaluated in terms of the imperatives of the climate crisis. With more than 70% of Europe's population living in urban areas, the EU Urban Agenda and related urban policies will be particularly required to respond to the EGD's vision of a green and socially just growth strategy. This goes particularly for their implementation in metropolitan areas, for which estimates of future urban growth rates are the highest. This session sets out to explore how metropolitan governance can be aligned with the objectives of the EDG, focusing on EDG measures that are of direct relevance to urban areas. These include the transition to emission-free transport, the sustainable use of energy and water, the energy efficient renovation of buildings, recycling and urban greening. Further, it will discuss how the EU can better support metropolitan areas in aligning the EGD with existing territorial governance mechanisms and policies.
- Moderator:* **Hannah Abdullah**, Research Fellow, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
Keynote: **Doris Knoblauch**, Senior Fellow, Ecologic Institute, Berlin
Ivan Tosics, Director, Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest
Antoni Farrero, Head of the General Manager Bureau, Metropolitan Area of Barcelona
Dominika Forgáčová, Head of the Bratislava Region Brussels Office
- 11.15 **Coffee Break**
- 11.45 **Panel 2. The metropolitan dimension of the Social Europe**
Social exclusion, segregation, homelessness, in-work poverty, the lack of affordable housing and territorial fragmentation are some of the main challenges metropolitan regions face. Inequalities, expressed in multiple ways and aggravated in the peripheries and certain urban areas, are higher in larger cities, where the gap between the rich and poor has widened in recent decades. One of the objectives of the regional development and the post-2020 Cohesion Policy is to build a more "Social Europe" by delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights (thus supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare). Specific goals related to enhancing territorial cohesion are also milestones for 2020, when the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, which nurtures the Europe 2020 Strategy, will have to be assessed. This session will address the metropolitan dimension of the Social Europe project and reflect on how to build on previous efforts to enhance territorial cohesion.
- Moderator:* **Eva Garcia Chueca**, Senior Research Fellow, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
Keynote: **Martyna Derszniak-Noirjean**, Researcher, Austrian Institute for Regional Studies
Oriol Estela, General Coordinator, Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PEMB)
Sergio Porcel, Head of Social and Urban Cohesion, Institute of Regional and Metropolitan Studies of Barcelona
Julia Peterbauer, International Relations Officer, Vienna Social Fund, City of Vienna
- 13.00 **Concluding remarks**
Agustí Fernández de Losada, Senior Research Fellow, Director of the Global Cities Programme, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)