

Proposal for Oslo Region SPIMA-Tour, Study Visit to Zürich, Lyon and Torino, 20-25 October 2019

Note from the Oslo Region Secretariat, to contacts in Zürich, Lyon and Torino

Introduction

This note gives the background for the proposed study visit to Zürich, Lyon and Torino, by a group of planners from the Oslo region, 21-25 October 2019. We have also presented suggestions for thematic content, both of general interest in each of the city-regions, and with some specific questions based on the findings in the ESPON SPIMA study.

Background – about the visiting group and study visit

We are a group of planners from a “land-use and transport” network of municipalities and counties in the Oslo Region Alliance. Our mission is to develop a common understanding of strategic issues of importance to our region and, on the basis of this, propose joint policies and guidelines for spatial development and transport investments.

We have chosen to visit Zürich, Lyon and Turin for three main reasons. Firstly, these cities were all stakeholders in the SPIMA project, which was completed in 2018. There is therefore a clear common interest in the question of regional collaboration in spatial planning. Secondly, these cities are all within reasonable travelling distance from each other over a week. And thirdly, these cities each have some similarities with Oslo, such as their size and strategic location, making comparison of their experiences with regional planning collaboration more legitimate.

We will use this opportunity to learn as individuals from our own unique positions within our region, and we especially hope to learn as a group through shared experiences and joint discussions and comparisons. The tour should also strengthen the group as a whole, as an investment for future collaboration in our own region.

Following the study visit, a summary report of the main findings and learning points will be written, which we will be happy to share with the host city-regions after the trip.

Strategic planning collaboration in the Oslo region

The common policy framework in the Oslo region is a joint land-use and transport strategy. An earlier version of the policy framework (2008) was revised and received political support in all of the region’s municipalities and county councils in 2015. (A short version in English will be sent in advance of our proposed study visit).

This joint strategy has the following two main assumptions:

- 1) strong growth in population and jobs over the foreseeable future, and,
- 2) the realisation of government plans for a new, supplementary network of higher-speed railways within our region by about 2030.

Our joint strategy also has the following two main goals:

- 1) to be a competitive and innovative region in Europe
- 2) to reduce carbon emissions.

To complement the rail-investment programme, local authorities have an obligation to work for more compact, polycentric urban growth than we have seen over the last decades. More compact urban growth challenges a range of issues, such as established living preferences and mobility, the quality of our towns and cities, local democratic independence, the interplay between transport sectors and planners, and the overall governance in our region.

Format for the visits

Our study visit to Zürich, Lyon and Torino is based on these cities' and their metropolitan areas' participation together with Oslo and Akershus in the ESPON SPIMA targeted analysis, which was completed in the Spring of 2018. During our study visit, we would like to learn from seeing, talking and discussing with local and regional planners and experts from each of the cities and their cooperation partners. Since many in the visiting group work in communities *outside* the core city of Oslo, it would especially valuable to meet one or more experts from municipalities outside each of the respective core-cities of Zürich, Lyon and Torino, as well as regional experts within each of the cities. We will have limited time for site-visit, but hope to visit at least one neighbouring town, most likely within the Zurich region if that is possible to organise.

Thematic focus

Below is an overview of themes and questions which we hope to learn about during the study visits to each of Zürich, Lyon and Torino and their respective metropolitan areas:

How do the stakeholders cooperate within the metropolitan area

We would like to hear about the arenas for collaboration, how they are organised. The division of roles and interplay between the municipalities, the regional authorities, statutory bodies and the core city would be of great interest. Both the formal collaboration framework(s) and the day-to-day coordination and discussion are important to learn about.

We understand that the thematic focus can vary between metropolitan areas. While our focus is on land-use and transport, we need to hear about which topics the other regions are working on. Please share good examples of how joint studies, policies and even actions have worked. This can include the main spatial issues such as land-use, transport, possibly housing and the environment, but also economic, social and cultural issues where this is appropriate.

Planning and land-use

We recognise that planning systems vary, as this is a national competency within the EU and there is no European motivation for harmonisation. However, EU policies in many areas give a common direction for planning in metropolitan areas, including sustainable and inclusive growth and, formerly, the EU2020 goals.

To gain a better understanding of how the metropolitan areas work to achieve this, we need to know more about the government structure and organisation of planning in each city-region. Issues like types of plans, legal/ informal status, different spatial levels and how to deal with sectoral plans (eg:

roads, protected areas etc) could be referred to. National policy and legal requirements which influence the collaboration would also be of interest, including requirements and incentives for collaboration and national policies for the metropolitan areas. Finally, on planning, we would appreciate seeing any examples of good or less-good practice for developing more physically compact and sustainable towns, especially outside the core city.

Transport and cooperation for strategic investments

Transport is the other key strategic issue for us, at the metropolitan area level. An overview of the framework of responsibilities for the different transport systems will be needed (cities, regions and national roles for each transport mode). Based on this, we would like to hear about the specific transport challenges in each metropolitan area, and how collaboration works to address these challenges. Possible collaboration between transport stakeholders and the other regional actors will also be good to hear about.

Other policy areas and strategies at the metropolitan level

In the Oslo Region, the overriding policy goals are to reduce climate emissions (mostly from transport) and to sustain our position as a competitive European region for investment and innovation. Social inclusion is also becoming an increasingly important issue, which has spatial implications as well. In this context, we would like to learn more about if, and how, our host-city-regions work on issues such as climate change (adaptation and mitigation), environmental services (waste management, water etc) and economic development, as well as areas which influence social inclusion such as housing and accessibility.

Timing and format for the study visits

We realise that this list of themes is comprehensive and our time in each city-region will be relatively short. Given this, it would be especially good to learn and to discuss through examples within each metropolitan area, projects and cases which are seen both as successes and those which may not be so successful.

The SPIMA project gives an important indication about the stronger and possibly weaker elements of collaboration in each of the stakeholder-regions. Using this as a guideline and a starting point, we would like to suggest that the following issues could be discussed during the course of our visits:

Zürich

- According to the SPIMA project, the Zürich region does not appear to have significant weaknesses in its regional planning collaboration. It would be interesting to hear if the local stakeholders agree with this finding.
- The SPIMA project indicates that the Zürich region is especially successful in a) the way it has managed to define the spatial (geographical) scale of the metropolitan area, b) assessing the spatial dynamics and urban trends in the region, and in c) selecting a governance model and institutional structure. It would be particularly interesting to hear more about these points.

Lyon

- The definition of the status of metropolitan area is assessed as being excellent in the SPIMA project. Please elaborate on this.
- The SPIMA project indicates that the planning collaboration in Lyon has significant weaknesses in being able to ensure success-factors in the regional planning collaboration, such as incentives and triggers. This would be a interesting topic to explore.

Turin

- The SPIMA project assesses Turin Citta Metropolitana as being especially successful in defining both the spatial scale and the status of the metropolitan area. This would be important to understand properly and to discuss.
- In the conclusions of the SPIMA report, the Turin Citta Metropolitana is considered to be significantly weak in the following two respects: a) involving the relevant actors, and b) ensuring success-factors such as triggers and incentives to engage spatial collaboration.

Final words and contact

We sincerely hope that this outline for a framework and content for the study visit is acceptable for you in each of the host city-regions, and we look forward to receiving your draft proposals for a programme in each case, preferably before the end of July 2019. Details will of course need to be confirmed closer to the time.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

The coordinating group for the study visit includes:

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