



Webinar on Covid-19 and metropolitan challenges, November 18, 2020

Summing up the discussion

On November 18th the Oslo Region alliance organised a webinar where we had presentations and discussions on metropolitan challenges, current and forthcoming, in dealing with Covid-19. The speakers were strategic planning experts from Brussels, Amsterdam, Barcelona and Oslo, who shared their experiences and discussed issues on Covid-19 and future planning of cities and urban areas.

Key challenges for urban development include regional cooperation, the loss of jobs and businesses, new patterns of travel and mobility, reviving our public spaces and inclusive housing. These challenges were seen against long-term EU policy goals in the Green Deal, and sustainable development in a more just and productive society.

The speakers were asked to give their comments on the following five key questions/perspectives:

1. **Regional cooperation:** Has there been any cooperation between the city and surrounding areas in dealing with the pandemic crisis? How might the future development be affected at the metropolitan scale?
2. **Transport and mobility:** Mobility and travel patterns have been drastically altered. There are many negative aspects of these changes, and perhaps some positive ones. How might the future look?
3. **Public space:** Open spaces became more important during the pandemic. What have your cities and urban regions done to make these spaces safe and accessible? How might the future development be affected?
4. **Housing:** The design, use and cost of housing has become an important factor during the pandemic, with many special measure for vulnerable households. How might future development and housing policy be affected?
5. **Economic recession:** Economies and jobs have been seriously affected by the pandemic and the lock down measures. What is your city and region doing for a more sustainable future for jobs and businesses?

Speakers

- Peter Austin, City of Oslo and the Oslo Region
- Johan van Zoest, Amsterdam Planning Office
- Xavier Tiana Casablanca, Barcelona Metropolitan Area
- Alfredo Corbalan, Brussels Capital Region

The presentations are available on [Oslo Region web-site](#). For further questions or comments, please contact: eva.nass.karlsen@osloregionen.no

Comments, Q&A

Below are comments, Q&A given in the meeting:

- Added to perspectives could be the first results from scientific research on the effects of covid, that might help us look better into the future
- "covid accelerate the downfall of already weak sectors", Stuttgart Region says, using this concept in determining which sectors to help and which not
- masterclass (ref Brussels-presentation) seems to be a good add-on to the concept of the 15 min city
- Donut theory (ref Brussels-presentation). Prof kate Raworth. search on youtube. Also Lyon and Nürnberg are working with this concept
- General remark: One important issue to harvest from this pandemic is to strengthen the links between metropolitan regions and cities and the EU. The Implementation Document alongside the Leipzig Charter could be one of the arenas in which to achieve this. Let us cooperate on achieving this: L'Union fait la Force! We cannot wait for the necessary systemic change in the EU, we have to find a way around it.
- What are expectations on consequences for office space? Lyon has put a hold on office development around the Part-Dieu central area?
- Access to green areas within and outside the City of Oslo has been crucial for the well-being of people in Oslo.
- Are temporary workers from other countries increasing the challenge of controlling the pandemic in your city regions?
- Now the problem for us is that we have weakened lockdowns and we cannot move from the municipality boundary. This is difficult for dense populated areas.
- Maybe we should also look back to the consequences of the Spanish flu, 100 years ago. Of course different conditions, but still interesting to see if it changed things in the long-term
- Covid seems to accelerate ongoing developments, positive and negative ones. I hope we will be wise in balancing in the mid/long term. Thank you for organising this. Let us continue this discussion, for which METREX will also offer a platform. 21 January we will discuss the issue on the Metropolitan Region.
- The whole region must collaborate in order to take a position on the global stage.
- Will polycentric development be more important in the future?
- Will there be reduced need for investment in transport infrastructure?
- Lessons learnt on preparedness and resilience
- Digitalization has increased, but also disadvantages on working digital.
- Consequence for international cities and business centres
- Demographic changes – too early to see consequences
- Distribute wealth. What to do to make the whole region more attractive?
- Do not want to bring back cars, - more open cities
- Urban plans will not change with pandemic
- Resilience discussions, prepare for later shocks, urban health
- 15-minutes city, mixed housing
- Mobility will change
- City centre of Barcelona, repopulation of city centre