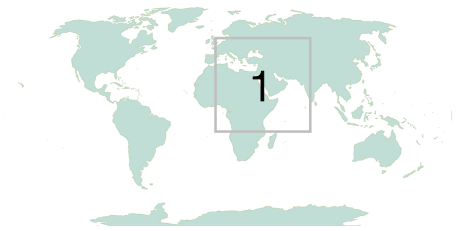


IN-Between Metropolitan Strategies Programme Interview #1 | Grenoble Region, France



Within the context of the activities of the Community of Competence on Metropolisation¹, INTA and Deltametropool Association joined forces to design the programme In-between Metropolitan Strategies pursuing earlier discussions and exchanges on metropolitan strategies ongoing in a worldwide spectrum.

During the first phase, a series of interviews have been realised to several metropolitan cases covering various themes: the scale of the metropolitan area, the governance and cooperation, new forms of urbanity and metropolitan environments, the innovative economical sectors within the metropolitan area and how to develop the metropolis sustainably.

Grenoble Region, France

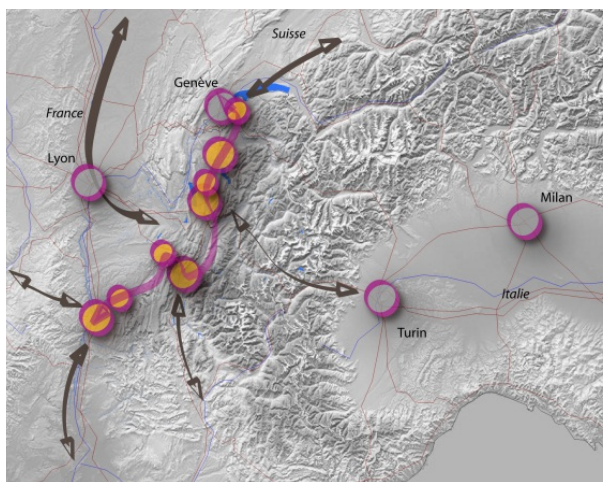
Interview with Jean-Michel Evin, Director AURG Urban Planning Agency Grenoble Region

1. The metropolitan area

How extensive is the metropolitan area and how are the metropolitan values and identity formed for this the area? What makes your metropolitan area internationally attractive?

From Geneva to Valencia, the Alpine Metropolitan corridor combines an exceptional natural setting, with a variety of populations and activities: a succession of Alpine valleys, medium size cities and urban districts, a diversified economy combining traditional industries and high technology.

The Alpine Metropolitan corridor is not a self-centred homogeneous territory. Relations between the different cities are unequally intense. Some links with territories outside the corridor are stronger than others inside the corridor.



Grenoble Metropolis Region
Alpine corridor, a multi polar/ polycentric metropolis in the heart of the Alps
Inter-regional, cross-border and trans-European cooperation to be put into place

¹ <http://www.inta-aijn.org/en/communities-of-competence/metropolisation/metropolisation-home>

Though, the territories of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor share a number of features which make them unite and unique:

- a strong link with the mountains,
- the size of the urban districts,
- a strategic geographical positioning at the crossroads between three of the largest and most powerful European regions (Rhône-Alpes and Lyon, the French part of Switzerland and Geneva, northern Italy and Turin / Milan).

The territory, made of a chain of cities, has both a high rate of population and economic growth, and a recognized role in the knowledge economy (a high level of highly skilled jobs, laboratories, universities, major scientific equipments). It also owes its vitality to the proximity and influence from the poles of Geneva and Lyon, and its condition of "pro-active link" within the main axis connecting northern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.

However, to face globalization's challenges and international attractiveness, the issue of the "critical mass" was also raised as a matter for this area. The average size of the cities that compose it, and the relative isolation of some of them in relation to major transport networks have been seen as a weakness, justifying the introduction of new forms of cooperation.

2. Governance and Cooperation

Is there a form of metropolitan strategy in place and what fields of policy does it entail? Which stakeholders are involved and what is their role and responsibility in this metropolitan strategy? How are the different territorial levels associated to the metropolitan governance? And how is the cooperation of different territorial levels maintained in the planning process that is increasingly subject to a rapid changing economic, social and technological environment?

Recently, the urban districts forming the Alpine corridor expressed the desire to structure themselves in a network under the status of association (called Metropolitan Pole) that should be operational early February.

The idea behind is to consider the Alpine Metropolitan corridor as a territory of project and of cooperation. This Metropolitan Pole is not a new structure, but more a leading body to boost and coordinate future actions and it must meet three main functions:

- The Alpine metropolitan corridor as a tool to question and reflect on common issues and to ensure political consistency and networking among the different actors:
 - Answer to common challenges (relationship between urbanity & mountain, organization of the metropolis as an archipelago...) implies inventing original answers.
 - Answer to common issues (restrict urban sprawl, promote sustainable mobility...) means to ensure consistency and coordination of public policies
 - Answer to common issues (improve accessibility, new economy of the mountain...) means to bring together different levels of actors, both political and socio-economic.
- The Alpine Metropolitan corridor as a tool for dialogue, negotiation and lobbying. It must allow the different territories composing the Alpine Metropolitan corridor to speak with the States, the Regions, the Counties as a single voice and with a wider range of stakeholders whose contribute to the Alpine Metropolitan corridor planning and development.
- The Alpine Metropolitan corridor as a promotional tool. In a context of increased competition between different cities, the Metropolitan corridor should help make visible and readable the network of medium-sized cities across Europe.

A metropolitan engineering to define the next steps

At the scale of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor, several actors have been involved in the construction of the process:

- Local authorities
- Consultants: an *ad hoc* committee created to animate the process, a territorial analyst to run a research on the development driving activities and a law firm for the juridical/institutional questions.
- Public structures: three organisations have been called upon to accompany the whole process of creation of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor: AURG (Urban Planning Agency for the Grenoble Region), MDP (The Development Perspective Mission in Savoy), and the CAUE of Haute-Savoie (architecture, urban planning and environment Committee). Together they contributed to:
 - Settle the metropolitan process within the national context of emerging metropolitan systems and survey other underway processes: through participation in the French national network of Metropolitan Poles and a communication and lobbying plan.
 - Develop a "shared smartness" of the Alpine multipolar metropolis construction: shared representations of the metropolitan territory in its various dimensions and projects dynamics.
 - Support local authorities in the identification and justification of cooperative actions through thematic working groups: "Higher Education-Economy-Research", "Mobility-Transport", "Culture, Tourism", "Territorial influence and strategy"

Three levels of integration of the metropolitan dynamics

- The regional scale and cross-border cooperation: the development of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor must be designed taking into account the influence and the interactions with all these different levels
- The scale of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor
- The neighbouring scale: consolidate neighbouring cooperation within metropolitan areas (cities & urban districts + NRP (regional park) + peri-urban areas)

3. New Forms of Urbanity and Metropolitan Environments

What are the key development projects (flagships, major infrastructure, social or cultural equipment, etc.) and programs (information, incentives, investments), of your metropolitan strategy? How is the dialogue carried between the specific ambitions of local key projects and the ambition of the metropolitan territory?

Key development projects:

- Polarities in the Grenoble metropolitan area: seeking to identify and organize the urban development around three poles and related stations and public transport hubs in the branches of the "Y" (crossroads). It is an operational issue in terms of time, of programme consistency and as a driver for the economic and social development of the city as a whole.
- Grenoble Presqu'île: the development of the peninsula, a site of 250 ha (18% of the area of Grenoble) is an opportunity to turn an international innovation campus and a strategic economic pole into a real neighbourhood in the heart of the city and the metropolitan area. The main idea behind is to promote social interactions between students, researchers, employees and future residents around the three poles: a "centre of life", a "heart of life" and an "outdoor leisure centre". The objective is to create a new urban model for a sustainable, attractive city which get people and functions together.

4. Innovative Economical Sectors

Is the regional level competitive enough in a globalized economic and innovation-led system clusters and does it remove the obstacle of the vertical organisation of public policy?

The economic influence of Rhône-Alpes: 10% of the French economy while it concentrates 18% of the competitiveness clusters (13 out of 71).

Most of the poles of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor cooperate with other major economic centres in the Rhône-Alpes: Lyonbiopôle Axelera, Tennerdis ... The Alpine Metropolitan corridor is strongly involved in the innovation dynamics, especially in partnership with the Rhône-Alps economy.

The Alpine Metropolitan corridor is partner of 25 competitiveness poles or clusters. In some fields, the Alpine Metropolitan corridor can develop its own driving development because it has a consistent innovation ecosystem: triptych **university-industry-research**. The clusters highlight forward-looking sectors of activities on which the territories have focused their development: renewable energy, nanotechnology, image technology, plastics technology, mechatronics.

Beyond a simple inventory and the multiplicity of poles, what is interesting is to note that according to a national assessment on the 71 French clusters, 6 poles on the Alpine Metropolitan corridor were rated as "very effective" and three others as "efficient". This therefore reflects the performance of the innovative ecosystem and the ability to cooperate between industry and research. These poles, clusters, laboratories represent more than 26 000 researchers, 5 campuses and research platforms, 4 international research centres, 8 industrial technical centres, 10 national research organizations, five incubators...

The success of these clusters and of the economic dynamism are also the result of a scientific, technological and research substrate particularly at the higher level of education. A well know university system- Grenoble, 3rd French university town - structuring a PRES (Research and Higher Education Pole) - Operation Campus -

Beyond an efficient higher educational system, the Alpine Metropolitan corridor has a research system that is very strong, unique and open to the industry. This research system is connected to the global research centres and is characterized by the presence of large laboratories and research centres, French, European and international such as CERN, ILL, EMBL, the Synchrotron LITEN, LAPP, LETI, INES ...

5. Sustainable Development

On which central themes and key policies is your metropolitan strategy set upon? How do these themes and policies overcome the short-term instability of any long-term vision and deliver a performing and resilient territorial development?

For presidents and mayors of the Alpine Metropolitan corridor local authorities, major changes that have lead to the creation of the Metropolitan Pole are related to climate, energy, social, economy, and finance and the need to cope with them enhancing endogenous local resources (quality of life, human-sized settlements, natural resources and agriculture, cognitive resources, potential for innovation, diversified economic fabric...). Two transversal and strategic projects engaging all partners fall into this perspective: the definition of **a model of a metropolis in the mountains** and the definition of **a model of a metropolitan network**. Carrying cross-cutting and innovative issues, thematic working areas have been identified as potential common action makers:

- **Transport system:** towards a more sustainable mobility involving transport offer and coordinated user-friendly services, to reinforce accessibility both on the large scale and locally.
- **Economy:** shared programmes to organize joint actions to promote the area and the "main sites" in order to enhance the competitiveness clusters and develop a "mountain" cluster, to

promote a coordinated offer for urban and event tourism and open a debate on the green economy enhancing local resources.

- **University, research and higher education:** a challenge of support and enhancement of the Grenoble University pole (PRES) across the Metropolitan Pole, to promote higher education offer and strong connections between high education and companies.

- **Culture, Tourism events:** a challenge for integrated cooperation to get a better understanding of the cultural and arts offer in the Alpine Metropolitan corridor, structured cooperation in the field of events and cultural activities, and joint cooperation between museums, educational institutions and media arts.