



INTA – Real Corp 2012 International Roundtable - Conclusions

Have we reached a limit in making the
city? Metropolisation of River basins:
between threats and opportunities.

Schwechat, Austria, 15 May 2012

Activity of the Community of Competence Metropolisation in
collaboration with:



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Report by Viviana Rubbo, INTA
Daniela Patti, MSc Researcher at CEIT ALANOVA



All abstracts and presentations available [here](#)

The latest working session of the Community of Competence on Metropolisation (CCMetro) took place in Schwechat (Austria) at the occasion of the 17- International Real Corp Conference.

The mandate of the CC Metropolisation is to explore and propose new and innovative solutions to pressing metropolitan development issues. The debate in Schwechat focused on development strategies for territories in fragile environmental situation such as those threaten by climate change and rise of water level : large river basins like the Rhine and the Danube or delta areas like in The Netherlands or Romania. The viennese working session gathered representatives from the most of the countries in the Danube-Rhine corridor: The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Serbia, Romania.



Black Sea to North Sea Water Route (Danube/Main/Rhine Waterway)

Source: Community Walk < www.communitywalk.com/map/12225 >

The day before the Roundtable the speakers and the moderators went on a tour to visit some projects in Vienna along the Danube that would have helped the discussion the following day.

Some of the projects visited:

Kaberwerk (with Volkmar Pamer, Stadt Wien): the transformation of cabelwire factory into housing complex

Donauinsel (with Markus Damm, Tina Vienna) a flood protection island with recreational purposes

Autofreiesiedlung, a housing complex planned for inhabitants what will have no car and Donaufeld (with Markus Vogl, Querkraft architects)

The CCMetro identified three groups of critical questions

- Intensification and extension of the co-operation between river cities and their surrounding regions
- Promotion of project making the river a metropolitan corridor linking the neighbouring territories;
- Search for an integrated governance system.
- How can the variety of approaches be integrated according to the local needs?
- How to improve citizens' involvement and participation in large scale territorial cooperation projects?

Opening the session, *Paul Gerretsen*, director of the Deltametropolis Association (The Netherlands), provided an analysis of the present situation in the Netherlands where rivers and delta have brought prosperity, wealth and economic development, and where urban development and delta are intertwined by circumstances. Dealing with climate changes and struggling with water is a permanent leitmotiv in his country where urban design is forced to confront with rising water and intense urbanisation.

Is there a possible limit to urban development?

Markus Damm, responsible for the management of the City Network Donau Hanse at Tina Vienna (Austria) described the macro-region strategy and the Danau Hanse network established to strengthen the economic performance of the Danube cities. The key goal is to transform the network into a sustainable engine for going beyond the borders of the European Union.

The presentation included an overview of the relationship of the Danube strategy and the relationship with the DonauHanse. The DonauHanse focuses on need to create local knowledge and know-how, therefore the capacity building and exchange promoted by the CUPA projects.

Mr. Pamer, Urban Planner, Municipal Department for District Planning and Land Use South and Northeast, City of Vienna (Austria), described in detail the methodology and structure which is used in the CUPA (Cooperative Urban Planning Approaches)

Marek Dinka, geographer and spatial planner, City of Bratislava (Slovakia) presented the peculiar case of Bratislava where city borders overlap State borders and where present challenges are the governance of a cross-border region, the coordination and the institutionalization of regional urban planning management and consequent harmonization of land use.

With a series of projects and joint initiatives, the Slovak capital and the neighbouring Austrian region have entered into a process of intense cross-border co-operation to harmonise the development within the greater region. Since the fall of the "Iron Curtain", the accession to the European Union and membership of the Schengen area, the potential to develop as an integrated metropolitan area has increased enormously. The strong dynamics of Bratislava are affecting the rural Austrian villages through increased demand for new settlements, leisure and recreational areas. The formerly rural villages tend to become suburban towns. However, protected natural areas such as the national park "Donau-Auen" between Bratislava and Vienna create the ideal conditions for developing a well-balanced strategy for the future development of Bratislava and the towns in the surrounding area, still denied by lack of real cooperation and shared strategic vision.

Specific studies in the project had indicated that high dynamics in new settlements and sites in-and-around Bratislava were placing increasing pressure on the neighbouring Austrian municipalities to convert from sleepy border municipalities to attractive suburbs of the Slovak capital. The project KOBRA (Cooperation Bratislava) was thus set up to prepare them for this new role and emboss their special cultural and ecological qualities and identities when planning vis à vis the present and envisaged demands.

The "Planning Community East" together with the Provinces Burgenland and Lower Austria as well as partners in Vienna and Bratislava prepared the ground for an expert discussion of existing local and regional plans to define and map functional zones and regional focus measures. In addition to KOBRA, the BAUM involved regional and local stakeholders whose main reason for participation is a cooperative voice in the joint management of the developments in the city of Bratislava and its surroundings.

Han Meyer, professor in Theory and Methods of Urban Design at the Technological University Delft (The Netherlands), pointed out the role the water is playing in the urban development in delta regions (and territories with river corridors) perceived as an opportunity and suggesting the new reflection over City within the Water. The Dutch National Government initiated a second Delta-program (2009-2014), in order to improve the safety of the densely populated western part of the Netherlands against flooding. This current delta-program can be considered as a new

challenge for urban planning and design: to find a new balance between decision-making at the large (national) scale and processes of self-organization at the regional and local scale. The future strategy for flood-defence and water-management will be of decisive importance for the spatial configuration of the Randstad, which tends to change into two metropolitan regions: the Amsterdam Metropolitan and the Rotterdam - The Hague Metropolitan.

Professor Meyer outlined the connection between national flood defence policies and economic development policies trying to combine several aspects:

- urban waterfronts development
- ecosystem improvement
- port & industry development
- safety

How flooding defense can be combined with urban development and urban areas?

In the metropolitan region Rotterdam - The Hague the port development (with the creation of a port-network) and the decision to open or close the delta (as the new frontier for the closing the delta and enlarging Dike-ring 14) can affect the future development of the region including Antwerp. The city of Rotterdam is making more and more effort to survive as a metropolis that is not only dependent on the port economy because something might change the main trade balance when China will complete the massive infrastructure rail line to connect the industrial areas of China to the West European logistic hubs.

Ahmed Khan, visiting professor and post-doctoral research associate at Cosmopolis, (Belgium), try to offered his views on the question " have we reached a limit in the urbanisation and metropolisation" by presenting a SECOA [Solution for environmental contrasts in coastal areas] research project in the 'environment' field that considers the effects of Human mobility and Climate change on urban settlements' growth and restructuring in fragile environments of coastal areas.

How to manage contrasts? How do we determine the conflicts change?

SECOA takes on board an integrated ecosystem approach with the aim to identify the contrasts, analyze their quantitative and qualitative effects on the environment, elaborate an innovative methodology, build alternative scenarios, develop tools for appropriate policies, and create models to synthesize the complexity of the different social, economic and environmental systems.

Four main categories of uses that are interrelated and play a crucial role in the life-worlds of Coastal Urban Areas - Ports and Harbours, Growth and Development of general urban functions, Energy / power generation and Natural environments and habitat contains conflicts cases that range from access [denying public access to coast] to land-use [conflicting / competing changes], bio-diversity maintenance and pollution associated conflicts, and which move and evolve along multiple scales and temporal dimensions.

Ahmed Khan describing the cases of the expansion of the Zeebrugge harbour (Belgium) and Costa Teatina National Park (Italy) explained that potential conflicts are embedded in land-use change triggered by competing interests. By unfolding [future] land [and sea]-use changes, therefore, potential conflicts can be mapped.

Sharing these scenarios-based mapping allows comparison between alternatives. Such alternatives function as a tool to map the complexity of policy questions, and thus, are useful as scientific support-base for expanding the strategic capacity of policy-making processes and governance.

Infrastructure-led urban and metropolitan developments along water corridors

Christopher the Vries, director of the European Infrastructure Laboratory (The Netherlands) saw the European infrastructure development as an opportunity for the territorial systems to improve socio-cultural and identity logics. As regards the case of the Danube-Rhin, 20 countries are involved. The Rhine and Danube watershed form an East to West transect across Europe. Where rail, road and waterway intersect intermodal harbours are the epitome of a trade node within the TENs. These nodes could ultimately form a transregional conurbation from the Netherlands to Romania.

How this European region is defined awaits appraisal. Which transnational identity?

The complex system Rhine and Danube connected by the Rhine-Mainz-Danube canal becomes a common element for the territories involved, the European infrastructure laboratory calling it Europe's liquid commons, a common sense for the "Danube-Rhine" region. Without any political links already existing from country to country, the river has the capacity to make connections. River is the geographical entity that actually exists around which citizens, organizations, institutions can be involved in the construction of the west-east axis with negotiations based on water functionality but also on other symbolic elements equally relevant. A complex landscape infrastructural development where many opposing stakeholders were accommodated through a socio-culturally sensitive approach.

Thomas Kiwitt, Managing Director, Stuttgart Regional planning commission (Germany) analysing the development strategy of the Stuttgart region, in the south-western part of Germany and in the heart of Baden-Württemberg Land, underlined that the relatively wide range of responsibility calls for a strong political control, a clear programmatic regional plan and democratic legitimacy. The region is responsible for planning at supra-municipality level and of the public transport net. The more so that the regional infrastructural system has a national relevance. The region covers the 30% of the national GDP. Nevertheless the region represents the 10% of the German territory accommodating 25% of the national population. Pressure on the economic side and population on a rather limited area lead to a relevant reduction in open spaces. Unfortunately, the 179 municipalities and each of the 16 regions of the Baden-Württemberg have their own regional planning and regional governance laws, contributing to a fragmented planning system on a national level (which leads to very different patterns of methodology and instruments). All over the nation the communities have relatively strong home rules – a constitutional right to – among others - organise their development within the limits of regional demands.

What has to be done on regional level?

To achieve sustainable and co-ordinated development regions have to transform general guidelines issued by the Land into the binding content of a regional plan, defining mandatory limits for municipalities:

- amount of new settlements
- areas where these are possible.

To assure that the plan, ideas and conditions on the different levels fit together a participatory system known as the “principle of countervailing influence“ is established. Stuttgart regional assembly is chosen by direct vote – elected by the people, while the other 11 regional assemblies are appointed by the County boards: “that guarantees the mixture of competences and democratic legitimacy within the perimeter of the region. Essential for future oriented regional development”. Each masterplan pays special attention to the characteristics of the landscape dealing with local authorities and user expectations. To meet regional sustainable development, Stuttgart region has to cope with:

- Globalisation: providing appropriate answers - provision of land for commercial activities and housing - to worldwide business net and migration flows demands
- Demographic changes: population ageing
- Climate changes as well (Vulnerable topography, Densely populated areas / manufacturing sites along rivers at risk, Insufficient regional water supply ..

Stuttgart region responded by promoting a cross-sectional / horizontal – vertical integrated approach to guarantee adequate infrastructure and open spaces quality, flood protection and safety within a long-term political agenda. Stuttgart metropolitan region is also responsible for the regional railway-system. Within this sector it is promoting accessibility and quality of the green infrastructure system strictly connected to the urban development in the region (only municipalities with railway access are allowed to have an intensified development of settlement areas).

How to connect the local level and the European level when funds come from Europe?

Pietro Elisei, founder and director of URBASOFIA (Romania) analysing the dense urbanized areas in the Romanian side of the Danube raised several questions: how to use the urban sprawl as an opportunity, and open a dialogue with the rural areas and with the Danube?

It seems that the context created by the EU could consent to face these issues under a more comprehensive perspective, this could open for this EU macro-area interesting new opportunities, especially in territorial questions (TENs, Energy, Urban Strategic Planning, ICT infrastructures and services...), but it remains a difficult task to create the liaison between the many real needs of this macro-area and the standard-general policy designed at Community level.

It is worth considering that the Danube is for more than 1/3 of his length on Romanian territory, this has permitted until now to launch cross border territorial cooperation with neighbouring countries (the Danube separate Romania from Bulgaria, Serbia and Ukraine). Moreover, there are 19 cities on the Romanian side of the Danube, of which 3 large ones (Drobeta Tr. Severin, Braila and Galati) and Tulcea, (if we consider the channel connecting to Constanza the number is 22). Each of these cities is connected to territories presenting different potential for regional development ranging from unique natural heritages (like the Danube Delta, Tulcea), to the industrial and logistics (Galati, Costanza, Drobeta) and the cultural ones (the singular urban fabric and history of Braila).

He underlined the lack of dialogue between the objective of the Eu projects and the real ambitions of the territories involved by the projects.

Which are the appropriate tools to manage EU funds for a receiver country that suffers from lack of coordination and integration?

Locally, Romania is starting to recognize as a strategic challenge the urban-rural development along the Danube corridor. The Danube has been considered first as a limit/ a border. Now has become a gate/ connection opening opportunities of dialogue/ exchange. Bucharest is connected to Odessa/ Budapest/ Istanbul, in a national /regional /sub-regional / systems and cross-border polarizations. There have been several attempts in the past and institutions designed to manage the territories adjacent to the Danube. Different European countries have tried to have the economic hegemony of this part of Europe.

The National Physical Development Plan, on long-term projection, foresees a complex and integrated network of navigable routes and ports / rail and road improvement and areas of high touristic value within important river territory connections.

Livia Morega, Urban planner at Eurodite (Romania), presented the cases of metropolitan Costanza and the Braila-Galati urban system. Braila-Galati, the only urban system in Romania, now constitutes the second biggest urban agglomeration on the Danube, at the very end of the river, a natural sea and river port, with specific sea and river transportation infrastructure. Mrs. Morega pointed to the real opportunities in developing the cooperation between the 2 cities along the Danube River in terms of:

1. Strategic-logistic hub of connection to/from the black sea
2. Touristic development
3. Industrial and urban development / urban renewal
4. Agricultural development

The project "Constanza metropolitan area" constitutes the very first steps of a master planning process. Constanza is a sea port, also connected to the Danube by the Danube-Black Sea canal, having undergone massive infrastructure works that has determined a specific pattern of development for the city both in physical as well as economic and social aspects. The municipality goal is to expand the touristic sector. In Constanza, the considerable opportunities presented by the existence of water become in themselves a threat: there are major benefits in various economic sectors, and developments to be made for each in part. The challenge is to bring all the stakeholders together and find the common strategy for the most efficient way to take advantage of all the opportunities. Context is relevant considering the efforts Romania is making to align itself to the other European countries and making the most of local, natural – water – resources.

Markus Vogl, architect at *querkraft architekten zt gmbh* (Austria) shown how the river determines on the one hand the identity of the territory (in terms of landscape and quality of life) while representing the occasion to create the connection with the inner city centre (innovative mobility system integrating the existing one).

The area of the Donauefeld is one of the targeted areas for development of the Urban Plan of Vienna STEP05 which currently is one the last areas close to the centre of the city with agricultural land-use. At the same time the surrounding neighbourhood lacks a urban functions and centralities although the very high connectivity.

The masterplan under development promotes a multi-stakeholder discussion in the development phase, implementation and maintenance, by proposing a band of events, so to function as a spine in the area, and urban agriculture and new housing and mobility concepts.

Some of the points were also discussed according to the tour on the previous day, such as how to integrate the present agricultural identity of the area in the urban development, how to guarantee social housing and facilities (economically and spatially) and how to provide urbanity along the river and not only recreational activities.

Darko Polic, The historic development and the relationship with the spatial and governance structures is undergoing a series of changes in Serbia in the past decade. The city of Novi Sad, the second largest in Serbia, and its development is representative of these patterns. After the war building speculation and informal settlements have drastically characterized the urban development of the outskirts of the city yet some areas along the Danube have remained untouched due to ownership and flood protection reasons.

In March 2012 the Municipality of Novi Sad held a CUPA Implementation Lab with the DonauHanse network in order to discuss the possible development of a precious area of the city, the so called Chinese District.

City of Novi Sad (Serbia), presented a metropolitan development process proposed for the left bank of Novi Sad consisting of old industrial zone (Chinese District), marine military barracks and two river (Fisherman and Kamenica) islands. The process outlined new perspectives and hidden resources to develop the area through the acquisition of a new and more complex vision, a wide participation of actors (local community, local stakeholders, citizens, municipality sectors..) and establishing a platform of cooperation (public-private partnerships have just being legally legitimized in Serbia).



Monday 14 May: evening pre-meeting in Vienna

More questions raised in the course of the CCMetro working session

- How such corridor can foster regional interactions?
- How sharing a river basin can be leverage for a coherent and cohesive development?
- How to maintain a balanced urban growth together with the protection of natural corridors?
- These natural axis are often connection and trade systems.

- Which integrated governance mechanism allows sharing large infrastructural equipments along a river basin?
- How to develop different scales of connection fostering urban and regional interactions along the river and within the territories around?
- How can the physical element of the river foster the identity of the region?
- How can initiatives be economically sustained and how can activities be integrated together.

The exchange of experiences between the Rhine and the Danube cities has highlighted many differences and similarities, not all so obvious at first sight.

If on the one hand the cities along the Rhine are characterised by a higher level of homogeneity as for economy, culture and 'europeanisation', on the other, the Danube cities present a higher level of diversity as for recent history and current political processes.

The examples of Constanza metropolitan region and the brand new Braila-Galati urban system confirm the necessity to improve cooperation and enhance the value of the water corridor to define a new economic systemic identity. The river can become a limit, a frontier denying a coherent and cohesive development ("How sharing a river basin can be leverage for a coherent and cohesive development?). In other occasions, like the Donauefeld, the river becomes the occasion to connect city centre of Vienna and link the nord-east district to the urban core still far away from the Danube.

European funds, networks and projects seem to be the current way to built today governance on these territories while raising the practical problem of the real final destination of the EU funds. Coordination among local, regional and cross-borders territories is on the one side the main goal of a region crossed by a river corridor, on the other is the main absent.

Disparities among countries include different approaches, different institutional framework, different level of public participation, different stakeholders and different development issues. A recurrent word in the presentations being the words "Balance – Conflicts" reflecting the need and the urgency of partnership and compensation, a unified terrain on which to build new alliances.

The identified gaps in the debate are a chance for new questioning

- Which problems (and which aspects) can be addressed at metropolitan scale?
- At which condition establish a dialogue between the objective of the local project and the ambition of the larger territory? - How the different projects meet their own ambition within the metropolitan area?
- How to insert the economic process into the metropolitan process ?
- Port epitomises exchange and commerce: which production "places" have to be linked to put into play the economic process? How to introduce metropolisation in the productive urban system, for example in the ports-network that is foreseen in the Netherlands?
- How to make an effective performing project? How to create values? Which are the values to be taken into account at the metropolitan scale?
- Finally what is the relation between metropolisation process and natural corridors?

A new topic introduced during the conversation is the city within the water, which brings into question risk and uncertainty linked to metropolitan development within the water (The Netherlands) Are delta or river an imposed limit? Why do we start from the map of conflicts and don't we look at the map of complex opportunities?

Find more information, background documents and pictures on our Communities of Competence's platform
at www.inta-aivn.org