



# THREE-YEAR REPORT

A New Outlook for  
Rethinking Metropolitan Spaces

NB: The data set out in this report was obtained from the annual and quarterly reports put together by the Metropolis Secretariat General, as well as our communication channels, principally the website. All data valid as of 30 October 2020.

The obtained outcomes depicted in this report are in line with the goals set forth in the Metropolis Action Plan 2018-2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Please refer to the SDG icons at the end of this report to see our contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In pursuit of transparency, our work and deliverables are presented in line with the Metropolis Action Plan 2018-2020 structured into:

- **L1. Action Line 1.** Urban Diplomacy and Metropolitan Advocacy
- **L2. Action Line 2.** Capacities for Metropolitan Governance
- **L3. Action Line 3.** Internal Governance Culture

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# Message from the President

**Michael Müller**

President of Metropolis

Governing Mayor of Berlin

Dear Members of Metropolis,  
dear friends,

It has been my great pleasure to serve our network as president over the last years. After some years as co-president, **I took over this office initially from my predecessor Denis Coderre** as interim president and was elected president in August 2018 at our annual meeting in Gauteng. With this report and the examples in it, I would like to invite you to look back on the last three eventful years.

I am glad that **together we were able to set so much in motion** in Metropolis during this time. This applies not only to **structural aspects**, but also to our network's activities in the **areas of policy and expertise**. The system of membership subscriptions and the statutes have been fundamentally modernised. In launching the policy debate format, we have stimulated political exchange and, in the same spirit, also created more space for constructive discussions in board meetings. We have given the co-presidencies a more specific focus and expanded our cooperation with other international city networks. The **Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE)** online platform is one Berlin Metropolis project which has had a very positive resonance. I am delighted to see so many members exchanging views on this platform, learning from and with one another about sustainable city development. The pilot projects over the last years have also shown our network's many different concerns and its considerable potential.

Metropolis is a remarkable knowledge resource for one of the key issues of our day – the development of metropolises. How urban space is developed decisively influences our success in climate protection and combating growing social inequalities, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic threatening all of us. Over the last years, we have increasingly succeeded in heightening awareness of this message and, in this way, have also given our network new political power. The work of Metropolis, as well as other networks with which we cooperate, has **helped to consolidate the role of cities as strong players on the global level**. Metropolis is presently showing how, even at a time of global crisis and social distancing, we can **intensify our cooperation to master the challenges facing us**.

**Together we were able to set so much in motion in Metropolis**

Partners and friends, **let us continue confidently along this path together!** I am glad to see how we in Metropolis, despite different political, cultural, and geographical backgrounds, have succeeded in working for common goals and standing up for a better future in freedom and democracy. Since I will not be running again for the office of Berlin's Governing Mayor in autumn 2021, it seems best now to arrange an orderly transition in our network. I would like to thank you for the confidence you have placed in me and I wish you every success in the future.



# Message from the Secretary General

**Octavi de la Varga**  
Metropolis Secretary General

At Metropolis we strive not only to promote the interests of our members but so they can leverage their resources to satisfy people's needs.

For 35 years we have done everything possible to enable metropolitan spaces to capitalise on the benefits of global urban growth and minimise all types of negative fallouts such as the intensification of inequality in order to harness their enormous potential. We want people to benefit from the incredible opportunities each metropolis affords. In the 2017-2020 period we worked tirelessly to realise these opportunities.

In my first few months as secretary general, I saw first-hand the capacity and daily dedication of our members at a time when the **needs of metropolitan governments were evolving** at a pace of **metropolisation** never seen in the history of humankind.

We were also faced with the challenge of establishing processes to comply with the 2030 Agenda and the recently adopted New Urban Agenda, while the **ecosystem of local and regional government networks** was steaming ahead. In this context, it was necessary to reframe **the value we could and should offer members**.

As defenders of effective metropolitan governance, in this three-year period we have developed and performed outreach around a common **metropolitan narrative** posited on the same practice as our network. We have identified multiple challenges such as the fear among women and girls to engage and live in the **urban public space** and make it their own, and **generated ideas** with new spaces of political debate. We then leveraged this to **share knowledge** across numerous learning and training programmes.

We have reinforced our desire to **step up the organisation's management, transparency and accountability** to meet the challenges and opportunities the global context presents, putting new processes in place and maintaining one of our core features: our grassroots approach and humane dealings with stakeholders.

A lot remains to be done.

Our association requires stable and flexible support from our members and partners to implement our ambitious Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023.

Our efforts will continue to focus on generating more **knowledge from and by members** and providing large urban areas with new and innovative tools so they can implement public policies around crucial questions such as the most recent threat the planet is facing, the Covid-19 pandemic. We can use this time to (re) consider a metropolitan governance that ensures fairer, more inclusive and more resilient cities and communities. It is, in fact, **a call of our times**.

I look forward to tapping the achievements of these three years and continuing to work together to bring the world a little closer to our vision, with metropolises by and for the people.

**At Metropolis we strive not only to promote the interests of our members but so they can leverage their resources to satisfy people's needs.**



**Introduction:  
35 Years'  
Experience  
in Metropolitan  
Governance**



In 2020 we celebrated the **35th anniversary of Metropolis** with the firm conviction that metropolitan spaces can harness the benefits of urban growth that seem unstoppable today.

For more than three decades we have promoted **cooperation, dialogue** and the **exchange** of knowledge and solutions, based on our members' own experiences. Below we look at what we consider to be key moments in our association, from its establishment by 14 large cities meeting in Montréal in 1985 through to the year 2020 (at the time of preparing this report):

35 years



metropolis ●

35 Years  
in

1984

**1st Metropolis World Congress** (Île-de-France)

1985

**Michel Giraud** (Île-de-France) is elected first president at the Metropolis Constituent Congress

1990

The **technical commissions** are established as of the 3rd Metropolis World Congress (Melbourne)

1993

The **Technical Assistance** Plan is created at the 4th Metropolis World Congress (Montréal)

1996

Engagement in **UN-Habitat** (Istanbul)

1998

**Joan Clos** (Barcelona) succeeds Michel Giraud (Île-de-France) as president

1999

**Josep Roig Martí** is appointed Metropolis secretary general

2000

Creation of the Metropolis **regional secretariats** (Guangzhou) and transfer of the **Secretariat General to Barcelona**

2002

**1st Metropolis Awards**

"Seeking Better Quality of Life for the World's Metropolises"

2005

Creation of the Metropolis Women International Network in Berlin

2006

**Jean-Paul Huchon** (Île-de-France) succeeds Joan Clos (Barcelona) as president

2007

**1st World Forum of the Metropolis Women International Network** (Brussels)

2008

**1st regional training centre** in Mashhad

2009

**2nd World Forum of the Metropolis Women International Network:** "Dynamic Cities Need Women: Vision and Challenges for a Women-Friendly City" (Seoul)

2011

**Alain Le Saux** succeeds Josep Roig as Metropolis secretary general

# 35 Key Moments

# 35

2012

Launch of the **Urban Innovation Programme** and **1st Guangzhou International Award** for Urban Innovation

2013

Opening of the **Metropolis International Training Institute** (Seoul)

2014

Launch of the **Policy Transfer Platform** (PTP)

2015

**Denis Coderre** succeeds Jean-Paul Huchon (Île-de-France) as president and **Felip Roca** succeeds Alain Le Saux as secretary general.

PrepCity initiative is launched by Metropolis and Berlin to prepare the Habitat III and ensure the participation of cities.

Engagement in:

- Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas, Habitat III preparatory event
- United Nations General Assembly when the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted
- COP21 Paris when the Paris Agreement was adopted
- 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai)

2016

Launch of the **Metropolis Observatory** and the first Issue Paper and participation in **Habitat III** (Quito)

2017

**Octavi de la Varga** succeeds Felip Roca as secretary general at the 12th Metropolis World Congress (Montréal). Michael Müller succeeds Denis Coderre as interim president. Launch of the **pilot projects**.

2018

**Michael Müller** is appointed president and suggests a thematic mandate for each co-presidency. **First political debate** promoted by our Board of Directors. **World Metropolitan Day** celebrated around the world for the first time.

2019

Public relaunch of the online-platform **Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE)** (formerly the PTP) with new functions and a new design.

2020

Launch of the **Cities for Global Health** platform



## New Political Leaderships: A Reflection of the Cooperation Between our Metropolises

By 2017 large cities and metropolitan areas had become key stakeholders in matters of such scope as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, there was a major uptick in local and regional government networks. In this context, our General Assembly unanimously confirmed our core purpose: **to defend the interests of large cities and metropolitan areas and help them step up more effectively to local and global challenges**. A mission spearheaded by Denis Coderre and, after him, Michael Müller as association presidents, and Octavi de la Varga as secretary general.



Mayor of Berlin, Michael Müller, stepped in as interim president for Denis Coderre, whose mandate as mayor of Montréal ended in November 2017. A firm defender of metropolitan cooperation, from the first day of his appointment as president in Gauteng in August 2018, Mr Müller was committed to engaging members in **political debates** and joining forces to **make the voice of major urban areas heard on global agendas**.

Octavi de la Varga, a former executive director of the association and secretary general as of the 12th Metropolitan World Congress held in Montréal in 2017, prepared the association for the new challenges to come.

Also of note was the role played by the co-presidencies, as well as the treasury, the vice-presidencies and the regional secretariats over these years. Their invaluable efforts have helped deliver significant progress.

And so the association continued to move forward day by day over these three years, with **new leaderships** marked by rigour, creativity and collegiality.

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1 and 3

# 01

## Key Deliverables in Metropolitan Governance

During the period of the **Action Plan 2018-2020** we successfully managed and punched above the challenges we faced along the way, including the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic which local governments experienced first-hand. There is no question that we secured significant deliverables around the challenges of metropolisation. Below are just some.

# | A Global Presence

In these three years we made clear progress in delivering on our mission thanks to the collaboration and trust of our members. We acquired over twenty **new members from various regions around the world**, consolidating our position as a network of large cities and metropolitan areas with a global reach. *At the time of preparing this report*, Metropolis had a total of 141 members – local and metropolitan governments – from 61 countries. Twenty-two have joined since the 12th Metropolis World Congress in Montréal:

Baghdad, Bandar, Barcelona (city), Bogor, Gaziantep, Goyang, Grand Lyon, Greater Paris, Greater Manchester, Guiyang, Jember, Jinan, Kazan, Male', Nanjing, Siping, Tijuana, Turin, Valle de Aburrá, Wuxi, Xiamen, Yiwu.

## | Connecting our Metropolises with Global Agendas

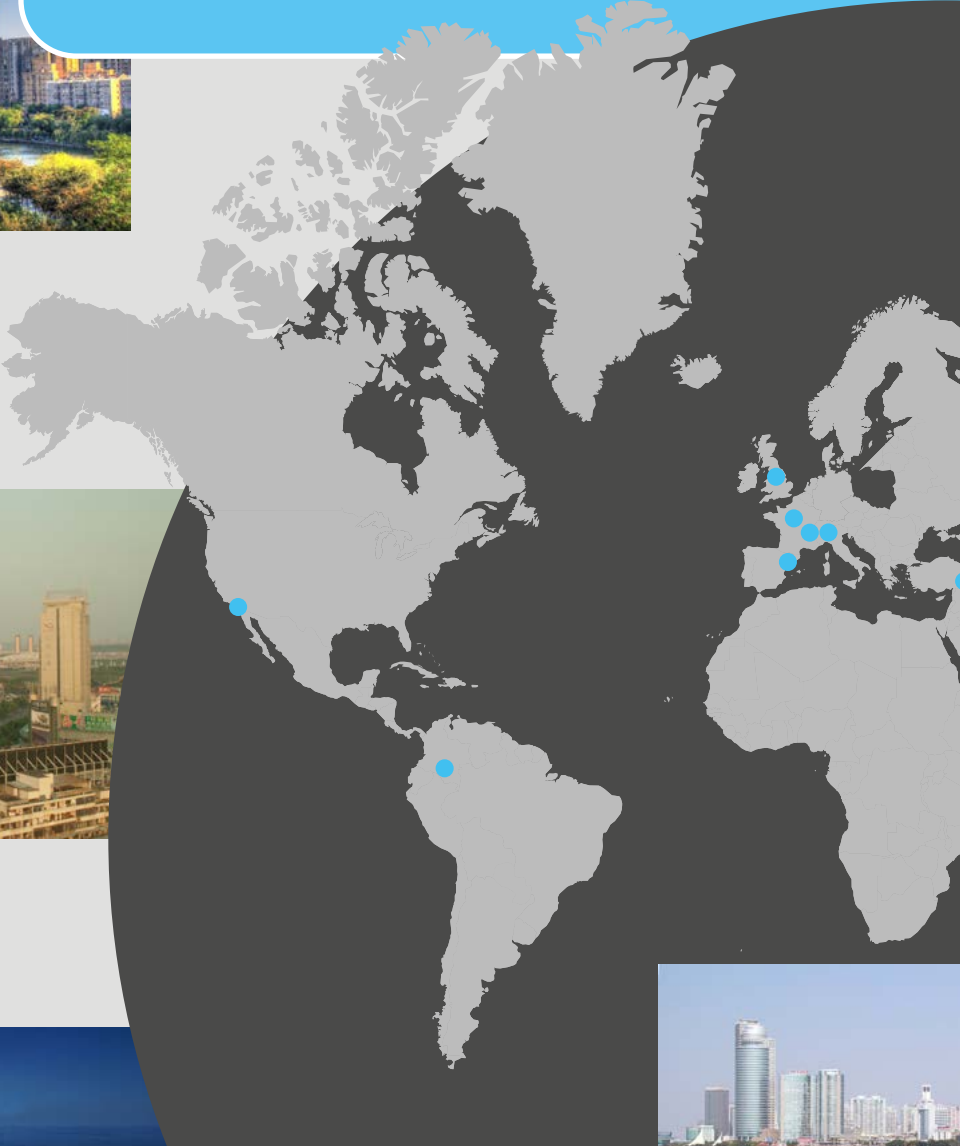
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During this three-year period we fostered a new and exclusive space of political engagement by the members of the Board of Directors. The **political debates** were conceived with the goal of hearing and sharing ideas, messages and responses to the challenges of metropolisation. These were:

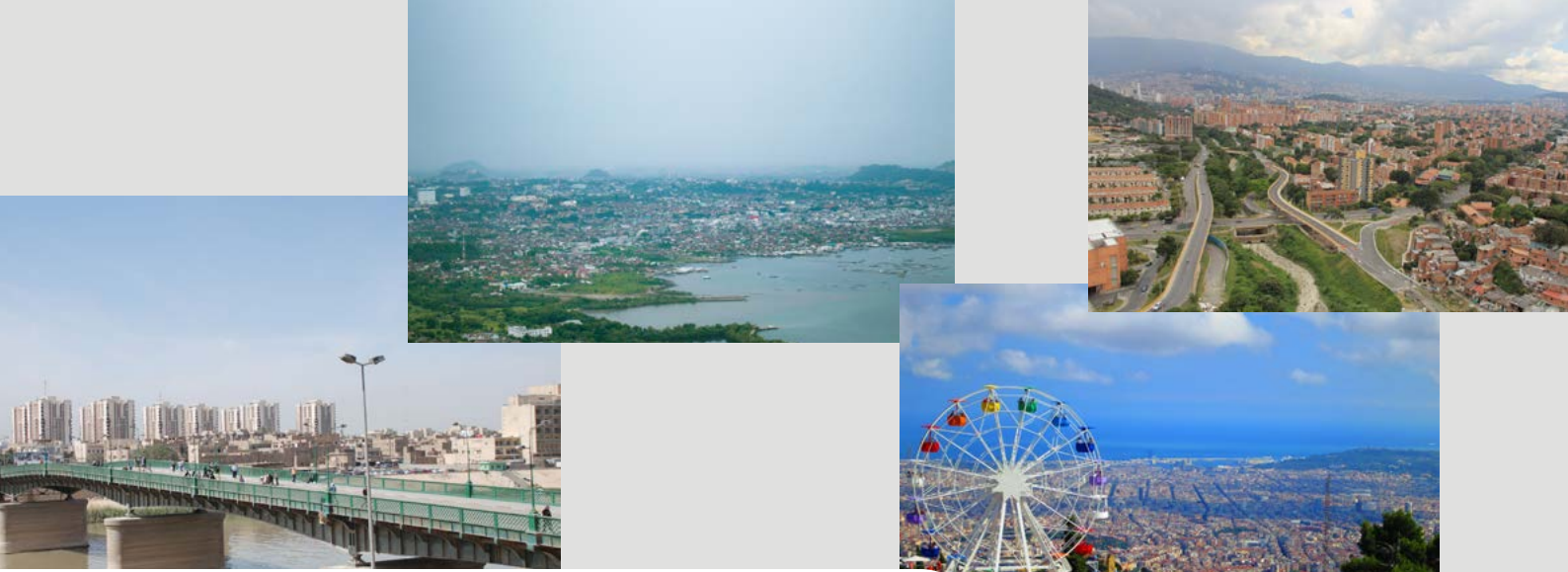
- **Metropolisation and social cohesion** (Gauteng, 2018)
- **How to onboard the citizenry in metropolitan governance** (Montevideo, 2019)
- **Metropolis in 2023** (online, 2020)



# 22 NEW MEMBERS







# 141 TOTAL MEMBERS

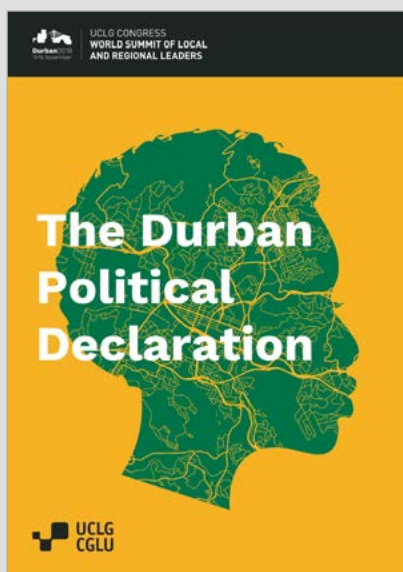
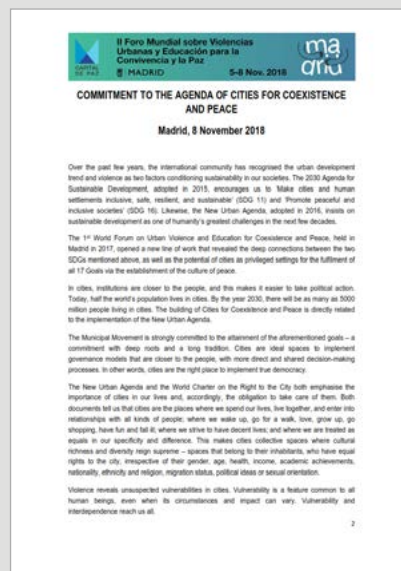


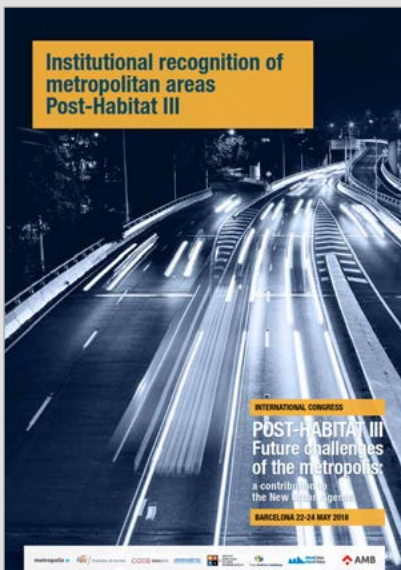
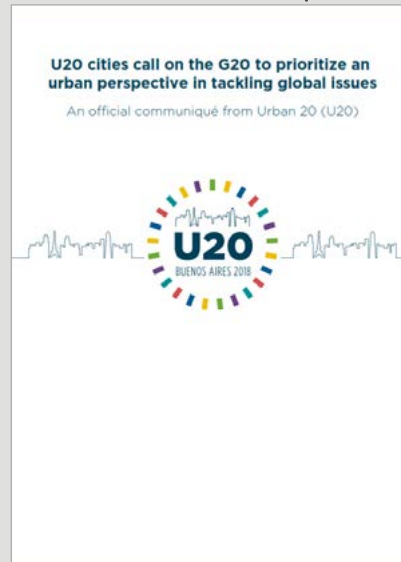
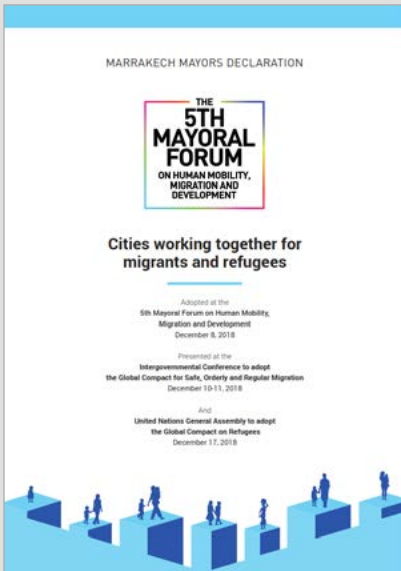
In keeping with our work of **impacting metropolitan matters** in this period we supported and contributed to the preparation of more than

# 11 global declarations and campaigns:

from questions around **climate change**, the **circular economy** and **migration**, to the **right to housing**, **social inclusion** and **gender equality**.

These are some examples:





# | A Global Metropolitan Narrative

In the past three years we shored up our position as the representative voice of large cities and metropolitan areas the world over, working closely with social organisations and reinforcing synergies with our members to create a **global metropolitan narrative**.

## #MetroGovernance

In 2018, we coined the term #MetroGovernance to cover five essential factors for adopting effective governance at a metropolitan scale:

- **Leadership** and political will in support of the common benefit of people
- **Mainstreaming** citizens in decision-making and the co-creation of the metropolitan space
- **Cooperation and active commitment** across all levels of government to work together towards a shared territorial vision
- **A legal and institutional framework** supporting this cooperation
- **Resources**, particularly in the form of technical and financial capabilities

One of the best examples of co-creation and the promotion of a global metropolitan narrative is probably the collection of **Issue Papers**. We leverage these publications to drill down on a sizeable number of themes and challenges facing local and regional governments at a metropolitan scale, such as different forms of **violence**, **mobility with a gender perspective** and **digital transformation**.

Regarding outreach around this narrative, there is no question that the celebration of the three editions of World Metropolitan Day (every 7 October in commemoration of the anniversary of the 2015 Montréal [Declaration on Metropolitan Areas](#)) was a key achievement in the period.

In the 2020 campaign, organised in conjunction with UN-Habitat and in a context of a pandemic, we encouraged metropolitan governments and interested institutions to organise online events to promote their responses to the Covid-19 emergency and to reframe our cities.

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**27** **institutions and local governments** engaged in the celebrations that gave rise to...

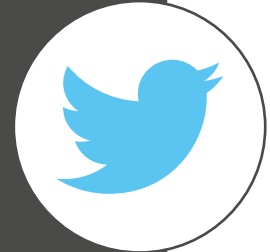
**18** **initiatives** on metropolisation issues around the world, mostly online events.

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**+30** of our members took part in the activities

The campaign culminated on 7 October when we teamed up with UN-Habitat to organise the event that put the finishing touch to the celebrations: *Metropolis Facing the Pandemic*.

The campaign had a significant impact in social media: at the time of preparing this report, the conversation around the hashtag **#WorldMetropolitanDay2020** was **trending third** at UN-Habitat's Urban October event. Our twitter account [@metropolis\\_org](https://twitter.com/metropolis_org) was one of the most influential of the 2,000-plus participating accounts, second only to UN-Habitat itself, with the most retweets and mentions received.



Finally, of note is the

## A Call to Rethink our Metropolitan Spaces

initiative we launched together with the Metropolis presidency and co-presidencies in May 2020. It is an open call to action to local and regional governments, institutions and leaders to create more inclusive, democratic, sustainable and equitable metropolitan spaces. Nearly 30 international organisations had signed up to the initiative.

(at the time of preparing this report)

# Knowledge Generated, Disclosed and Implemented

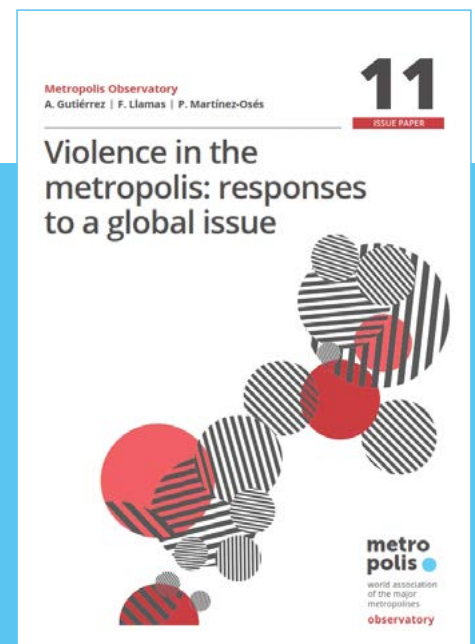
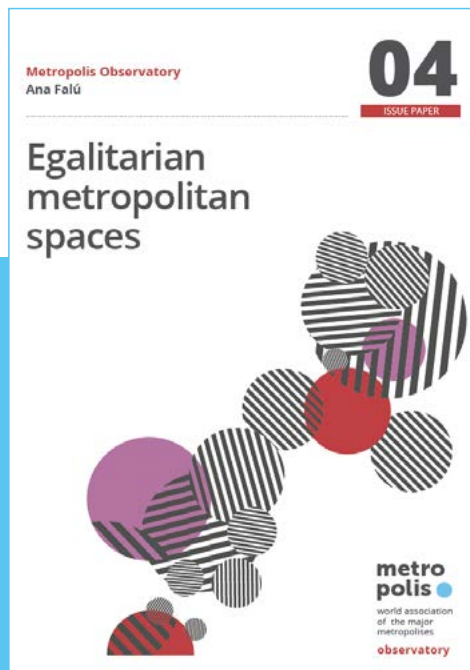
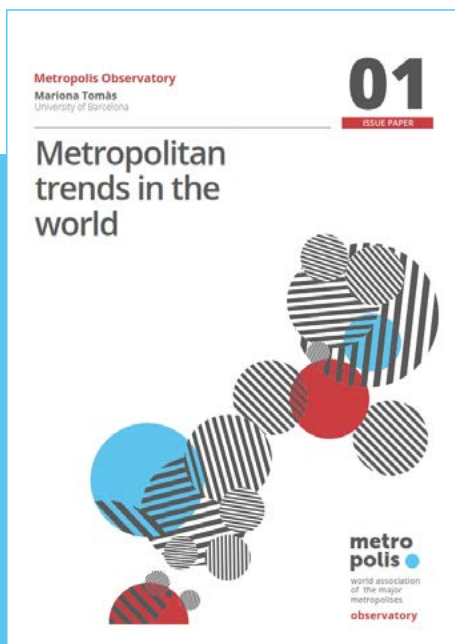
The joint **learning** format, **knowledge** transfers and the availability of **training** tools targeted at our members' technical personnel for enhanced decision-making and implementation of public policies has been a central plank in our work over the past three years.

Below are a number of initiatives illustrating endeavours in this area:

## Metropolis Observatory

Via the Metropolis Observatory, with LSE Cities and funding from the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), we investigated and gathered data on 71 metropolitan spaces where 82 of our members operate. Thirty-eight **metropolitan indicators** considered key for understanding the metropolitan reality and offering reference frameworks were defined.

We leveraged the data to unpack, compare and double down on current issues and challenges facing local and regional governments at a metropolitan scale and made the information available in our collection of **Issue Papers**. With an average release of two to three new editions every year, the collection has covered a total of **11 publications** to date.



# Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE)

La **Policy Transfer Platform (PTP)** was renamed and relaunched as the **Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE)** with new functions and a new design.

This was all done with the aim of becoming a global benchmark space to exchange knowledge and innovative solutions to urban problems proposed by a global community of citymakers.

The number of urban good practices presented has risen by

# 65%

since 2018

(taking the total number to 370 in 2020) and an important proportion of our members have engaged in the platform by contributing examples.

**The citymakers' community registered in the USE now stands at 458 (72% up on 2018).**

**In addition to cases and the citymakers' directory, what else can we find on this platform?**

## USE "Spotlight on..."

short articles presenting features of our members, such as their culture or economy

## USE:POSITIONS

in interview format, political personalities, citymakers, researchers and academics provide our members with insights on contemporary urban challenges

## Covid-19 Service Point

a one-stop-shop for initiatives led by our partners that offer learning and knowledge exchange opportunities in the fight against Covid-19

## How do we promote the USE and Cities for Global Health platforms?

Initiatives from our metropolises published on these platforms gain a higher profile from featuring in our monthly digital newsletters and in our social networks.

ZOOM ON...

**RUMAWIP**  
RUMAWIP (Rumah Mampu Milik Wilayah Persekutuan) is an initiative of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH) to help low and middle-income groups buy their first home. [\(+info\)](#)

**Brussel's Capital Region Recovery Plan**  
The Government of the Brussels Region has drawn up a recovery and redeployment plan to enable a gradual and secure restart of all activities in the short, medium and long term. [\(+info\)](#)



# | Cities for Global Health

This is an initiative coordinated by Metropolis, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Euro-Latin American Cooperation Alliance between Cities (AL-LAs), with the support of Barcelona City Council. It was launched at the start of March 2020 in response to the **measures to handle the Covid-19 pandemic** that local and regional governments were forced to urgently adopt.

We leveraged the platform to promote learning and inspiration to provide an immediate response to the emergency. We also offered a space to share metropolitan recovery and transformation plans and initiatives by local communities.

**CITIES FOR GLOBAL HEALTH** Select Language Log in | Register f t in ☰

#Cities4GlobalHealth

## FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES TO RETHINK OUR CITIES FOLLOWING THE PANDEMIC

Discover and be inspired by initiatives launched by governments and communities to tackle the COVID-19 crisis

REGISTER & SHARE

**657** Initiatives uploaded

**34** Countries

**105** Cities

Photo: UN Women / Ploy Phutphong

Cities for Global Health so far features

655 initiatives from 34 countries and 105 local and regional governments, of which 45 are Metropolis members

Building the **#BeyondTheOutbreak** community...

### #Cities4GlobalHealth

partnered with the “Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak” initiative developed by UCLG and supported by Metropolis and UN-Habitat

### #InTheNews

“Thanks to the Cities for Global Health space we had real-time knowledge on the way Chinese cities were tackling public transit restrictions and organising social distancing, disinfecting their municipal markets and stepping up their medical care capacity”

**HUFFPOST**



# | City Managers Community

We launched this initiative in 2018 to provide a meeting space for top-level public authority personnel tasked with the operative management of major cities and metropolitan areas.

Themes covered in the past three years have included **finances**, **digital transformation** and **green infrastructure**.



# | Urban Innovation

Another core focus of knowledge-sharing was our work to support urban innovation, understood as a key driver in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the New Urban Agenda. Of note was the leadership we showed by jointly organising and promoting the **Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation**. Part of our work involved encouraging members to engage in the distinguished award and supporting outreach on the finalist initiatives.

In 2018... six cities,  
**three of them Metropolis members**, won the  
**4th Guangzhou International Award**  
and of the 15 preselected cities,

**5** were Metropolis members

Over 900 media outlets from around the world, including the Yonhap, Associated Press and Bloomberg news agencies, **had published the 2020 call for award submissions at the date of preparing this report.** The stories ran in over 10 languages

# Learning and Training Programmes

We have also fostered multiple **learning and training spaces** intended for technical teams amongst our membership. These events were organised directly by the secretariat general or by members, specifically the training centres of the Metropolis International Training Institute. Of note is the fact that in 2018 our Board of Directors approved the training charter establishing the MITI work areas for the coming years.

Our programmes progressively and constantly evolved from a predominantly in-person format to an online one, allowing us to reach more diverse target publics from all the regions of the world and with very different profiles. The outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020 saw us conclude this period with a **fully online training programme**.

These years of endeavour and experience laid the groundwork for what will going forwards become the **Learning Station**, a space on our website that will set out all the learning activities we do and tools to shore up metropolitan governance capabilities (it was being finalised at the time of preparing this report).




Below are some important data reflecting our commitment to learning:

In this mandate:

**+1500**

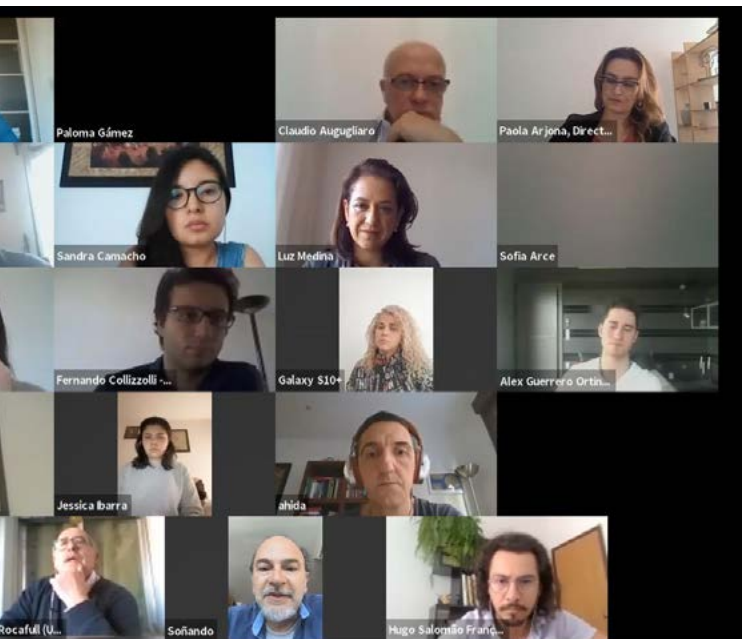
people engaged  
(52% men,  
48% women)

**+32**

training sessions and  
courses were organised  
(12 online sessions and  
1 online metropolitan  
governance course of a  
three-month duration)

**+100**

citymakers partnered  
in the programmes  
(58.5% men,  
41.5% women)



# | Pilot Projects

Since the first pilot projects were approved at the 12th Metropolis World Congress in Montréal, we have fostered **technical exchanges** across diverse spheres of metropolitan management and specifically from an **intersectoral approach**: local governments, private and academic sectors and grassroots communities, among many others. We harnessed these projects for joint work on developing **co-creation and learning**, processes and to obtain outcomes that could potentially be replicated by all members.

In these three years...

Of note are the following deliverables we met:

**3** We organised three calls in which **44 proposals** were received and **73 members** were involved

**21**

members  
directly  
benefitted

**7** projects concluded  
covering areas such as:

- economic development at airports
- metropolis energy governance
- food security
- sustainable urban development
- intersectionality in metropolitan LGBTI policies

**11**

pilot projects  
selected

The selection for the 3rd call  
was still pending at the time of  
preparing this report



Action  
line  
2

02

# Crosscutting Priorities

# A Gender Strategy Across All Our Work

In the past three years, led by Barcelona and together with partners, we have played a major role in raising the profile of gender inequalities in urban areas and securing the **right to the city for all women and girls**.

Our **gender mainstreaming strategy** leads us to apply this approach to everything we do, since we understand it as a key plank in designing, managing and leading our metropolises and even in conceiving our association. This conviction was embodied in many ways: by collecting data and metropolitan indicators, for example, and in our publications, as well as in the wealth of events and debates we organised. The approach is even present in our statutory documents and the service procurement process at the Secretariat General.

Putting gender equality at the very heart of our being, in the period covered by this report we:

## 1. Implemented several awareness-raising initiatives

For example, to celebrate the launch of our tenth **Issue Papers** we claimed the **right of women and girls to experience the public space without fear**. The campaign received widespread media coverage.



#InTheNews



"According to the Metropolis report 'Rights and Claims for Metropolitan Mobility', nearly 40% of trips in large metropolises are for reasons related to caring for minors and dependents, while 20% is work-related mobility."


We also organised and engaged in a slew of events to cover this topic.

## 2. We identified and shared **policies and experiences** around gender issues.

For example, we leveraged the USE platform to compile cases from around the world on mainstreaming the gender perspective into metropolitan governance. Many of these case studies or good practices were published in **Gender Keys**, a series of short publications where we approach the incorporation of the gender perspective in metropolitan planning..

**#InTheNews**

**EL PAÍS**



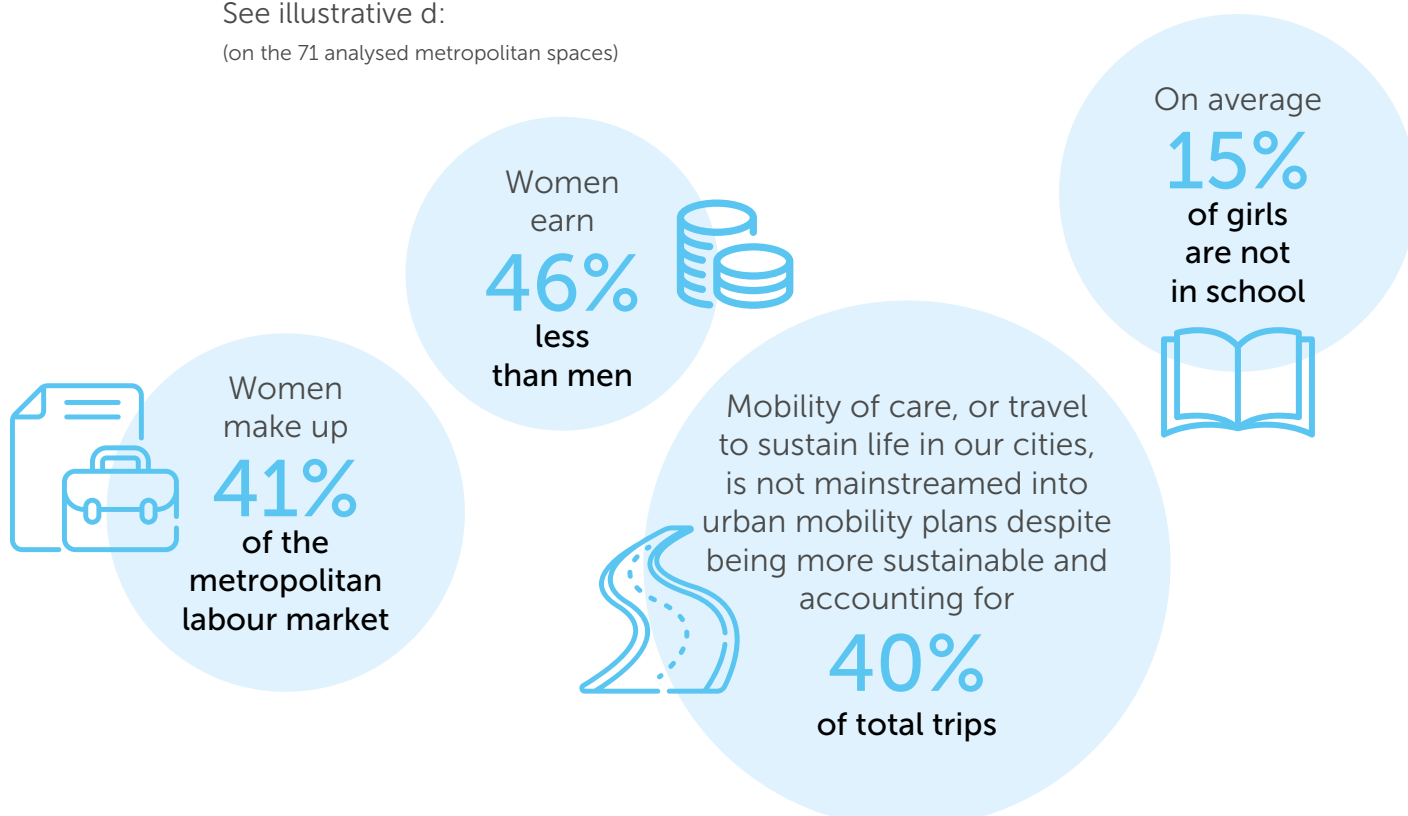
"In its latest Issue Paper, 'Mobility and Gender: How Can We Build the Right to the City?' (Metropolis) analyses the need to mainstream the daily life, needs, patterns and reasons (of women and girls) in the formulation of all mobility policies, strategies and instruments"

## 3. We generated a common **knowledge base** to put gender issues on member agendas

In 2018, Metropolis published the results of the "**Safety and Public Space: Mapping Metropolitan Gender Policies**", study which mapped 83 policies, strategies and instruments focusing on the safety of women and girls in public spaces and which are implemented in 49 of our member organisations.

See illustrative d:

(on the 71 analysed metropolitan spaces)







## Partnerships with Key Stakeholders

Networking posited on partnerships with key stakeholders, whether ongoing or ad-hoc for specific projects, has always been a feature of the way we work. From the start of the mandate, there was a confirmation of the political and technical commitment to maintain this strategy that powers mutual learning and the **joint rollout of solutions to urban challenges from diverse insights**.

In the past three years, we have promoted or visibly bolstered institutional ties with dozens of partners, including UN-Habitat (e.g., by jointly organising World Metropolitan Day) and the C40 Climate Leadership Group, with whom we signed a collaboration agreement.

Other partnerships were also reinforced over the past three years:

The cooperation with the **London School of Economics (LSE)** was renewed with a new agreement signed in early 2019 enabling the Metropolis Observatory to broaden its database and provide additional knowledge, for example on the metropolisation processes of 17 African metropolitan areas.

In mid-2020, Metropolis and LSE Cities again, this time together with UCLG, forged a key partnership to analyse the impact of the global crisis generated by Covid-19 and its implications on governance through the **Emergency Governance Initiative (EGI)**.

### Emergency Governance for Cities and Regions



Meanwhile, together with the **International Association of Public Transport (UITP)** we organised a webinar in June 2020 on metropolitan mobility, where citymakers had the chance to swap experiences around coordinated mobility management.

The long and ongoing relationship we have had with the **Chicago Council on Global Affairs**, in recent years, as part of its annual forum on global cities, was strengthened through initiatives such as **#MetroTalks** in late 2020.



This project built on the Call to Rethink our Metropolitan Spaces in the form of a relaxed and in-

depth conversation with an internationally recognised expert on one of

the eight issues covered by the Call. The theme chosen in collaboration with the CCGA was redesigning the public space to make it more convivial, accessible and functional.

Our work encouraging **decentralised cooperation** for sustainable development saw us enter collaborations with other partners. One example was the **Clearing House**, project with which we stepped up our work with the international organisation **European Forest Institute (EFI)**. On this project, together with a consortium of 26 partners from across Europe and China that also includes the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, we promote the use of Nature-based Solutions (NbS), in particular urban forests, to meet closely interconnected global megachallenges such as rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, sustainable urban development and climate change.

Furthermore, our partnership with the **European Commission (EC)** has remained as strong and multifaceted as ever. As part of the pilot projects, the results of one project earned us a €2.5Mn EC subsidy to exchange experiences in energy transition management, a project set to be implemented soon (at the time of preparing this report) in the Dakar metropolitan area.



## Also on our agenda ...

We engaged in many debates and activities organised by members and partners.



### *What the experts say:*

*"The effects of large-scale crises lead to a rise in financial economics and its impacts on city inequalities"*

Eric Huybrechts, L'Institut Paris Region

# A More Responsible, Sustainable and Fairer Association

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We also implemented a culture of sound, consultative and sustainable internal governance in this period.

We successfully brought home a process targeted at ensuring **transparency and financial stability** for the association which had started under the direction of the previous president. On the one hand, we were able to diversify revenue streams, for example by tapping European Union funds. On the other, the financial sustainability strategy approved by the Board of Directors in 2018 included a new and fairer **membership fees system**. With the announcement of the review and the updating of member contributions, membership certificates were issued and a summary of the main deliverables met in the first year of execution of the action plan was shared. The data went on to be gathered again in subsequent years.

This strategy also covered the maintenance of **extra membership contributions** (particularly from the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and Guangzhou Municipality) and the rollout of new agreements with other members to implement joint projects of interest to both parties. These contributions could be monetary or in kind (for example, the case of the city of Berlin or Brussels Capital Region).

A new **accounting system** was therefore needed, organised according to cost accounting and which would also streamline the submission of reports justifying subsidies received.

Furthermore, an ad hoc committee was created to review our **articles of association** and internal regulations to update and modernise the document's language, remove ambiguities and make it more coherent and responsible. Proposals were approved by the Board of Directors at Montevideo in 2019 and will be presented to the General Assembly online in November 2020 for final approval (at the time of preparing this report).

The review of **internal processes** and efforts to optimise **resources** and reorganise the Secretariat General by internal projects was key to powering a more efficient association pivoted to member needs and meant we could better respond to the goals of the then-new Action Plan.

There is no doubt that the **ew financial sustainability strategy, new articles of association** and the **internal restructuring of the Secretariat General** in line with the set objectives are helping

us remain a transparent, responsible, fair and efficient organisation that has been working sustainably for many years.



## Innovation as a Way of Operating

The Covid-19 pandemic took a hammer to the work methods of many organisations like ours in 2020. As with numerous other member-dependent associations, we had to continue ensuring our support for the membership. That is why, in 2020, we consolidated **new forms of operating and relating** which we had already been exploring in previous years, and innovated in terms of the services we offer (online meetings and annual congresses, online learning sessions, etc.), harnessing the opportunities afforded by new technologies. The highly satisfactory results would not have been possible without the ideas, specialised knowledge, promotion and support of our members and partners.

Although the pandemic forced us to operate this way, we had already been implementing a **digital transformation** of the organisation prior to Covid-19, fully cognizant of the importance of seamlessly adapting to the new demands of a changing environment. In 2018, for example, we inaugurated a new virtual training format entitled "Rethinking Metropolitan Governance", developed and put into practice in collaboration with the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).

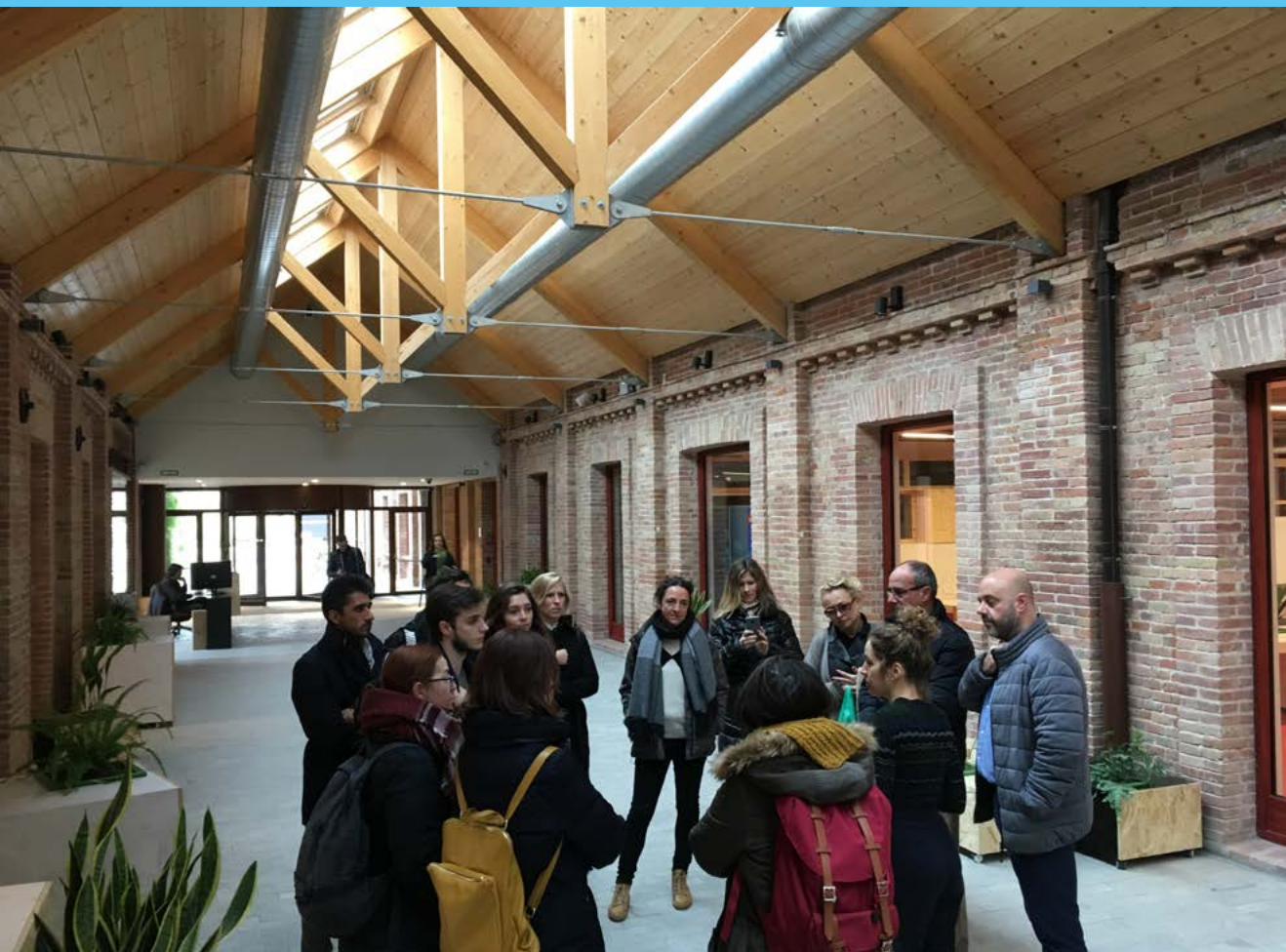
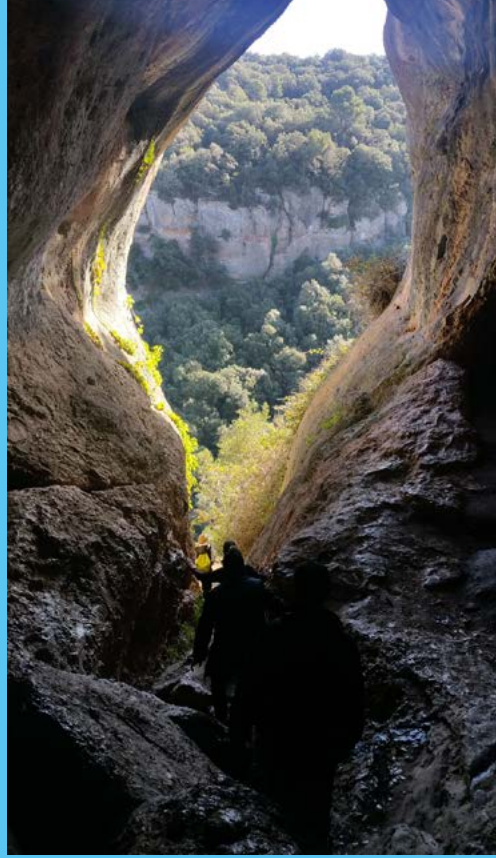
In 2020, we consolidated **new forms of operating and relating** which we had already been exploring in previous years, and innovated in terms of the services we offer

At the same time as leveraging these resources in an optimal fashion so our services could be best pivoted to our members' real needs, we also maintained certain inertias that mark our essence, such as direct contact between the team at the Secretariat General and the technical officers, citymakers and political representatives of member governments, whether by email, postal mail or phone.

Our form of networking and our **corporate culture** were key to delivering on the goals of this mandate. The commitment of the people who work at the Secretariat General reflects this. It would otherwise have been very hard to rise to the changes that the shifting contexts required of us. Our Barcelona office demonstrates a **clear desire to help generate an effective and positive transformation of our societies**. Examples of this include:

- Environmental responsibility. An inverse osmosis system was installed as an alternative to bottled water in 2019, eliminating the use of plastic and the transportation of water
- Social responsibility. Nature activities fostering group wellbeing and unity are organised on a regular basis
- Gender equality. Examples include continuous training on matters related to the empowerment of women

There is also no doubt that our empathy-driven management culture meant we could tap **active listening** and put ourselves in our members' place to **stay ahead of changes and their requirements**.



# Communication: Our Number One Crosscutting Tool

Without question, the latest period, and specifically the year 2020, has brought a great deal of complexity in all areas. Communication therefore became more necessary than ever in all our areas of action.

Proof of this has been the consolidation of our **narrative around metropolitan governance**, as shown by our hashtag **#MetroGovernance** which was applied consistently to all communications from the organisation.

We also endeavour day by day to improve our **website**, which dropped in late 2018. For example, we launched two new sections in mid-2020, the Newsroom and Campaigns.

The **Newsroom**, features a summary of the work we have been doing through **news stories** and **media** appearances.

There is also a **monthly digital newsletter** and the **Metropolis Blog**. The blog includes articles based on the opinion not just of people working within the organisation but also representatives of partner networks and international organisations, along with experts from the academic world on the challenges of urban living and how to improve the quality of life of the people who live in our major urban areas.

## What the experts say:



*"It is necessary to provide the most disadvantaged groups with a decent life, to articulate urban/rural relations (...) and ensure that the inhabitants of metropolitan regions can find a prosperous and encouraging future"*

Oriol Estela Barnet,  
Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PEMB)

For its part, the new **Campaigns**, section showcases the actions we ran that had the most impact on metropolitan matters, such as World Metropolitan Day and the Call to Rethink our Metropolitan Spaces.

Finally, another initiative put in place in this three-year period that is important to mention is **Humanizing Metropolis**. A product pipeline (articles, interviews, infographics, etc.) in a journalistic format such as, for example, a series of interviews with political leaders from among our membership (under development at the time



of preparing this report). These interviews are published in partnership with Cities Today, such as the one with Michael Müller on the way Covid-19 is affecting Berlin and its citizens.

## #InTheNews



“Collaboration is very important for us. We learn from the experience of other cities. They contribute new approaches and solutions and this is of great help in our work”

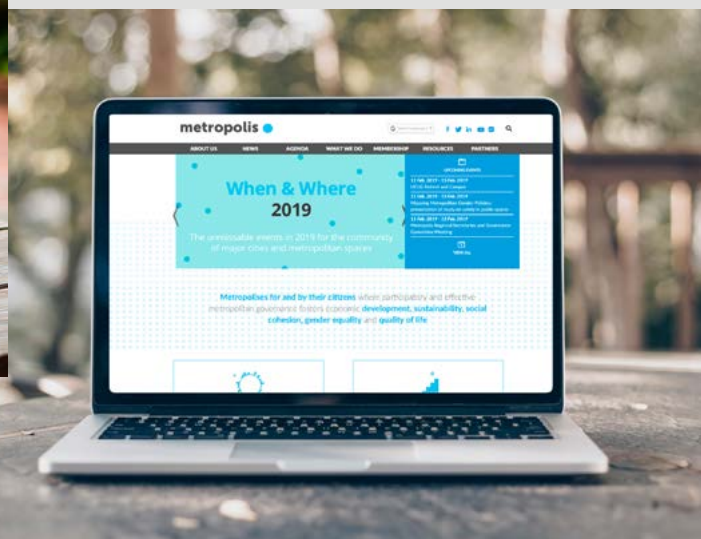
Cities Today

In short, our association is closer than ever to the people thanks to our media communication and outreach actions that have had a major impact among different target publics.



# 20k followers

THANK YOU · GRACIAS · MERCI · 謝謝 · DANKE  
GRÀCIES · مكل اركش · GRAZIE · OBRIGADO  
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# Looking Ahead

Our future path is mapped out by the **new Metropolis Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023**, a reflection of our wish to continue to transform metropolitan spaces through active listening. This plan, based on the lessons of 35 years of networking and looking to the future, is launched at a historic time for our metropolises on a road sown with uncertainty and challenges of sizes never seen, but also considerable opportunities for a better future.

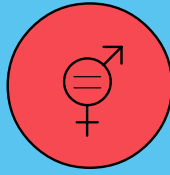
We will continue to sound out innovations and new ways of working to ensure **active listening around our members' needs, concerns and priorities**, with a special focus on delivering on the 2030 Agenda and, at the same time, keeping people at the heart of our work.

At the time of concluding this mandate, the world is still strongly shaken by the Covid-19 pandemic. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their **extraordinary level of cohesion and cooperation** to ensure a proactive, effective and visible response to this emergency that binds us even closer together. It is an honour to feel the ongoing support of our members and the recognition of the many institutions that believe in the work we do every day. Our sincerest thanks to all the people who have and will continue to make it possible.

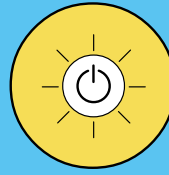
Between 2017 and 2020, we contributed particularly to delivering on the following Sustainable Development Goals:



3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



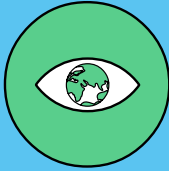
5. GENDER EQUALITY



7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



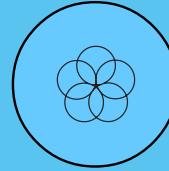
11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13. CLIMATE ACTION



16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17. PARTNERSHIPS

**metropolis** ● world association of the major metropolises

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[metropolis.org](https://metropolis.org)

#MetroGovernance

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November 2020

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