

## NEWS



## Metropolis strengthens sense of belonging to the UCLG family

Thursday 01/02/2018

From January 22 to 27, the fourth edition of the UCLG Annual Retreat & Campus took place in Barcelona, bringing together most of the members and partners the Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments. The six days of meetings and discussions opened a path of stronger collaboration from Metropolis as a connective section of UCLG. Under the new leadership of Emilia Saiz as its Secretary-General, UCLG is showing that the work that is carried out by all sections, committees, working groups and policy councils is becoming more and more aligned.

Under the theme "Co-creating equality, peace and sustainability", the week began on Monday with an

introduction to the UCLG Strategy and Work Plan for 2018 by Emilia Saiz. Octavi de la Varga, Metropolis Secretary General, followed Ms Saiz with a keynote speech: “in Metropolis we want to be content-driven, and contribute to a narrative for the UCLG family”, he said, making reference to the importance of all levels of local and regional governments, which together are able to draw solutions for the metropolitan spaces of the world. “This moment allows us all to share work, visions and a common language”, he added, seeking to provide inputs to UCLG’s waves of action (housing, financing and migration).

On Tuesday, the Metropolis Secretary General moderated a round table with his regional counterparts from Africa (Jean-Pierre Mbassi), Asia-Pacific (Bernadia Irawati), Eurasia (Rasikh Sagitov), Europe (Frédéric Vallier), and Middle East and West Asia (Mehmet Duman). This round table also counted on the participation of the Director of International Relations and Cooperation of Montevideo and Metropolis Regional Secretary Nelson Fernández (representing Latin America, as part of the Permanent Technical Secretariat of Mercociudades), as well as of Elena Pierce (Governance, Policy and Networks Officer at Federation of Canadian Municipalities) in representation of North America. Octavi stirred up the debate calling regional sections to activate their metropolitan chapters and highlighting the idea of governance with a metropolitan approach: “we need to work together with regional sections to make an impact, to explore the relationships between metropolitan governments and the local governments of their hinterlands”.

For the first time in the history of UCLG, the Retreat meetings included a session dedicated to developing a gender strategy across all UCLG. This proposal coincides with Metropolis’ current strategic vision, which positions gender equality as one of its priorities: a gender culture is being incorporated in the association, in order to introduce the gender perspective in various fields of metropolitan life. Seeking to bring such concepts to the ground, the program of the UCLG Retreat also included sessions on the Global Taskforce and the need to continue strengthening the role of local and regional governments in the SDGs localization process.

The UCLG Retreat was concluded with a meeting dedicated to the fifth edition of the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD V), which counts on the support of Metropolis in the development of its metropolitan chapter.

Among the more than 200 participants of the meetings, the Metropolis-UCLG joint membership was represented by some of the key international relations staff from Barcelona, Berlin, Córdoba, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Mexico City.

For further details and highlights on each day of the 2018 UCLG Retreat & Campus, please visit the UCLG website.