

Call for Membership

“Resilient Metropolitan Regions – Spatial Planning and Management for Urban Transformation”

The Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association (ARL) is currently establishing an international working group (IAK) “Resilient Metropolitan Regions – Spatial Planning and Management for Urban Transformation” and looking for participants. The members of the working group will work for approximately three years together and address the topic from inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives.

About the Academy

The ARL is an interdisciplinary forum for research and practice in which spatial and planning-related knowledge is generated and communicated in dialogue. The ARL is member of the German Leibniz Association and a non-university forum and competence centre for sustainable spatial development. The research focus is on spatial structures and developments, their causes and effects, and policy and planning options for their management. Holistic, integrative, and future-oriented perspectives taken on complex, spatial-social challenges, characterize the work of the Academy. The close honorary cooperation of actors from spatial and planning-related research and practice forms the core of the Academy’s work. In its function as a transdisciplinary network, the ARL researches spatial structures and developments as the basis and expression of social practice. In addition, it is a place of scientific reflection on planning.

Scope: Resilient Metropolitan Regions

In view of the multiple crisis situation, European metropolitan regions are facing increasingly complex challenges. Climate crisis, energy crisis, biodiversity crisis, consequences of the COVID19 pandemic, international migration, terrorist and war threats as well as the digital transformation of economy, society and individual life demand a rapid and profound process of transformation. Planning, politics, and public management in metropolitan regions have a responsibility to make urban spaces resilient and fit for the future. Like every process of change, this transformation harbours both opportunities and risks.

The necessary transformation has a fundamental impact on spatial development in all types of space. However, it undoubtedly unfolds its highest intensity and dynamics in metropolitan regions, where population, economy and innovation are concentrated, but which are also the largest emitters of harmful CO₂ emissions. At the same time, a wide range of social problems (poverty, safety in public spaces, inequalities in access to affordable housing and primary health care) are concentrated in urban areas, threatening social cohesion, and therefore requiring both greater social solidarity and decisive action by public administrations.

In the transformation, not only sectoral policies are required, but above all integrative spatial planning at the local and regional level. This aims at the sustainable use of the overall space and brings together

settlement development, mobility, transport infrastructures and open space development. The moderate use of land, efficient, intermodal, and sustainable transport systems, which are also guidelines for settlement growth ("transit-oriented development"), and multifunctional green (and blue) infrastructures (including governance structures, new urban-rural linkages and relations with other urban autonomous poles and open/protected spaces) will increasingly be key topics of spatial planning in metropolitan regions in the future. In this context, the concepts that have been applied for decades in some cases must be reconsidered and adjusted and further developed against the background of the challenges in the current multiple crisis situation.

According to the OECD definition, resilient cities and metropolitan regions (including second tier functional urban areas, 'regiopoies' and city cooperation networks) are those that have the capacity to absorb, adequately prepare for and respond to future challenges (at economic, environmental, social, and institutional levels). Resilience means the adaptive and resilient capacity of individuals, institutions, enterprises, social groups, and critical infrastructures. The IAK aims to translate the challenges into fields of action for the creation of resilient metropolitan regions, to discuss approaches to solutions, to prepare "good practice" examples and innovative scientific approaches from the participating countries. At least recommendations for those responsible in state, regional and municipal politics are to be developed.

Research Questions

The central objective of the IAK "Resilient Metropolitan Regions - Planning and Management for the Transformation of Urban Spaces" is to work on questions of increasing resilience in spatial development using the example of selected metropolitan regions in German-speaking countries and Southern Europe. This is intended to contribute to an expansion of both spatial and planning theory as well as practical planning knowledge and discourse. The following research questions are crucial:

- Which fields of action and challenges for spatial planning result from the current multiple crisis situation?
- How can the resilience of metropolitan regions be increased?
- How can urban transformations address normative goals like justice and equality and thus contribute to a just and resilient transformation?
- Which well experience spatial planning instruments are suitable for promoting the transformation to resilient metropolitan regions, and which adjustments are necessary?
- For which challenges should new political strategies and planning instruments be developed?
- What institutional framework conditions are required to strengthen the resilience of metropolitan regions and ensure their sustainable development?
- Which strategic, planning, and organisational approaches in the metropolitan regions of involved countries are suitable to be taken up as "good examples" in other regions and to be further developed individually?

Products

The working group aims at

- developing a report compiling answers to the main research questions
- publishing the main results in peer reviewed journals/a special issue
- providing online content for the platform arl-international.com

- developing recommendations for actors in politics and planning authorities as well as policy papers providing intermediate results
- illustrating elements of good practice approaches by learning from (previous) international experiences, networks and projects (e.g. from 'urbact' and 'interact')
- establishing a network of experts in development of metropolitan regions ('metroact')
- organizing regular initiatives (roundtables, discussion forums, media reports and interviews) to raise awareness among citizens and place in the public debate the importance of integrative spatial planning for quality of life ("space matters")

The joint products may include articles in peer reviewed journals, a special issue, a white paper, opinion pieces or interactive story maps.

Organisation

The working group will consist of 12 members representing different European countries, from practice and research. It will run for three years and have three meetings of two days, one per year. The kick-off meeting will be held in Valencia. The 2nd meeting will be in Southern Germany (e.g. in Stuttgart). The place of the 3rd meeting will be agreed upon in the working group. Regularly (quarterly) online sessions and interim working phases will take place in between. The work will be supported by scientific and administrative staff from the ARL headquarter and an organisational assistant.

In thematic workshops, which will be held as face-to-face meetings, specific topics will be discussed in detail. Exchange with other international ARL working groups is intended. Colleagues from other Southern-European and German speaking countries will be invited to specific workshops following the idea of international learning.

Application

We are particularly interested in applications with a regional focus on sustainable and resilient urban planning and development in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France, as well as in Germany, Suisse, and Austria. The first reason to focus on these countries is the fact that they provide very innovative and promising cases with regard to resilient metropolitan development in Europe, at the political-institutional level (designs of hard and soft governance), in terms of strategic and territorial planning experiences as well as in terms of the research attention of the scientific community. The second reason is that especially Portugal, Spain and Italy have been underrepresented in ARL activities in the past, and therefore offer a field of opportunities to expand and strengthen ARL's internationalisation.

The Call for Membership is addressed to representatives of different disciplinary approaches (e.g., geography, spatial planning, environmental sciences, sustainability sciences, sociology) who have solid expertise on resilience, urban sustainable development, and spatial planning with a regional focus on Southern European metropolitan regions and who are interested in contributing actively to the aforementioned objectives of this working group. Applications from both researchers and practitioners of all stages of experience, all gender and ages are welcome.

If you are interested in participating in the working group, please submit your statement of interest (in digital form) by

15.12.2023

In your application you should

- briefly explain your personal interest in participating and draw your research perspectives and potential contributions to the working group (max. 300 words),
- illustratively present your relevant professional skills and experience in a short (max. 2 pages) CV including the bibliography of your most relevant publications/projects,

Please send your application in digital form to Katharina Kapitza and Ingo Krenz as the responsible contact persons in the academy:

ingo.krenz@arl-net.de

Questions regarding the topic and objectives of the working can also be send to Prof. Dr. Axel Priebes, Kiel University: priebs@geographie.uni-kiel.de, Prof. Dr. Andreas Hildenbrand Scheid, Sevilla University: andreas.hildenbrand@juntadeandalucia.es or Joaquín Farinós Dasi, Valencia University: joaquin.farinos@uv.es

Contact

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