

Catch-MR (Cooperative approaches to transport challenges in Metropolitan Regions) is an INTERREG IVC projekt running from January 2010 until December 2012 with a total budget of approximately Euro 2 million.

Workshop from **29 September to** 1 October 2010 in Vienna. Traffic and land use planning -Understanding urban sprawl

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Understanding urban sprawl and identifying new planning solutions – The second workshop in Vienna, Austria

In the context of the first phase of the Catch-MR project, experts from seven European metropolitan regions were given an opportunity to meet for an intensive thematic exchange and to discuss issues of transport and regional planning.

Metropolitan Regions

The Vienna workshop was jointly organised by the Lower Austrian and Viennese project partners as part of a series of seven Catch-MR events addressing three thematic areas. In the course of the workshop held in the Austrian capital, the phenomenon of urban sprawl was analysed in depth while various co-operative structures to simplify the collaboration of planning actors were likewise presented and discussed.





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What is Catch-MR?

Catch-MR (Cooperative Approaches to Transport Challenges in Metropolitan Regions) is an INTER-REG IVC project running from January 2010 until December 2012 and mainly financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

12 partners representing seven European Metropolitan Regions (MR) take part in this project focusing on sustainable transport solutions. The partners explore and seek to adapt passenger transport solutions with the aim of reducing transport needs without impairing mobility while increasing the share of environmentally friendly transport. An overall objective is to improve competitiveness and quality of life. The project follows an integrated approach encompassing three themes: (1) reducing the need to travel within the regions by co-ordinating transport and land use, (2) increasing the share of public transport, and (3) increasing the use of renewable energy in transport. The partners pursue these objectives by identifying and promoting good practice. At the end of the project, the partners will present a "Guide on efficient mobility and sustainable growth in Metropolitan Regions", thus contributing a joint approach applicable to Metropolitan Regions in general.

(For more information visit: http://www.catch-mr.eu)



Source: http://www.geographypages.co.uk/carturbansprawl

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Urban sprawl in metropolitan regions

Catch-MR aims at improving the quality of life and competitiveness of metropolitan regions by exploring good models of sustainable land use and transport development in the participating metropolitan regions and investigating their transferability to other locations. The phenomenon of urban sprawl is a key issue in this context. Suburbanisation is hardly a novelty, as cities have been forced to deal with this trend since the industrial revolution. However, the problem has intensified over the past 50 years and about two decades ago began to afflict the originally much more compact cities of Southern and Eastern Europe as well.

Urban sprawl is a continuous process of change. The increasing consumption of energy, water and fuel per capita or settlement unit markedly curtails spatial efficiency. But social diversity, too, is deteriorating: segregation in residential areas is on the rise while social interaction is decreasing. Thus the different planning sectors are called upon to identify and implement solutions.

How can urban sprawl be quantified?

Catch-MR conducted a questionnaire-based survey in the partner regions in order to evaluate the extent and significance of key factors of urban sprawl in the seven metropolitan regions. The experience of the partner regions indicates that the following seven aspects are crucial for the emergence of urban sprawl:

- macroeconomics: globalisation and economic growth
- microeconomics: standard of life and land prices
- demographics: population development and household size
- preferred housing types and lifestyles
- inner-city problems: environmental quality and social factors
- mobility: public transport and individual traffic
- planning culture and legal frame conditions

Facts and figures

The key drivers of urban sprawl are transport development in the regions, land prices and individual housing preferences. Yet the situation is highly differentiated in all Catch-MR metropolitan regions.

The Berlin-Brandenburg MR is by far the biggest participating metropolitan region and the only one to

comprise two federal states in their entirety. Since the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, sprawl phenomena are increasing and have led to numerous residential developments in suburban areas. By now, numerous "commuter towns" with 4,000-12,000 inhabitants each have sprung up around Berlin's condensed urban core.

The Budapest MR covers roughly the same area as the metropolitan regions of Vienna or Oslo. Due to lower building land prices, many families have moved to the urban periphery. This development was accelerated by the upgrading of highways and motorways. Seven "commuter centres" emerged, initially to the north-west of the core city but now encircling it. The older communities resulting from these sprawl tendencies were classic-style housing-only developments, while more recent communities present a mixed-use pattern composed of residential units, R&D, industry and trade.

In the second half of the 20th century, the Vienna MR expanded mainly towards the south. Since the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, the city and its environs have resumed growth. Urban sprawl accretes along the northern axis and in the south-eastern periphery of the city. However, the Aspern airfield project ("Vienna's Urban Lakeside"), for example, is a venture aimed at planned urban expansion within the confines of the municipal territory.

The Oslo MR is characterised by numerous settlement cores developed as early as in the 1970s. Many of these areas are far away from the city centre. However, development projects were also initiated in the core city to revitalise a few rather isolated zones. Current plans envisage developing future urban expansion areas along efficient public transport axes.

Compared to the other regions, the Rome MR is of a small size and very densely populated. Urban sprawl is concentrated along radial highways and motorways; transportation is mostly limited to car traffic.

Urban sprawl in the Gothenburg MR covers a very large area. Many settlement cores are situated far away from the city centre. Some areas formerly characterised by scattered summer cottages are now being condensed and urbanised.



The suburbanisation of the Ljubljana MR began in the 1970s. Today, some sub-centres even have developed their own "hinterland" in its turn affected by sprawl phenomena. Most of the growth is evolving in formerly rural settlements, which are being gradually turned into a part of suburbia. Attempts to decentralise key economic functions were unsuccessful; a monocentric structure with roughly 150,000 daily commuters to Ljubljana – most of whom use the car – has remained in place.

Urban sprawl "at a glance"

The below illustration shows the degree to which the six most important factors of urban sprawl are present in the seven regions and is based on the evaluation of the questionnaires, which called for a joint assessment regarding each factor for every city and region. If this proved impossible, "no common understanding" could be ticked off as an answer.

How to deal with urban sprawl?

Experts from all metropolitan regions represented in Catch-MR agree that planning interventions are necessary to avoid the negative impact of urban sprawl. The approaches proposed are as diverse as the regions' individual situations.

 A polycentric public transport network supplies the different functional zones of the metropolitan regions.

- Stepped-up investments in public transport can render the traffic volume caused by urban sprawl at least slightly more sustainable.
- More condensed suburban areas are endowed with more pronounced central functions.
- Metropolitan condensation in the form of centres and sub-centres is combined with the development and protection of green spaces.
- Effective planning can develop infrastructure, manage changes in land use and influence land prices.

All these steps contribute towards preventing further urban sprawl. Moreover, the past two decades have seen a growing awareness of the necessity for different interest groups and stakeholders to co-operate. Different forms of co-operation were analysed and discussed in detail in the context of Catch-MR. While it has become evident that systems cannot be transferred from one metropolitan region to another without modification, an active exchange of experience certainly imparts an understanding of, and the possibility to, discuss the pros and cons of instruments employed and tested in individual regions. Obviously, all practical work and fields of application must reflect the individual frame conditions.





Spatial development strategies in the Austrian metropolitan region

Starting in the 1960s and 1970s and spanning several decades, a largely unstructured suburbanisation process has taken place in the metropolitan region of Vienna and in particular in its southern environs. Regional and traffic planners often were forced to merely react instead of act. The attractiveness of Vienna's metropolitan region continues unabated, and the suburbanisation process is increasingly spilling over to the northern periphery as well. smaller-scale neighbourhood) hubs. In keeping with the principle of decentralised concentration, urban development was to occur mainly in specially designated regional development centres. In retrospect, it must be said that this strategy was not always successful.

Planning experience has shown that, taken by itself, the designation of such hubs and axes by means of concepts is not a sufficiently effective strategy to bring about the desired spatial structure. In particular, there

This process is inter alia the outcome of a dramatic mobility increase of the population. However, many people associate mobility primarily with the freedom to drive their own car, which in the long run entails massive environmental and transport problems due to growing traffic intensity. Moreover,



the freedom to move is nowadays often transmuted into enforced mobility, e.g. when people are marginalised because they do not own a vehicle or have no possibility of using public transport for a lack of stops in their vicinity. The development of new settlements that make use of novel, alternative and much more ecological types of mobility thus constitutes a burning challenge for regional and traffic planners. This is particularly true of metropolises and their environs. While cities with their compact architectural structure dispose of attractive catchment areas and potentials for the creation of public transport facilities, their environs are much more sparsely populated, thus rendering it enormously difficult to develop public transport in these areas.

In 1993, the federal provinces in the eastern part of Austria thus tried for the first time to counteract the prevailing trends with their own settlement policy concept in order to steer future development in a focused and planned fashion. By upgrading the system of commuter and regional train lines, this concept provided for the creation of rapid connections between development centres at the periphery and urban (or is a lack of instruments to create active and attractiongenerating impulses for settlement and location development.

In 2007, Planungsgemeinschaft Ost (Eastern Austrian Planning Association, PGO) was tasked with developing new spatial development strate-

gies. The purpose of this initiative does not only lie in juxtaposing potential development scenarios and formulating priority objectives, but above all in highlighting concrete implementation options. Intensified co-operation between federal provinces and municipalities is to safeguard that the predicted growth can be handled in economically and ecologically sustainable fashion and that the resulting development opportunities for the entire metropolitan region will be made optimum use of.

The metropolitan region with the federal capital Vienna as its centre continues to grow. At the moment, the region has approx. 2.6 million inhabitants, 1.7 million in Vienna proper and roughly 900,000 in the environs. By 2031, the population of Vienna alone is expected to grow by 250,000 persons, while the surrounding municipalities in Lower Austria will increase their population by another 130,000 inhabitants. If these demographic forecasts prove correct, this will result in a population of close to 3 million by 2030, which is a significant number even compared to other European regions. The "shrinking cities" label is definitely not applicable to the metropolitan region of Vienna.



The driver of demographic growth of the metropolitan region in its entirety lies primarily in migration from abroad and from the rest of Austria, balancing an increasing deficit in births and creating a pool of potential mothers and fathers, as newcomers tend to be younger and hence still in the reproductive age group. a consequence of labour market or training/education requirements. This is also – and especially – true for Vienna-bound migration from abroad.

Migration trends from the core city to the periphery are not so much labour market- or education-driven, but rather triggered by changes in the household



However, the dynamism of this development varies across the metropolitan region. While international migration to Vienna proper outweighs the exodus from the city to the environs, the rest of Austria and abroad, migration from the core city predominates in the environs. Above all younger households with children - motivated by the desire to live in the countryside, enjoy an intact environment and shape their living environment according to their personal needs and requirements - tend to move from condensed inner-city areas to the periphery where the facilities and advantages of the metropolis can be combined with lower-cost housing and "suburban" lifestyles. Transport infrastructure upgrading and universal car ownership make for increasingly acceptable travel times. Denizens of suburbia have access to both options – city life and country life.

Who are the people who choose to live in the city, in its environs and in the metropolitan region? Generally, it may be said that migration trends still largely follow life cycles and mainly occur in the early to middle life phases. Age-specific profiles of persons moving to Vienna peak clearly in the 18- to 19-yearold bracket. Thus education, the start of a university curriculum or first career stages obviously act as key triggers for changing one's place of residence. Migration in this life phase is not family-oriented, but rather structure. Moving in with your partner often means changing your lodgings as well; however, the birth of children and the resulting bigger household provide a more frequent reason for moving.

Starting a family, the birth of children, training and the first steps towards a career are caesuras that motivate people to think about where they want to live in the future. But what motivates persons or households considering a move to choose a specific place?

One decisive motivation cluster concerns the available supply of housing space or building land. Independently of what is actually desired or required by the individual, building land availability and land prices as well as the supply and price levels of rented or owner-occupied flats play a decisive role in selecting a specific place to live in. More affordable locations in the city or its environs thus "score" higher in this respect.

Even if long-term location assessments do not always follow purely rational criteria, the accessibility of locations or facilities within the metropolitan region is an important criterion for persons or households considering a move. The increasing tendency of recent years to settle in the "gaps" between traffic axes or in the environs of regional centres may be an indicator



that these are spots where people look for a compromise between attractively priced building land supply and acceptable accessibility. Decisive factors regarding accessibility are high-quality hook-ups to public transport and motorised individual traffic, distances, travel times and the cost of commuting between the (future) place of residence and the (current) place of significant. Here, infrastructure availability involves a wide spectrum ranging from workplaces and shopping options to social infrastructure and medical care. Good availability of such facilities thus enhances the attractiveness of a location. Purely monofunctional residential communities ("dormitory suburbs") were perceived as attractive neither in the past nor today.

work. However, the accessibility of the nearest central hub and hence the availability of shops, schools and social infrastructure, etc. play an important role as well.

While accessibility within the city proper is excellent to good, the perceived traffic volume is viewed as a push factor by persons willing to migrate. In the urban context, "traffic" thus is often negatively connoted (lack of parking space, noise, air pollution, potential hazards for children, etc.), to which objectively good acces-

sibility takes a backseat. This aspect seems to be less pronounced in the urban periphery. However, it is unclear whether future suburbanites are actually factoring in daily traffic congestions on their way to work or the purchase of a second car and steadily rising fuel prices (in case public transport connections are perceived as insufficient).

As another cluster of key factors determining the decision for or against a specific location, the provision of the new residence with infrastructure facilities is also





Finally, the "image" heading may serve to summarise all those characteristics that might be defined as "soft" pull or push factors. These are characteristics of a location that, contrary to the aspects mentioned above, have no or little direct significance for practical everyday life. The vicinity of an attractive old city centre and charming surrounding countryside as well as natural or cultural landmarks, but also the vague desire to live in an area that is "greener", "safer", "more human-scale" may all be classified as coming under this heading.

The metropolitan region of Vienna is certainly loaded with potential and very attractive. The environs of the city boast a varied landscape, good infrastructure and excellent transport and traffic connections. An additional asset is the city of Vienna itself, whose fame – due to its demographic size, economic significance and historical-cultural image – extends far beyond metropolitan confines. Analyses show that the metropolitan region boasts good preconditions for coping successfully with its current growth. However, this calls for the efficient implementation of suitable regional development measures, most specifically for areas where growth is considered desirable based on considerations that take due account of both environment and settlement structures.



The project workshop in Vienna

The 2nd Catch-MR workshop addressing the issue of how to reduce traffic through spatial planning in metropolitan regions took place in Vienna from 29 September to 1 October 2010. In addition to presentations and excursions, the extensive programme also left wide space for discussions and the formulation of joint conclusions. Constant participant interaction was an aspect of this event that met with universally positive reactions and resulted in a very stimulating workshop.

The workshop was organised by the planning departments of the Federal Provinces of Lower Austria and Vienna (project partners in Catch-MR) with the support of external experts. After introductory words by the two heads of the planning departments (Ms. Ilse Wollansky und Mr. Thomas Madreiter), Mr. Michael Rosenberger acted as event moderator.

The first presentation was given by Mr. Hannes Schaffer, who provided an overview of the evaluation of the questionnaires – the "Inventory" – submitted by all partners. Abstracts of this analysis and the subsequent discussion are summarised in the contribution on urban sprawl contained in this newsletter. Three very intensive working sessions served to analyse various forms of co-operation in the field of regional and traffic planning in metropolitan regions, for which case studies from the metropolitan regions Gothenburg, Berlin-Brandenburg and Vienna-Lower Austria provided a basis. This exchange of ideas was rounded off by scientific conclusions and reflections provided by Mr. Alexander Hamedinger.

To offer participants a more in-depth insight into the metropolitan region of Vienna, the programme also

A participant: "It was great to compare the different perspectives of the workshop members and regions."

included two field trips. The first and longer trip across the region to the northern municipal boundary of Vienna was guided by Ms. Zuckerstätter-Semela. In addition to the development potentials of the peripheral districts and municipalities bordering on Vienna, the contribution of fine-tuned planning to sustainable land use was the key topic of this excursion. The second day of the workshop was enlivened by a visit to the construction site of the future Vienna Main Station, in

A participant: "I especially valued the summary of the inventory and the in-depth presentations."



A participant: "The site visits, especially the first one, were very informative and very well connected with the workshop topic."





whose course the inner-city development potential of the area was discussed as well.

In retrospect, the importance of the topics and conclusions formulated in the workshop for the further course of the project becomes evident. Appraisal for the structured discussions both during the workshops and informally in the context of the field trips and the joint dinner was voiced by the participants in numerous comments. Now the challenge lies in communiA participant: "Co-operation needs and intensity are related to a certain level of democracy, also to a proactive way of thinking."

cating the workshop results to the competent authorities over the course of the project and in creating a smooth transition to the issues of transport and traffic planning mobility as well as energy supply in metropolitan regions. Finally, the organisers want to praise once more the commitment of all participants. Without the active role assumed by each and every one of them, neither the workshop atmosphere nor its results would have proved as positive as they in fact did.

A participant: "Spatial planning and development shouldn't be separated from transport development issues."



A participant: "I valued the contributions of all participants in the working groups."



Site visit SUM – Interview

Together with area manager Renate Zuckerstätter-Semela (R. Z.-S.), Catch-MR visited the northern part of the Vienna MR. The core city of Vienna with its 1.7 million inhabitants is surrounded by a few smaller towns, many (rural) villages, large green areas and farmland. The Danube divides the Vienna MR with its 2.6 million inhabitants into a northern and a southern region.

Catch-MR: Renate, could you explain a bit about the daily work of an area manager?

R. Z.-S.: One of my core tasks is to mediate controversial cross-border issues. To give you an example, we are involved in conferences of mayors and information platforms such as "Dialogue on Regional Spatial Development". The harmonisation of the participating Lower Austrian municipalities and municipal districts of Vienna and the two federal provinces regarding regional planning matters is another trigger for co-ordination work. We organise an open and honest exchange of thoughts among stakeholders with a focus on establishing an all-inclusive vision for the area, e. g. the annual SUM conference or the annual SUM forums "North" and "South".

We also set incentives and design solutions for crossborder challenges together with stakeholders in order to create regional added value. My favourite examples are the cycling track maps, the on-call shared taxi for the Marchfeld area and the joint flood prevention plan.

Catch-MR: What can you tell us about the tradition of co-operation in the region?

R. Z.-S.: Institutionalised in 2006, SUM is a rather young joint initiative of the Federal Provinces of Vienna and Lower Austria on their way towards close cross-border co-operation. Since 1974, the "Association of Lower Austria and Vienna - Common Leisure Areas" has been safeguarding leisure areas of regional importance. The joint planning platform of the Federal Provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost, PGO) was established in 1978 to co-ordinate spatial planning in the region. With the Transport and Tariff Association for the Eastern Region (Verkehrsverbund Ost-Region, VOR), another important regional player began its work. Since 1984, VOR has acted as a central platform linking the transport system in the eastern part of Austria. Regional managers for the environs of Vienna have proved necessary and successful as instruments of cross-border co-ordination. The continuous



involvement of policymakers necessitated a firmly established co-operation framework. From 1998 to 2006, regional managers were active for the first time in co-or-

http://www.stadt-umland.at

dinating urban, regional and local stakeholders for the southern and northern environs of Vienna.

Catch-MR: How exactly is SUM organised today? R. Z.-S.: SUM is a joint initiative of the Federal Provinces of Vienna and Lower Austria and institutionalised under the umbrella "Association of Lower Austria and Vienna - Common Development Areas". Its members are the Federal Provinces of Vienna (political leader: Deputy Mayor and Executive City Councillor for Urban Planning, Traffic & Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Public Participation) and Lower Austria (political head: Executive Provincial Councillor for Education, Youth and Spatial Planning). The steering committee consists of administrative and political representatives of Vienna and Lower Austria and the SUM managers. The SUM budget is approx. € 200,000 per year, jointly financed by the two federal provinces. Co-operation partners include mayors of municipalities, provincial legislators, provincial administrations (charged with regional planning), PGO, regional managements, district chairpersons, city councillors and city administrations (charged with urban planning).

Catch-MR: Renate, who is responsible for spatial planning in the region?

R. Z.-S.: The way rights and duties are allocated within the Vienna MR entails an imbalance regarding administrative structure and powers. Under the Austrian Constitution, the federal provinces are responsible for spatial planning laws, while municipalities are responsible for local spatial planning. In Vienna, the Vienna City Council is responsible for spatial development, which is implemented by the Vienna City Administration. The municipal districts have no spatial planning authority. In Lower Austria, municipalities are responsible for local spatial planning, with the Provincial Government as supervisory authority. With regard to responsibility for regional development, the range of actors involved is obviously wider.

Catch-MR: Given the manifold issues of regional development, what is the main goal of an area man-





ager? Can you put it in one sentence?

R. Z.-S.: The aim is to come up with a joint regional strategy for development, I would say.

Catch-MR: The project Catch-MR focuses on

the challenges of sustainable mobility in metropolitan regions. How is this topic related to your work? **R. Z.-S.:** Traffic and transport issues are characterised by close collaboration with VOR. There are links regarding regional mobility management, public transport and sustainable mobility, the prevention of traffic jams through sustainable spatial planning and analyses of high-level infrastructure and local border traffic. SUM supplies smart regional solutions for each transport mode.

Catch-MR: Thank you, Renate, for showing us a part of the Vienna metropolitan region and sharing information about your activities at SUM.

Co-operation in planning (Ilse Wollansky and Thomas Madreiter)

In 1954, regional planning was defined as a competence of Austria's federal provinces. Already in 1978, the competent politicians in the eastern part of the country – i.e. the Federal Provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland – realised that regional planning and transport do not stop at provincial borders and hence decided to set up a cross-border plan-



Thomas Madreiter Head of Municipal Department 18 – Urban Development and Planning, Vienna

ning body called "Planungsgemeinschaft Ost" (PGO). This lean organisation with a staff of five was and still is tasked with co-ordinating and fine-tuning spaceimpacting activities and plans of common interest for all partners.

Its scope of activities embraces sometimes conflicting

province-specific, political interests and thus calls for a solid basis of trust and pronounced willingness to co-operate.

While PGO in its early days served as a mere coordinating body of the individual administrations, it has by now evolved into a strategic unit for joint planning work of the three federal provinces. By establishing additional co-operation instruments in the federal provinces (e. g. Stadt-Umland-Management, Regional Management), it has become possible to break down the strategies developed (after prior agreement with the politicians concerned) to a smaller regional and local scale and to expedite their implementation.

However, those who expect that co-operation can take root and function overnight misjudge reality. The crucial point to ensure the functioning of co-operation ventures lies in overcoming mental barriers on the part of all actors – an aspect where Catch-MR is making an important contribution.

As experience has shown, co-operation cannot be decreed from above. Collaborative behaviour and action must be part of day-to-day life and work processes. Co-operation depends on the people acting within a system. As a result, it happens quite often that smoothly functioning joint activities suddenly



llse Wollansky Head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Policy, Lower Austria

falter because of a change in the personnel involved. Irrespective of the technical challenges, this inevitably leads to novel situations that, however, can be mastered if all players have learned to think "regionally".

Yet the international financial crisis – whose effects are still palpable – has forced municipalities, regions, the economy, politicians and administrators to look for, and enter into, co-operation projects to

ensure forms of location, settlement and transport development that are sustainable, resource- and climate-efficient. Given this background, we are happy to make use of the partnership afforded by the Catch-MR project and look across national borders in order to share our know-how and experience with other metropolitan regions.





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