

# Regions

THE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP  
NO. 285, 2012 ISSUE I

QUARTERLY  
MAGAZINE OF THE

Regional

Studies

Association

THE GLOBAL FORUM FOR CITY  
AND REGIONAL RESEARCH,  
DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

Issn: 1367-3882



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# SUM: INFORMAL COOPERATION IN THE VIENNA METROPOLITAN REGION

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inhabitants, while the population of the surrounding municipalities in Lower Austria is projected to increase by another 130,000. If these demographic forecasts prove correct, this will result in a population of close to 3 million by 2030. Demographic growth in the entire metropolitan region is primarily driven by migration from abroad and from the rest of Austria.

## Introduction

In the Vienna Metropolitan Region (MR), the core city Vienna is both a municipality and a federal province, and is embedded in the federal province of Lower Austria. In the last few decades, the Vienna MR has experienced a phase of largely unstructured suburbanization. Regional and traffic planners were often forced to merely react rather than act. The attractiveness of Vienna's metropolitan region continues unabated, and the suburbanization process, which already started in the 1960's in the southern part of the region, is increasingly spilling over to the northern periphery. Since the fall of the iron curtain, the MR has been growing again. Currently it has about 2.6 million inhabitants: 1.7 million in Vienna and roughly 900,000 in the environs. By 2031, the population of Vienna alone is expected to grow by 250,000

## Administrative borders as a challenge

In Austria, spatial planning legislation lies within the responsibility of the federal provinces, while the respective autonomous municipalities are in charge of local spatial planning. There is no federal spatial planning law. As a result, there are different planning laws, strategies, concepts and instruments in Vienna and Lower Austria. The allocation of rights and duties in the Vienna MR is therefore marked by an imbalance of administrative structures and legal competences.

In Vienna, the City Council is responsible for spatial development, which is implemented by the Vienna City Administration. In Lower Austria, municipalities are responsible for local spatial planning, and the Provincial Government only acts as a supervisory authority. This highly complex political, administrative and financial structure



Stakeholder exchange at a SUM conference

gives rise to many challenges and a number of difficulties.

## Cross-border cooperation is the solution

From the 1970's, politicians in the Vienna MR started to realise that spatial problems and transport issues transcend provincial borders. As early as 1978, the Federal Provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland established a cross-border planning body called 'Planungsgemeinschaft Ost (PGO)' to co-ordinate spatial planning in the region. Its activities embrace sometimes conflicting province-specific interests. Originally, the PGO served as a mere coordinating body between the individual administrations. At present, it is a strategic unit for joint planning by the three federal provinces. By establishing additional cooperation instruments in the federal provinces (e.g. local area management, regional management), it has become possible to break down the strategies to a smaller regional and local scale and to expedite their implementation.

With the Transport and Tariff Cooperation Board for East Austria (VOR), another important regional player took up work in 1984. Since then, VOR has acted as a cross-border interface between public transport passengers, transport providers and public administration. Its stakeholders are the federal provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland. 17 railroad and bus companies are partners of VOR. The tasks of VOR, namely the support for transport services, the coordination of transport companies and passengers as well as mobility management and information have become more and more important in the last few years. In the future, more emphasis shall be given to transport planning. From 1998, regional



Vienna has the best living standard in the world, according to the Mercer 2011 Quality of Living Survey

managers coordinated urban, regional and local stakeholders in the southern and northern part of the Vienna MR. In 2006, they were replaced by the Metropolitan Area Management Vienna/Lower Austria (Stadt-Umland-Management Wien – Niederösterreich, SUM).

### Focus on SUM

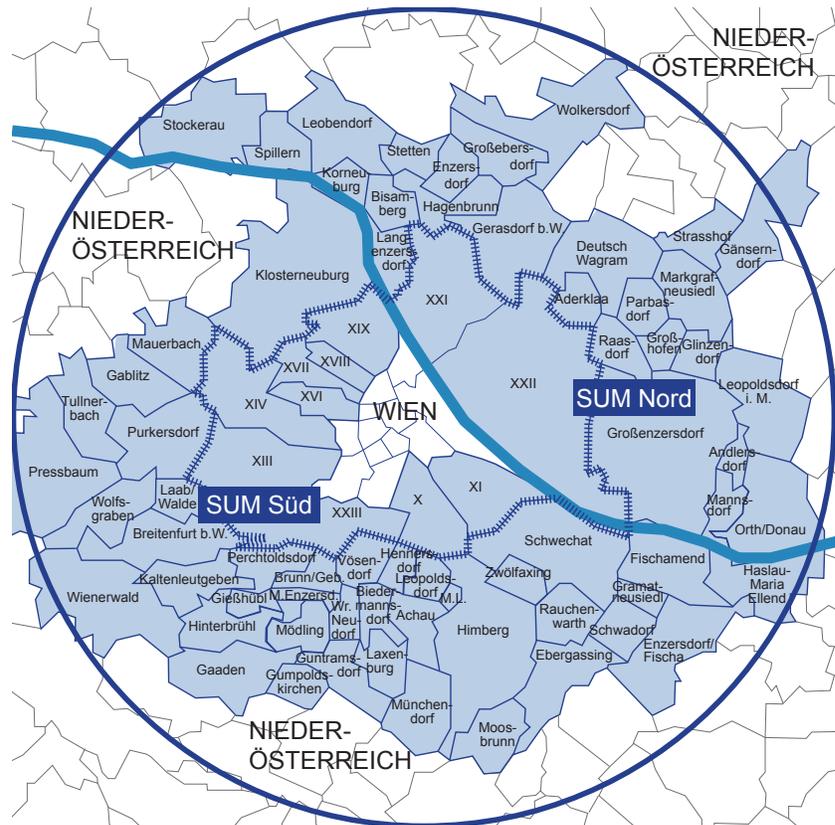
SUM, the Metropolitan Area Management Vienna/Lower Austria, was established as a joint initiative of the federal provinces of Vienna and Lower Austria. Its institutional basis is the Association of Lower Austria and Vienna – Common Development Areas, which is formed by the two federal provinces. The SUM Steering Committee is composed of administrative and political representatives of Vienna and the surrounding municipalities in Lower Austria, as well as the two SUM managers. SUM is co-financed by the two provinces.

SUM focuses on settlement and location policy, landscaping and mobility. It is a contact point with the following tasks:

- cooperation and intermediation: SUM is designing common solutions for cross border challenges, mediating controversial cross border issues, establishing a joint regional strategic approach of the 60 Lower Austrian municipalities and 11 Viennese districts. For this task VIA SUM, an online information system for projects of regional importance has been established (see also <http://www.stadt-umland.at>).
- information: SUM works as a platform for topics of regional relevance, organising an exchange of thoughts among the stakeholders. With the establishment of annual conferences, SUM offers a platform to discuss topics of importance for the whole region such as site development, infrastructure cooperation, public participation, etc.
- networking: SUM is strengthening mutual trust, establishing an all-inclusive perspective on the area.

Partners of the cooperation are the mayors of municipalities, provincial legislators, the provincial administration for regional planning in Lower Austria, as well as city councillors, districts chairpersons and the

**Figure 1: SUM cooperation area**



city administration concerned with urban planning on the part of Vienna.

### The Korneuburg Mobility Centre at a glance

As a result of the SUM dialogues, the Korneuburg Mobility Centre was established by Lower Austria in 2009. Based in the small town of Korneuburg near Vienna, it develops multimodal mobility projects between the densely populated urban areas of Vienna and the more rural neighbouring regions in Lower Austria. The Centre fosters better connections

between public and individual means of transport, and creates a stronger awareness of environmentally friendly mobility in general. Ongoing projects are:

- establishing bike rental stations of the 'nextbike' bike sharing system;
- holding an annual award show on mobility projects;
- organising mobility events for kids ('climate miles') and teenagers;
- initiating a continuous dialogue on public transport schedules to improve urban-rural train and bus connections.



*The Korneuburg Mobility Manager at work*

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THE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Transport is a key factor in economic development, as economic growth requires ready access to resources and market. This applies in particular for Metropolitan Regions as engines of economic growth and as regions with a very diverse population. However, this need for mobility and economic growth has, as side effects, rising volumes of traffic and levels of congestion with a significant impact on the environment. The above-mentioned issues are comprehensively tackled within the Catch-MR project (funded by Interreg IVC), where cooperation between metropolises and their surrounding functional regions is put to the fore in the cases of Berlin-Brandenburg, Budapest-Central Hungary, Gothenburg Region, Ljubljana Urban Region, Oslo-Akershus, Province of Rome, and Vienna-Lower Austria. Our guest Editor, Janez Nared, has therefore compiled a set of case studies from this project for our Regional Survey. Some challenging examples on how different metropolises face urban sprawl, mobility and congestion issues are presented. The most common example in three of the metropolitan regions (Berlin, Vienna and Oslo) is joint planning, where the metropolis and its hinterland cooperate to prevent urban sprawl and to improve public transport systems. These examples show great progress in planning, but still urban sprawl remains an important factor that should be dealt with. The other four examples present transport-related issues in the Ljubljana Urban Region, transport interchanges in Gothenburg, improvements of mobility in Castelli Romani (Rome) and the regional cycle network in Budapest.

In our 'Comment and Debate' section, Tassilo Herrschel discusses the role that the RSA plays in debates on public policy. Also in this issue, Mandy Talbot looks at farm diversification and farm tourism, a paper that won the award for Best Paper at the RSA's Rural Tourism Symposium. Amongst the reports of Research Network events, there is a final report from James Hopkins on his doctoral research relating to the history of the RSA.



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