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Statement by the Association of German metropolitan regions (IKM) on the updated draft of the Leipzig Charter (version 30/3/2020)

The Association of German Metropolitan Regions (Initiativkreis der Europäischen Metropolregionen in Deutschland, IKM) submitted its comments on the draft of the Leipzig Charter to the responsible ministry in Germany last November. The main criticism was and still is directed against the relatively narrow focus on the core city, which disregards the vital role of regional cooperation for the sustainable development of city regions or “functional areas”.

The current draft has seen some improvements. However, metropolitan areas are still more or less equated with functional areas, their special role is not sufficiently emphasised. We therefore propose the following aspects for consideration:

- Lines 103-109: the paragraph on functional areas acknowledges metropolitan areas as a form of constitutional regional cooperation, but fails to recognise the special role of metropolitan regions as an established spatial category. With their strategy-based holistic development approach, the metropolitan regions, under the joint responsibility of a large number of regional actors from politics, business, science and civil society (regional governance), go far beyond the descriptive approach of “functional urban areas”.
- Lines 112 ff (Three dimensions of European cities)
We propose to add a fourth to the three dimensions of the European city: “the cooperative city”.
Reasons:

- We believe that sustainable and resilient urban development is necessarily embedded in a regional context. It relies on a complex network of functional interdependencies, cooperations and partnerships, as exemplified in the metropolitan regions.
 - More and more frequently the regional level turns out as the most suited action level to meet current and future challenges, already known or still unknown, for the benefit of all.
 - For topical reasons: Cities embedded in regional cooperation structures and forming a community of responsibility with their surrounding geographical area are better performer and more likely to cope with crisis situations (“cooperative resilience”)
- Lines 187 ff (Key principles of good urban governance)
As an alternative to the addition of a fourth overarching dimension (see above), we propose to establish the principle of cooperation as another key principle of good urban governance.

The justification is largely in line with the above reasoning.

- Lines 272 ff (Strengthening Urban Governance to assure the Common Good)
We propose to add that cities of all sizes need to be enabled to plan, act and finance projects in a regional approach:
Justification:
European cities do not lead an island life but are engaged in multiple cooperations, networks and partnerships in variable geometry. In the interests of a sustainable urban development performance it is, more than ever, important that urban development fits in with a wider spatial and functional approach differing according to the region.
- Line 376 ff (Funding and financial instruments and EU-programmes taking up urban issues)
We totally agree that the mentioned instruments should be accessible to cities of all sizes and to functional areas. Referring to our reasoning above (page 1) we propose to include metropolitan regions as a separate category of beneficiaries of European funding in this context.