

# Metropolitan area of Oslo and Akershus

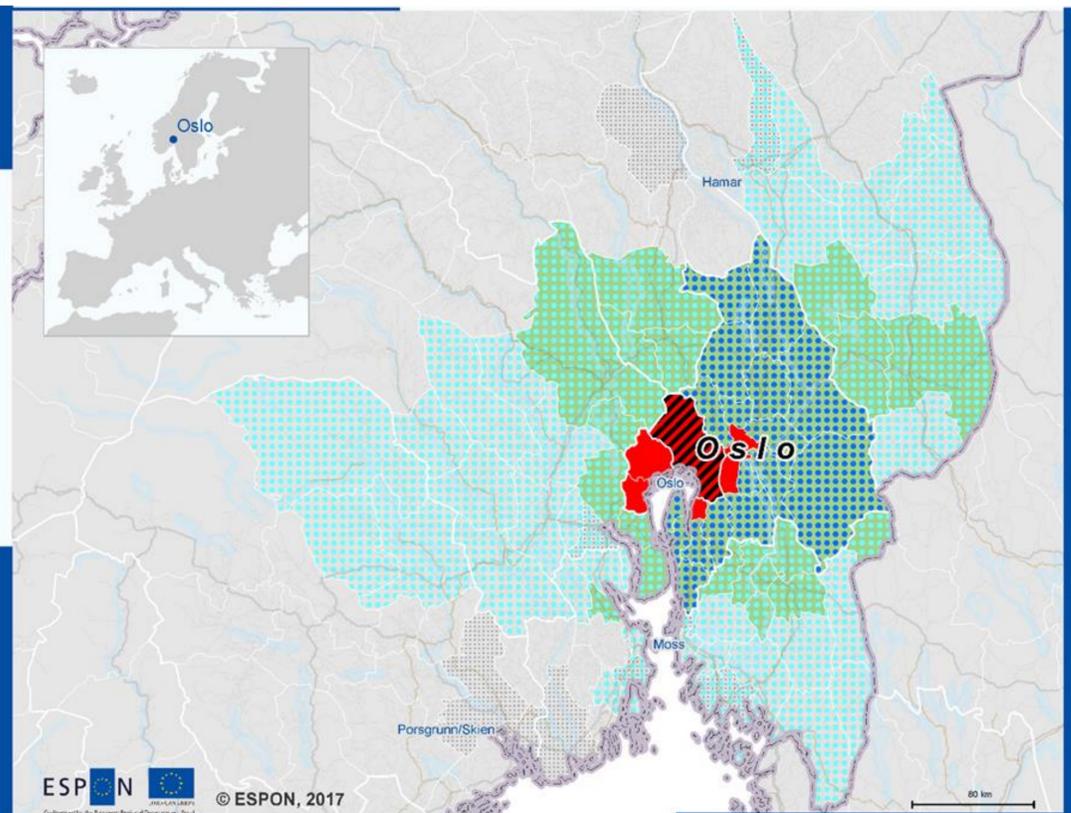
## Spatial dynamics and strategic planning

### The Metropolitan development of Oslo and Akershus

The Oslo region has experienced strong growth in population in the past decade that has determined its transformation into a larger metropolitan area. Housing, employment and transport have grown correspondingly and presented new challenges to the local and regional authorities. The spatial scale of the metropolitan area has not been yet clearly defined. Different delineating scenarios are currently into consideration, addressing the extend of the metropolitan developments in the region. These scenarios aim at strengthening collaboration between Oslo's local authorities, Akershus county and the regional authorities in integrated spatial development. The initiation of metropolitan development initiatives such as the Oslo and Akershus joint regional plan for land use and transport, has been supported by regional and national authorities and brought a number of regional and inter-regional collaborative actions, promoting more balanced spatial development in the region.

### Metropolitan Development Area (MDA)

Map of the MDA of Oslo and Akershus



- Core city municipality
- MUA of the core city (ESPON 2013 Database)
- Surrounding MUA's (ESPON 2013 Database)
- Minimum extent of the MDA: City of Oslo and Akershus County Regional planning authority area
- Maximum extent of the Metropolitan Development Area (MDA)
- FUA of the core city (ESPON 2013 Database)
- National border
- Railroad
- Motorway
- Primary road
- Other road
- rivers

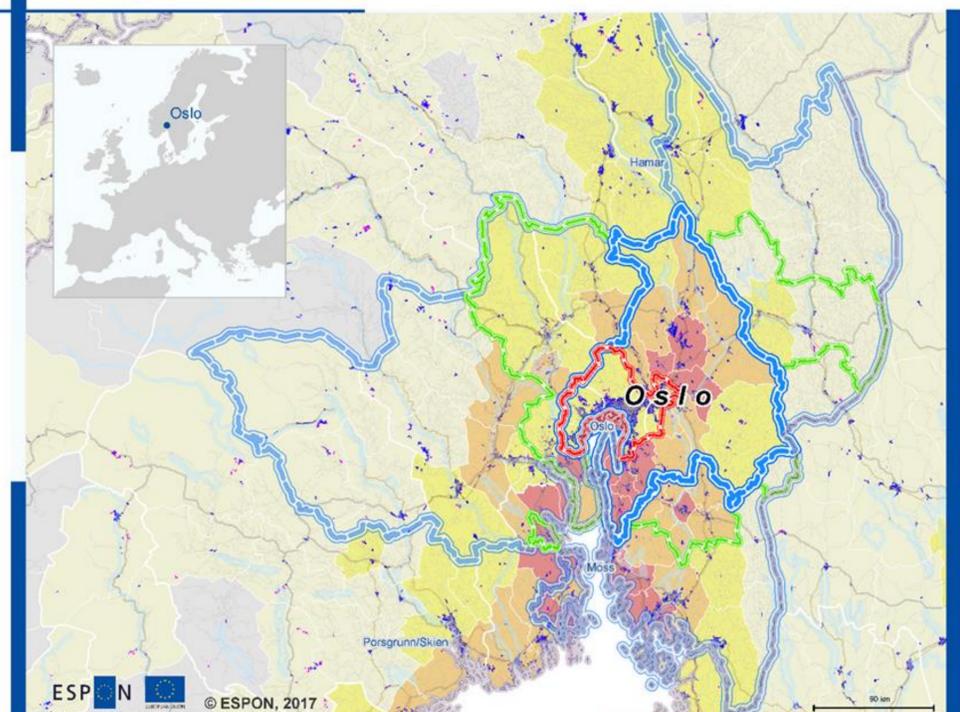
- One of the scenarios of the MDA of Oslo represents an urban agglomeration of the urban area of Oslo and the county of Akershus, covering a territory of 5370 km<sup>2</sup>. The area consist of 23 municipalities with a population of about 1.23 million inhabitants (2015), (minimum scenario). This scenario is based on establishment of a collaboration in spatial planning activities between the Oslo's local authorities and the Akershus county.
- The maximum scenario of the MDA refers to the greater Oslo region, representing a large functional urban area. It covers five county councils with 78 municipalities, representing 2.1 million inhabitants. This scenario is based on the commuting patterns of the regional public transport network and the transport infrastructure strategic plan. The area represents the Oslo's Regional Alliance initiative.
- The FUA of the core city of Oslo is relatively large area due to inter-regional commuting patterns with a rather monocentric character. The MDA scenarios of Oslo, however, promote polycentric spatial structure that ensures more balanced development and distribution of functions across the region.

### Current spatial development challenges

- The key challenges of the Oslo's & Akershus metropolitan area are in ensuring sustained economic prosperity and managing population growth. This requires integrated spatial planning strategies and approaches for managing urban growth in different parts of the area with different spatial functions.
- Developing a polycentric spatial structure that ensures efficient mobility and accessibility via optimized transportation flows and reduced car-use is essential for the future of the region.
- Providing a better quality of life and affordable housing is another challenge, arising from the population growth trends and climate change.
- Metropolitan development of Oslo & Akershus is as well challenged by institutional issues such as the need for a systematic support from the national government, regarding integrated spatial planning policy and a clear metropolitan governance process.

Map of the Urban Sprawl in MDA, FUA and MUA

#### Urban Sprawl 1975-2014



#### Increase in Night Light Intensity 1992 - 2012



- MUA of the core city (ESPON 2013 Database)
- Min. extent of the MDA: City of Oslo and Akershus County Regional Planning Area
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## Strategic priorities, opportunities and incentives

- The Oslo and Akershus joint regional plan for land use and transport addresses number of strategic priorities for the metropolitan development of the region:
  - Densification around public transport hubs, and distribution of growth across municipalities.
  - Further develop and implement the "Urban growth agreements".
  - Coordinate transport investments of the national authorities.
  - Reduce car-use and CO2, (e.g. car toll, biking and walking infrastructure).
  - Enhance the economic development, and competitiveness, stimulate the housing market.
  - Ensure environmental quality by protecting farm land, biodiversity and large recreational areas (the "Marka-Act").
- A key incentive for more comprehensive metropolitan planning and governance are the high potential of the territory in terms of economic growth, attractiveness, recreation and landscapes.
- A number of bottom up initiatives have triggered the collaboration between Oslo and Akershus authorities and presented a number of common benefits for the future development of the entire region.

*SOEI matrix of the Metropolitan city of Oslo and Akershus*

### Strategic priorities

- Densification around public transport hubs
- Improve transport infrastructure
- Reducing car-use and reducing CO2-mitigation
- Increase the use of bikes
- Economic development
- Housing market
- Environmental sustainability

### Emergent problems

- Population growth
- Transport infrastructure, public transport capacity
- Urban sprawl, suburbanization
- Post-industrial brown fields
- Air pollution, Co2-mitigation
- Increase in house prices
- Environment & Landscape
- Finance (funding and taxes)

### Opportunities

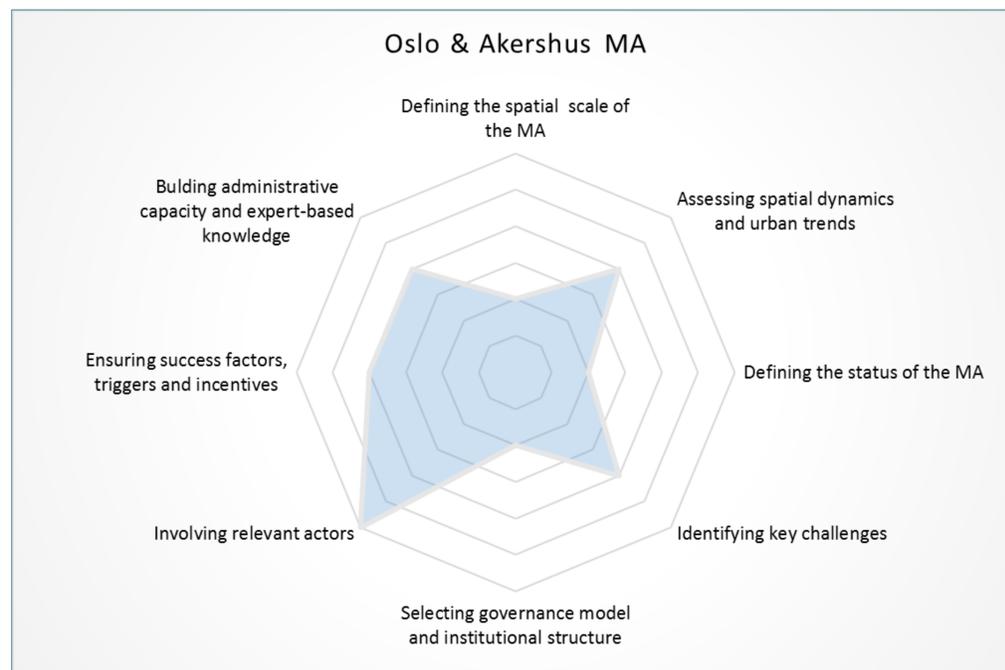
- Growth (business, housing, population)
- Knowledge-based business services
- Bigger investments in education sector
- Research and innovation investments
- Recreational values: large nature areas ("Marka" woods)

### Incentives

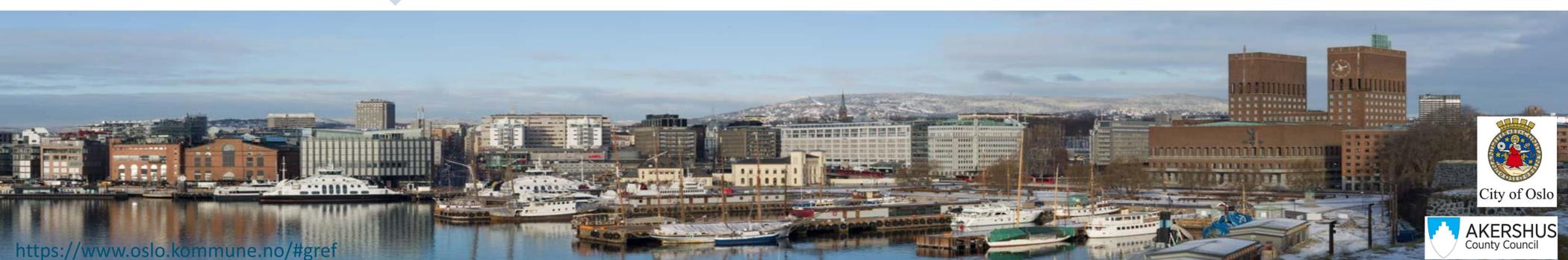
- Urban growth agreements
- Transport investments agreements between national authorities, Oslo & Akershus
- National transport investments in the metropolitan region
- Amalgamation of Akershus with two other county municipalities

## Key recommendations and relevant policy tools

*Progress in Metropolitan Planning Approach within eight action areas*



- The authorities of Oslo & Akershus have ensured a good understanding on the current trends behind the metropolitan development and the challenges ahead to be addressed in joint regional plans.
- Oslo & Akershus have already achieved progress in involving relevant actors in the planning activities of the area among which are the businesses in the region.
- Most progress in Oslo & Akershus is needed in defining the spatial scale of the metropolitan area. In particular an agreement is needed between the regional and local authorities on the various delineation scenarios.
- Discussions about the formal status of the MA is in progress and needs to be further strengthened in order to ensure the recognition of the area by relevant actors.
- Due to the large impact of the regional economy of the two regions on the national territorial policy, the support of the national government is considered as a key success factor. Formal agreements, political commitment, or financial stimuli are potential tools to support the use of a metropolitan planning approach.
- Further efforts are needed in the development of a shared governance process that ensures ongoing collaboration between the national authorities, the regions and the municipalities (multilevel governance).
- The most relevant policy tools to be employed by Oslo & Akershus will be collaborative and coordinative policy tools, followed by strategic policy tools. These policy tools can support the joint efforts between different levels of government (vertically) and the shared competences in specific sectoral issues such as transport and housing etc. (horizontally).



## References:

SPIMA final report <https://www.espon.eu/metropolitan-areas>

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