

EUKN webinar “Port Cities and Mega-Trends: Glocal Approaches to Sustainable Transitions”

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The Covid-19 crisis raises questions of resilience, sustainable transitions and global trade in the wake of a pandemic. Port cities require new scenarios to deal with these questions, and over the past year several online initiatives were held to discuss this challenge. So does the **European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)** ‘**Thinking Beyond the Crisis**’ series, which explores the urban impacts of and responses to the coronavirus outbreak in EUKN member countries. The online webinar “**Port cities and Mega-Trends: Glocal Approaches to Sustainable Transitions**,” - held on 26 January 2021 and organised with the French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) and the port city of Le Havre - offered a platform to reflect on the global impact and local effects of mega-trends on port cities, including the recent, far-reaching impacts of Covid-19. The event specifically explored the strategies and experiences of the ports of Le Havre (France), Incheon (South Korea), Rotterdam (Netherlands) and Hamburg (Germany).

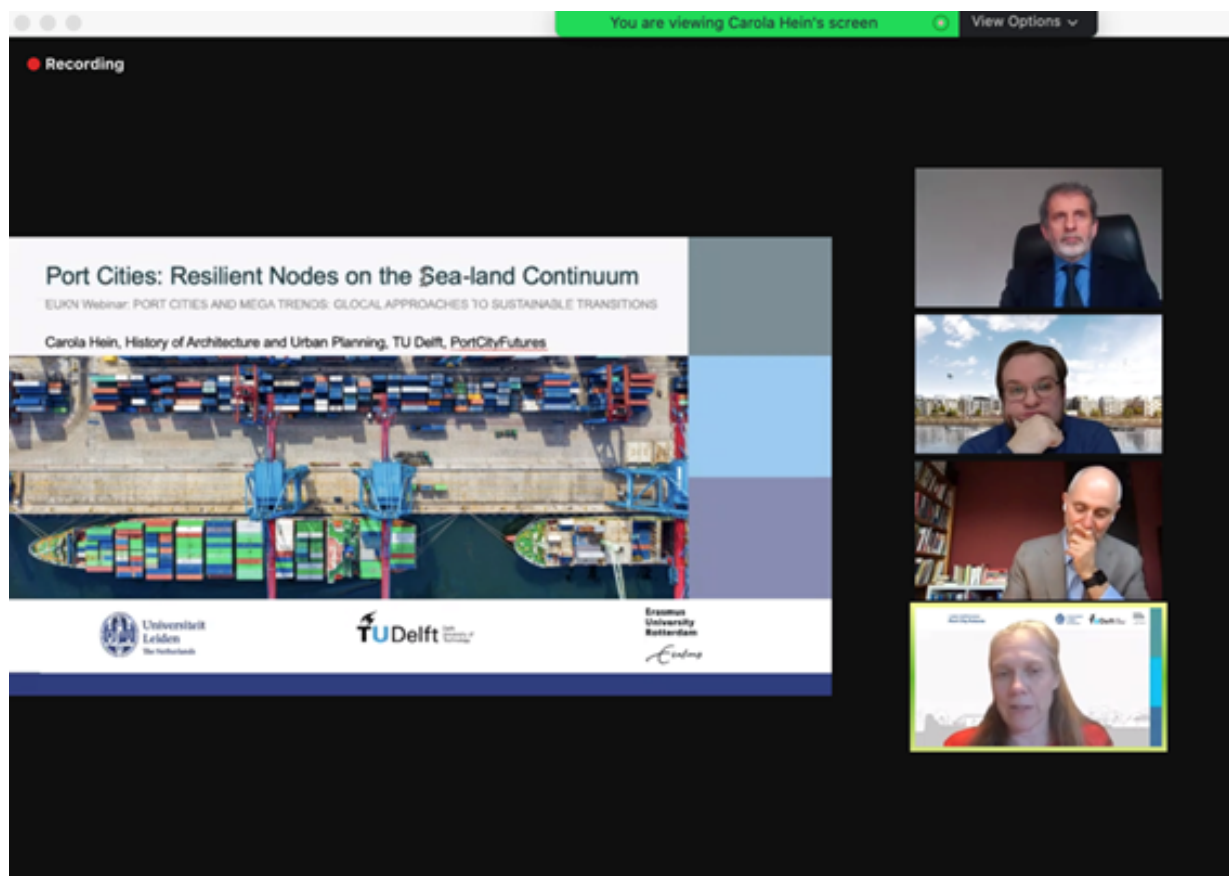
To mitigate the effects of the pandemic on port cities, it is crucial to facilitate long-term collaboration, said **Édouard Philippe (Mayor of Le Havre)** at the opening of the webinar session. Within this collaboration, it is important to keep in mind the changing relationship between ports and their cities and the need to tighten their collaboration, emphasized **François Philizot (Intermin. Delegate for the Development of Seine Valley)**. He focused on the importance of port city regions as global maritime corridors and reflected on their effect on the global economy and technological future transitions. What this could entail specifically is for example Le Havre’s smart port city project as a sustainable transition roadmap for future port city projects. **Cyril Chédot (Port of Le Havre)** explained how the La Havre Smart Port City project is integrated with megatrends, impacts and challenges on port cities such as digitalisation (cybersecurity, 5G/IOT), health, investments (such as the post-Covid 19 economic recovery plan and the EU Green Deal), governance, social innovation and sustainable development (such as new territorial collaborations).

However, this territorial sustainable coordination between ports and cities or local-economic synergies, is not self-evident. **Olaf Merk (Maritime transport and ports expert, International Transport Forum (ITF), OECD)** pointed out that the corporatized port authorities mostly ignore local economic synergies. He highlighted that a “glocal” governance is impossible since the externalities of shipping are regulated at the level of the International Maritime Organisation, but port cities are not represented there.

Sustainable development is a theme for both ports and cities. Rotterdam, as the largest port in Europe, is leading in the field of energy transitions and climate neutral systems. **Huibert van Rossum (Strategic advisor, External Affairs, Port of Rotterdam Authority)** talked about the energy transitions in the port of Rotterdam as well as the

bio-propane plant at the Maasvlakte (the large port expansion into the North Sea west of Rotterdam). Van Rossum mentioned flood risk adaptation strategies, mitigation programs and climate neutral systems of the Port of Rotterdam in response to the climate change challenges. **Lukas Gilliard's (Assistant to the Executive Director, HafenCity GmbH)** presentation focused on the port city interface of Hamburg with an emphasis on opportunities for inclusive and sustainable future urban transformation within areas of the former harbour. Also, sustainable construction and enhancing the links between port and city through maritime businesses is part of HafenCity's working agenda.

It is important to explore port city transitions in global context. **Stanislas Roussin (HAROPA representative in Korea)** focused on the case of Incheon (South Korea) and the changing relationship between ports and their cities through a historical and spatial perspective. As the gateway of Great Seoul with China, Incheon is a key transportation hub and among the top 3 in the World for its quality service since its foundation in 2001. Rousin's presentation highlighted the future redevelopment of port activities in the areas related to cruise terminal and new international passengers' terminal, E-commerce zone, cold chain logistic complex, and digitalisation.



The theme of port city collaboration was also addressed by **Carola Hein (Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning, TU-Delft; leader of LDE PortCityFutures research group)**. She discussed the different dimensions on long-term, multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder interventions in port cities as the particular types of city due to the presence of water, a theme also highlighted in the group's animated film the Magic of Port Cities. As important global hubs, port cities are at the fore

front of many contemporary challenges. The recent explosion in the port of Beirut and the resulting destruction of urban areas and heritage sites served as a reminder of this close relationship and the need for shared planning. Hein argued that port cities are highly resilient structures with often long-standing collaborations between port and city actors, making them potential leaders in port city transitions.

The webinar highlighted the diversity of actors such as port authorities, policy makers, academics and various stakeholders and the multiplicity of territorial scales for impacts of megatrends on development in terms of sustainability of ports, port cities and local ecosystems. This dynamic make-up of experts and presentations provided the possibility to analyse critically the different aspects of port cities' challenges as well as their sustainable future transitions.

References

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