

Port-city scenarios during and after the Covid-19

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In a few months, the Covid-19 has changed our way of life by asking questions about what awaits us in the future, particularly in port cities.

Diffusion and impacts of Coronavirus have been not homogeneous since its appearance in China where Hubei Province has been hardly affected but other regions such as the capital Beijing have remained practically unscathed. In addition, the impact in terms of mortality has been different in some Countries – such as Switzerland or Germany – certainly thanks to the efficiency of the health system, but also for other factors that we should analyze in the next months.

On the one hand, the pandemic has affected world and countries very irregularly, but on the other hand, the impact is global, even with different weights, but without saving any country in the world as it is emerging, day after day, in the five continents.

Summarizing, direct effects of pandemic appear limited and controllable, but economic and social impacts are growing day by day with the risk of leading us to a systemic crisis. According to some economists and sociologists, future scenario could be similar to post-World War II or the Great Depression of 1929.

Port cities particularly suffer this global impact of Covid-19 because they are open sea-land gateway. This is undoubtedly an advantage in an ordinary period but it can be very dangerous in a pandemic situation.

Port-cities can be optimal laboratories to analyze the impacts of the Covid-19 by economic, social and environmental points of view – port-city system and sub-systems, the elements and the relationships, interaction between urban community and maritime community.

At the same time, during the pandemic of Coronavirus, port cities can be an oxygen mask to save the lives of our communities, not only because they allow the supply of necessary goods and life-saving tools, but mainly because they can become a strategic resource to restart by building physical and community resilience, promoting functional and relational reactions.

The Scientific Committee of RETE, representative of many geographical realities, expression of different competences and of complementary points of view, invites to reflect on:

- what will be and how long will the effects of Covid-19 go on?
- what role can port authorities play in managing the emergency?
- what impact is the lockdown having on the marine traffics?
- how are relations between port and city changing and how will they change?
- how are maritime urban communities reacting?
- how the port-urban landscape is changing and how will it change?
- is the ecological footprint of port cities going to decrease?
- how could the emergency become an opportunity?
- and other objectives-questions that you would propose!

RETE Scientific Committee, April 2020