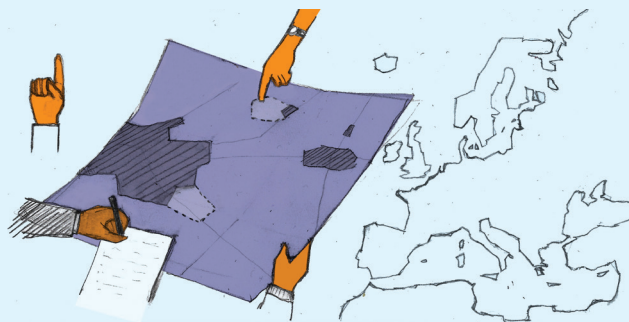


FONCIERS EN DÉBAT AND GERTRUD PRESENT

# LIMITING LAND CONSUMPTION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES



WEBINAR

MARCH 10, 2022, 14:00-17:00 (CET)

## SPEAKERS

**Paul CHESHIRE**, Professor at the London School of Economics (LSE)

**Sebastian DEMBSKI**, Lecturer at the University of Liverpool

**David EVERS**, Senior researcher at the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and assistant professor at the University of Amsterdam

**Jean-Marie HALLEUX**, Professor at the University of Liege (ULiège)

**Peter LACOERE**, Lector and researcher at the University College of Ghent (HOOGENT)

## SCOPE

**Limiting the consumption of agricultural and natural land by urbanization is a growing focus of land policies and the trend is general in Europe.** The issue is related both to European and governmental regulations, and to general changes in spatial planning models and paradigms. Although there is a certain consensus on the European objective of limiting land consumption, the methods of implementation concern very different situations and are subject of national debates and practices. **How do national land use regulations and implementations highlight international differences in understanding of the issue?**

**The webinar will provide knowledge on the issues and situations in different European countries concerning the objectives and practices of limiting land consumption.** The aim is to understand the consequences for the actors involved and on the spatial transformation. What are the current spatial planning practices? What are the difficulties and ambivalences encountered in different countries? What effects can the regulation of land consumption have on spatial planning practices and urban development processes?

## VIDEOCONFERENCE ACCESS

To receive the videoconference access, please register here: <https://forms.gle/wfYmjmqNJRZMCGwo7>

## ORGANIZERS

The webinar is organised in partnership with the **association 'Fonciers en Débat'** ([www.fonciers-en-debat.com/](http://www.fonciers-en-debat.com/)) and the **GeRTrUD research project** ([www.laburba.com/recherches/gertrud/](http://www.laburba.com/recherches/gertrud/)). The event is supported by the Lab'Urba ([www.laburba.com/](http://www.laburba.com/)) and the Young Researchers in Real Estate (RJCF).

**This session is associated with two other sessions** addressing the French ZAN objective. These two sessions will take place on 9 March and will be in French. More information on [www.fonciers-en-debat.com/zan-et-pratiques-durbanisation-en-france-et-en-europe/](http://www.fonciers-en-debat.com/zan-et-pratiques-durbanisation-en-france-et-en-europe/).

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## PROGRAMME

**14:00-14:10**

### INTRODUCTION

Joël IDT, Université Gustave Eiffel, Camille LE BIVIC, Université Gustave Eiffel, and Romain MELOT, INRAE and Université Paris Saclay

**14:10-14:40**

### EXPLORING LAND-USE CHANGE AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL: FINDINGS FROM THE ESPON SUPER PROJECT

David EVERS, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and University of Amsterdam

**Abstract.** The ESPON project Sustainable Urbanization and land-use Practices in European Regions (SUPER) analyzed how much land is converted from one use to another and offered suggestions on how to influence these developments. It rejected pejorative terminology such as 'land take' and 'sprawl' and concentrated instead on the (dis)advantages divergent modes of urbanization can have for sustainability in its broadest sense. To assist the political discussion, pan-European scenarios for 2050 were drawn up illustrating the footprints of each mode. The project also included a survey of over 200 interventions in Europe that affect urbanization and 11 in-depth case studies.

**David EVERS** is a senior researcher on spatial planning at the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and assistant professor at the University of Amsterdam. His research interests include retail development, new institutionalism, metropolitan governance, impacts of EU sector policies on planning, territorial cohesion, wind energy and spatial impacts of Covid-19.

**14:40-15:10**

### THE "NO NET LAND TAKE" STRATEGY: A LAST HOPE FOR URBAN CONTAINMENT IN BELGIUM?

Jean-Marie HALLEUX, University of Liege, Peter LACOERE, University College of Ghent

**Abstract.** In the first part of our presentation, we will comment the path-dependency mechanisms that explain the tradition of urban sprawl that affects Belgium. This path-dependency is intrinsically linked to great respect for individual property rights. This presentation of the Belgian planning context will allow to explain the main blockages which make a different path toward urban containment unlikely. Despite this difficult environment, planning authorities, in both, Flanders and Wallonia, try give concrete form to the "no net land take" strategy. The second part of the presentation will aim to describe those current efforts of the regional planning authorities of the two main Belgian regions.

**Jean-Marie HALLEUX** is Full Professor at the University of Liege (ULiège), where he teaches economic geography and spatial planning. In 2019, he created at ULiège a new master degree dedicated to the professions of urban planning and territorial development. His research focuses on the relations between economic mechanisms, spatial planning and land markets. He has been involved in several European research programs where he has developed an expertise in the international comparison of planning systems. He is currently in charge of a research project on the application of the "no net land take" strategy in Wallonia.

**Peter LACOERE** is lector and researcher at the University College of Ghent (HO Gent), where he teaches land policy and project development. His main research interests are in land policy, sustainable planning and instruments of land management. Peter is currently working on a PhD thesis at the KU Leuven on land neutrality and the instruments of land policy needed to achieve this goal. He has published several articles on the no net land take target for Flanders. He recently coauthored the expert advisory report for the regional minister on the implementation of a "no net land take" policy for Flanders.

**15:10-15:40**

## **PUSHING WATER UPHILL: CONTAINMENT POLICIES DOOMED TO FAIL**

Paul CHESHIRE, London School of Economics

**Abstract.** Containment policies are much older than most people realise. From 1580 to 1605 Queen, Elizabeth 1 tried repeatedly to stop the outward growth of London imposing minimum lot sizes and outlawing building within 11 km of the city walls. This attempt to stem London's growth finally came to an end following the great fire of 1666. The 19th Century vision of Green Belts as the 'green lungs' of the city lasted up to 1955 in Britain. Then the Conservative government transformed them into great tracts where all new development was to be prohibited: the first, London's, some 17 times bigger than the administrative area of London. The declared purpose may have been to 'stop further urban development' but the reality was to stop encroachment into the 'Home Counties' where the prosperous had already made their homes, taking advantage first of commuter rail, then the car and the expanding road system.

Why physical barriers to urban development such as 'containment boundaries' fail is that as cities grow and prosper, their more numerous and more prosperous citizens not only demand houses, they demand more spacious houses and gardens too. Demand for space in and around houses – so price – is mainly determined by real incomes, not population growth. So long as there is economic growth, therefore, setting rigid boundaries on development is like trying to hold back the tide. There are all sorts of unintended consequences which in the end mean the policy collapses. In the UK case real house prices doubled in every decade following 1955. Moreover far from 'containing' London, its Green Belt has caused it to leapfrog outwards with ultra long distance commuting as people tried to find affordable space. Far from producing compact cities, growth boundaries ultimately produce super low density, car dependent living as well as increasingly unaffordable and cramped housing. But if society really wants to limit land consumption, urban economics does offer some methods that would work while causing less harm to the environment and welfare.

**Paul CHESHIRE** an applied urban economics is Professor Economic Geography at the London School of Economics. His research has focused on urban growth in Europe, urban land and housing markets and the economic effects of land use planning. He is the author/editor of 12 books and more than a 150 journal articles. He has acted as consultant to governments and international organisations. He was an advisor to both Barker reviews of planning and a Board member of the National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit. He is an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and won the Royal Economic Society's Best Paper prize for 2004 and the EIB-ERSA Prize in 2009. He was awarded a CBE for services to economics and housing in 2017.

**15:40-16:10**

## **DENSIFICATION POLICIES BETWEEN STATE AND MARKET: TRENDS IN GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND**

Sebastian DEMBSKI, University of Liverpool

**Abstract.** Urban densification is high on the policy agenda in many Western countries reducing net land uptake while at the same time addressing the housing shortage that exists in many cities. There has been a widely reported shift from the active state to the enabling state to deliver public goods such as housing in urban areas. Based on these wider shifts it can be assumed that the policies of land strategy will take a stronger steering role to enable the market to deliver densification. This study reflects on the use of different types of land policy instruments in Germany and Switzerland and the role of the state and the market in delivering densification.

**Sebastian DEMBSKI** is a lecturer in Planning in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Liverpool. He has recently completed a project on housing land allocation, assembly and delivery comparing practices in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland for the Scottish Land Commission, and currently works on a comparative study of land policy instruments for densification.

**16:10-17:00**

## **DISCUSSION**