



Institute for Development

**TERRITORIAL COHESION IN POLISH  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY. THE  
RESULTS OF SURVEYS AND IN DEPTH  
INQUIRIES CONVERING REGIONAL  
AUTHORITIES IN POLAND**

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# Spójność terytorialna w polityce rozwoju polskich województw. Wyniki badań ankietowych i wywiadów pogłębionych przeprowadzonych wśród władz regionalnych

Sierpień 2015

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## Abstrakt

*Niniejszy raport stanowi przeznaczone dla zagranicznych odbiorców pogłębienie Dokumentów roboczych Instytutu Rozwoju nr 003/2014 (014) (Zaucha Komornicki +2014) i nr 002/2015 / (021) (Zaucha Komornicki 2015). W artykule przedstawiono, w jakim stopniu i w jaki sposób polskie regiony (województwa) realizują koncepcję spójności terytorialnej w ich polityce rozwoju. Wszystkie trzy wymiary spójności terytorialnej zostały poddane analizie (spójność terytorialna: jako proces dostosowania polityki do specyfiki jednostek terytorialnych, czyli skuteczność polityki, jako wkład aktywów / kapitału terytorialnego do wzrostu gospodarczego tj. efektywność terytorium, a w końcu jako platforma umożliwiająca włączanie konkretnych celów przestrzennych do polityki rozwoju). Nacisk został położony na pierwszy z tych trzech wymiarów. Raport jest efektem badania ankietowego i wywiadów pogłębionych przeprowadzonych ze służbami odpowiedzialnymi za szeroko rozumiany rozwój województw (z reguły były to departamenty Urzędów Marszałkowskich). Badanie dowodzi, iż przedstawiciele władz regionalnych, wykazują relatywnie dobrą orientację w problematyce spójności terytorialnej, ale ich rozumienie pojęcia jest na ogół węższe niż w opracowaniach teoretycznych. Nierzadko jednak spójność terytorialna nie jest rozumiana jako cel, lecz jako proces dążenia do osiągnięcia spójności społeczno-ekonomicznej. Na poziomie definicji większość województw zgodnie podkreśla rolę endogenicznych czynników wzrostu określając terytorium w kategoriach pozytywnych. Przy prowadzeniu polityki intraregionalnej, dominują podejście bardziej tradycyjne.*

*Regiony prowadzą często wewnętrzną politykę przestrzenną do wyznaczenia różnego rodzaju obszarów. Co więcej wyznaczenie przeważnie odbywa się w oparciu o kryteria negatywne (nawiązujące do dawniej wydzielanych obszarów problemowych). Jednocześnie widoczna jest jednak ewolucja podejścia, która, nawet, jeżeli jest do pewnego stopnia wymuszona regulacjami Unii Europejskiej, daje podstawy do lepszego ujmowania w przyszłości spójności terytorialnej w polityce na poziomie regionalnym.*

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**Kody JEL :** R11, R12, R58

**Słowa kluczowe:** kapitał terytorialny, spójność terytorialna, terytorialne ukierunkowywanie polityki

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# Territorial Cohesion in Polish Regional Development Policy. The results of Surveys and in depth inquiries covering regional authorities in Poland

August 2015

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## Abstract

*The paper is an extended version of the Working Paper no. 003/2014 (014) (Zaucha Komornicki 2014) and the Working Paper no. 002/2015/(021) (Zaucha Komornicki 2015). It aims at foreign readers. The paper presents to what extent and how the Polish regions (voivodship) have managed to introduce territorial cohesion paradigm into their development policy. All three dimensions of territorial cohesion have been examined (territorial cohesion: as a process of policy adaptation to the specificity of territorial units i.e. policy effectiveness, as the contribution of territorial assets/territorial capital to economic growth i.e. territorial effectiveness, as an enabling platform for the specific spatial objectives of development policies) with the focus on the first one.*

*The paper is based on the results of a survey and in depth inquiries conducted with the services responsible for the broader development of the regions (mostly departments of the Marshal Offices).*

*The study found that the representatives of regional authorities, have a relatively good understanding of the issues of territorial cohesion, but their understanding of the concept is generally narrower than the theoretical studies. Many of them considered territorial cohesion not as a separate goal but as a vehicle of achieving to social and economic cohesion.*

*While at the conceptual level (defining territorial cohesion) most regions have emphasized the role of endogenous growth factors, this has been slightly abandoned at the policy programming stage. In programming of intraregional policies the more traditional approach dominates. Regions usually delimitate different types of areas. This takes place generally on the basis of negative criteria (e.g. problem areas). But the study also, shows the evolution of the approach (forced mainly by EU regulations), which gives rise to a better implementation of the territorial cohesion concept in regional policies.*

***The paper presents the results of the project financed by the Polish National Science Centre "Concept of the territorial cohesion in cohesion policy. Implications for Economic Growth" (no. 2012/05/B/HS4/04212).***

**JEL classification:** R11, R12, R58

**Keywords:** place-based policy, territorial capital, territorial cohesion

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## **1. Polish Voivodeships as Testing Ground of Territorial Cohesion Implementation**

In the previous papers the concept of territorial cohesion as an optimum model has been presented. It emphasized three main dimensions of territorial cohesion i.e. territory as development asset, efficiency of development policy (e.g. place-based policy making) and utility of a given territory as an outcome of a public choice process i.e. trade off between spatial and economic goals. It should be examined now in what way (if any) such territorial cohesion is implemented in Poland.

This paper presents the results of research on the presence of all three dimensions of cohesion in the development policy of Polish voivodeships. First, readers should be acquainted with the Polish system of development policy in different spatial scales. Only then the manner in which local and voivodeship self-governmental bodies understand and conceptualize the categories of territorial cohesion is presented. Subsequently, methods and progress of the place-based paradigm implementation are analysed, that is methods of adjusting development policy to territorial specificity in accordance with that concept. This is followed by the analysis of the scope of integration of spatial and socio-economic paradigm in the voivodeship developmental policy in the context of creating territorial utility and treating territorial factors (territorial capital) as development assets. Thus all three dimensions of territorial cohesion identified by Zaucha (2014) have been examined:

- territorial cohesion as a process of policy adaptation to the specificity of territorial units i.e. policy effectiveness,
- territorial cohesion as the contribution of territorial assets/territorial capital to economic growth i.e. territorial effectiveness,
- territorial cohesion as an enabling platform for the specific spatial objectives of development policies

Finally, the achievements of regions as well as the so-called good practices in territorial cohesion implementation are presented.

This paper focuses on the procedural dimension of territorial cohesion i.e. policy effectiveness. An attempt was made to examine the way and the degree to which Polish voivodeships succeeded in linking the spatial and the socio-economic development within the framework of the territorial cohesion paradigm. The effect of such integration is the

territorially sensitive intra-regional policy, which is one of the main expressions of a serious treatment given to the paradigm of territorial cohesion. It means, first, considering the territorial capital as an asset and the conditioning of the development, and adopting the intervention of the public authorities to this capital, that is – dis-uniformisation of this intervention over space for purposes of improvement in the attainment of the agreed public goals and, second, analyzing the consequences of these interventions regarding the changes in the territorial capital. This is, therefore, a continuous iterative process, whose essence is the synergy of various types of public intervention with respect to a given area (territory). Policies influence territorial capital, which in turn is subject to change (it grows or declines or changes its nature) and this calls for policies modification. In Polish reality we are closest to that model on the regional level and in this area extensive experience in the field of development policies integration has been accumulated.

At national level territorial assets are taken into account only in some policies, despite undertaken efforts aiming at conducting development policy. Hence this paper focuses on Polish voivodeships.

Since 1999 in Poland a three-level administrative division has been in effect. Municipality (LAU2) which possesses extensive competences in spatial planning, is the basic unit of local government. In Poland there are 2479 municipalities varying in size from a few thousand inhabitants to cities with a few hundred thousand inhabitants (being both the municipality and county). Municipalities create study of development conditions and directions (obligatory) and Local Spatial Development Plan (non-obligatory). New Spatial Planning and Development Act of 2003 has nullified local plans passed before 1994. Therefore, territory covered by those plans has been greatly reduced. In the following years new plans were successively passed but still they cover only 28,6% of country area (2013). For this reason some investment projects are based on officials' decisions (so called individual planning permissions), which does not have positive influence on spatial order and is one of the causes of uncontrolled suburbanization. Municipalities can also enact development strategy, but in practice, it is done only by big cities.

The county is another unit of government (LAU1). There are 379 counties in Poland including 66 towns with the administrative rights of a county (all voivodeship capitals and a large part of sub-regional centres). The county does not have the power of spatial planning and

development policy. However, it is a convenient and widely used (also in this research) statistical unit (region research tool; Dziewoński (1967)). There are no administrative units of NUTS 3 level. Such division exists only for the needs of official and European statistics. It is the lowest level for which GDP data are aggregated. Since January 2015 there have been seventy two NUTS 3 units in Poland.

Voivodeship (which is often considered equivalent to region; NUTS 2) is that level where central (voivodeship governor as Government's representative) and self governments are connected. Voivodeship assembly (local parliament) elected in direct election and Marshal of voivodeship (executive body) constitute regional authorities. Development policy and spatial policy are within the competence of regional authorities. Marshal's offices usually have departments or other organisational units responsible for spatial policy. It is on this level that two basic regional strategic documents are created: the Voivodeship Development Strategy and the Voivodeship Spatial Development Plan. The majority of those documents was created at the beginning of the last decade and have been updated in recent years. They served as a basis for Regional Operational Programmes managed by regional authorities in two programming perspectives: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. Moreover, regional governments sign regional contracts with the central government, which make it possible for them to influence both government's policy and investments on their territory. Since 2007, irrespective of Regional Operational Programmes, in both UE financial perspectives one Operational Programme on a macro-regional level is in effect. It covers five least developed voivodeships of Eastern Poland (warmińsko-mazurskie, podlaskie, lubelskie, świętokrzyskie and podkarpackie). It is based on a proper strategy for development of Eastern Poland. Marshals have prepared or are preparing similar documents for certain other macro-regions in Poland. However, their impact on financial allocations from EU structural and investment funds is indirect. Figure 1. presents the map of Polish voivodeships and counties.



**Fig. 1. Division of Poland into voivodeships and counties**

*Source: Państwowy rejestr granic i powierzchni jednostek podziałów terytorialnych kraju*

On the central level, National Spatial Development Concept 2030 is a document of superior importance for spatial policy ([Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego, 2011](#)). It was adopted by the government in the late 2011. Apart from general aims of spatial policy, the Concept defines also a number of functional area categories, within which territorial policies are to be carried out. National Regional Development Strategy 2020-2020 (KSRR) adopted in 2010 defines the objectives of regional policy ([Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego, 2010](#)). These documents fit into the framework of Medium-term Country Development Strategy which is a document of superior significance, and results from Long-term Country Development Strategy.

Such division of responsibility implies that in Poland regional governments are best suited and have appropriate legitimacy to act holistically according to territorial optimum model. Therefore, surveys have been conducted among services responsible for widely understood

voivodeships' development. Generally, these were departments of Marshal Offices, but also Regional Planning Bureaus responsible for either socio-economic or spatial development.

## **2. Understanding the Notion of Territorial Cohesion by Polish Voivodeship Authorities and the Application of the Concept in Strategic Documents**

The understanding of the notion of territorial cohesion and the way of referencing it in the regional documents are not uniform. The very first differentiating element is constituted by the perception of the territorial cohesion either as a process (even an instrument for attaining goals) or as a sort of an ideal ultimate state (conforming to the definition by [Markowski, 2009](#)). The former perception dominates in the Polish regions.

The second dichotomy considers the different emphases concerning the issues of leveling out of the socio-economic disparities and supporting the endogenous factors of development. Most voivodeships base their definitions on both of these issues i.e. for them territorial cohesion is both "spatial justice" and territorially-sensitive development. Some of them, though, treat territorial cohesion as, in a sense, identical with socio-economic cohesion, only being attained by other means (i.e. using own potentials). In other cases the issue of the endogenous factors is treated as the most important, accompanied by the differentiation of the spatial policy across various territories. It was most frequent in each of the voivodeships that several elements were mentioned simultaneously as shaping jointly the understanding of territorial cohesion (the frequencies of their specification are provided in Table 1). Then, only joint consideration of these very different elements determined the perception of the problem.

**Table 1. Elements referred to in the definition of territorial cohesion**

The defining element	Number of voivodeships referring to the element
Development based on endogenous factors	11
Levelling out of the socio-economic disproportions	8
Functional areas and territorial differentiation of policies	7

Functional cohesion, connectedness and spatial accessibility	7
Joining of potentials and building of regional identity	4
Services of general economic interests	3

*Source: own elaboration*

Regarding the most commonly encountered ways of interpreting territorial cohesion (cf. [Szlachta and Zaucha, 2010](#)), it should be considered that Polish regions understand it, first of all, as a method of planning and development, accounting for the territorial capital (assets), the settlement network, the administrative regions themselves, and their networking. To a certain degree the responses contain also the instrumental approach, mainly through the indication of the functional regions as separate subjects of the policy implemented in the voivodeships. A consideration of the areas featuring disadvantageous geographical features appears in just one single response. Of the defining elements, given by [Medeiros \(2011\)](#), most often indicated is the evening out of the social and economic differences across space, followed – indirectly – by the improvement of the territorial management process (through the reference to the functional regions). At the same time, the interviewees rarely mentioned environmental equilibrium, polycentric urban system, or collaboration in management. Some responses clearly refer to the definitions appearing in Polish governmental documents (endogenous potentials), and to the interpretation path of [Gorzela \(2009\)](#), where the functional (integrative) factor is underscored, as more important than the equalizing one. It is also characteristic that regions do not perceive these approaches as alternative. Functional connections and evening out of disproportions are indicated simultaneously, as the elements jointly defining territorial cohesion. It should also be underlined that the responses do not convey the content indicating the integrative role of the territorial cohesion (i.e. its sometimes postulated superiority with respect to the sectoral policies).

When relating the responses to the sense of the notion of territorial cohesion as provided in the ARL essay ([Bohme et al., 2008](#)), it should be stated again that the respondents noted only some of the components, listed there. These were: the endogenous potentials and the parity of access to infrastructure and services. At the same time, one can hardly find in the definitions provided an unambiguous treatment of the very territorial diversity as a

development asset. The responses lack also the element of the external connections of the region (influence, exerted on other territories and the impact from the sectoral policies). Likewise, the elements of governance, associated with the extraction of the so-called tacit knowledge, are also omitted.

On the other hand, special attention ought to be paid to the appearance in the definitions provided of virtually all the territorial keys, defined in the attempts of territorializing the document Europe 2020 (Zaucha et al., 2014; Böhme et al., 2011). A part of responses mentions directly the functional regions, city networks, accessibility, and services of general economic interest (SeGi's). In almost all responses the element of territorial resources appears. Since the very concept of the territorial keys, had not been known to the interlocutors their answers constitute an evidence for the correctness of the keys approach, especially in its operational sense.

Summing up, it should be stated that the representatives of the regional authorities display a relatively good orientation in the territorial cohesion, but their comprehension of the notion is usually narrower than that presented in the theoretical studies. The very ambiguity of the definitions provided is, in this context, to a certain extent a reflection of the lack of homogeneity at the theoretical level and at the European level. It can be admitted that territorial cohesion is usually correctly associated by them with the conduct of an appropriately directed spatial policy and with the use of the endogenous potential. Narrow understanding of the notion is to a certain degree determined by its use in the projects and programmes of the European Union. At the same time, in the background of the definitions brought in, the superior objectives appear of an egalitarian character (diminishing socio-economic discrepancies). This puts, in a sense, territorial cohesion, in an auxiliary position with respect to the social and economic cohesion.

The specific features of the understanding of the notion of territorial cohesion by the Polish voivodeships (with respect to the theoretical studies, as well as with respect to the European documents) are constituted by, in particular:

- Very limited references to the natural environment as a component of the territorial cohesion,

- Frequent emphasis of the element of connections, though almost exclusively in the context of development of infrastructure, but not the very intensification of interactions, and even less so the cooperation between the territorial units and the expansion of the network structures,
- Frequent, even though not always direct, reference to the evening out of the disparities between regions, as a superior value,
- Lack of references to the polycentric development.

In the last case this is certainly the consequence of the geographical level, at which the study was carried out (polycentrism being more often defined at the national level), yet, it is significant that there are no suggestions, related to the strengthening of other centers in the region (except for the voivodeship capital). Equilibration of development is rather supposed to be based on levelling out of the traditional dichotomy center-periphery, with the periphery being identified with rural areas and possibly also small towns. The role of functional ties and of accessibility was decidedly more often paid attention to in the voivodeships surrounding the main metropolitan centers. It is, on the other hand, difficult to indicate any other regional regularities, differentiating the way of understanding of territorial cohesion.

Despite the differences in defining, and also comprehending, the notion of territorial cohesion described therein, most of the voivodeships declare the use of this notion in the regional strategic documents. (Table 2). In the case of the Development Strategy all the voivodeships make a reference to territorial cohesion, while in the case of the spatial development plan in only one voivodeship the respective reference is not made.

In the development strategies, territorial cohesion appears most often in the context of determination of the Functional Areas (FuAs) and the Strategic Intervention Areas (SIAs). In a couple of cases, territorial cohesion is mentioned among the strategic objectives or development challenges. In other cases, the term is used only when referring to the national documents (the KPZK - National Spatial Development Concept 2030), or to the European ones. In parallel, some respondents stated that the strategies contain the notion of the spatial cohesion, which can to a definite extent be identified with territorial cohesion. From among the territorial keys the responses mentioned most often the transport-related

accessibility and the SeGi's. The respondents mentioned them as associated in the Strategies with the notion of territorial cohesion.

In the case of spatial development plans, some of the respondents claimed that the whole document refers to territorial cohesion. In some others the term was mentioned on the level of goals (as a part of visions, missions and general objectives). As opposed to strategy, answers referring to endogenous potential can also be found.

A more direct reference to documents of European Union And the EU technical language can be observed in the provisions of Regional Operational Programmes. The document Europe 2020, and the concepts of social exclusion and Human Development Index (HDI) are mentioned in the context of territorial cohesion. The term appears among objectives and on in the priority axes.

However, respondents do not usually specify the role of territorial cohesion in territorial contracts, assuming that the documents are not ready. However, commentaries indicate its treatment as basic principle for document creation.

**Table 2. Application of the notion of territorial cohesion in regions' strategic documents.**

Voivodeship	Voivodeship Development Strategy	Spatial Development Plan	ROP	Territorial Contract
dolnośląskie	X	X	X	X
kujawsko-pomorskie	X	X	X	X
Lubelskie	X	X	X	X
Lubuskie	X	(-)	(-)	(-)
Łódzkie	X	X	X	X
małopolskie	X	X	(-)	X
mazowieckie	X	X	X	X
Opolskie	X	X	X	X
Podkarpackie	X	X	X	X

podlaskie	X	X	X	X
pomorskie	X	X	X	(-)
Śląskie	X	X	X	X
świętokrzyskie	X	X	X	X
warmińsko-mazurskie	X	X	(-)	(-)
wielkopolskie	X	X	X	X
zachodniopomorskie	X	X	X	(-)
<b>Number of voivodeships</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>

*Source: own elaboration based on survey results*

Summing up, it can be concluded that the notion of territorial cohesion appears in the documents analyzed, but its role is highly differentiated (from one of the objectives of the strategy, up to just placing it in the “vocabulary”). This differentiation is certainly partly due to the timing of elaboration of the particular texts. In the older plans or strategy documents the term is only just mentioned, while in the newer ones it sometimes plays an essential role. At the same time, it is evident that the respective authors perceived territorial cohesion in different ways, and this fact exerted an influence on the place and context of application of the notion.

In comparison with the definitions of cohesion, provided in the interviews, the documents give less of exposure to the role of endogenous potentials (perhaps they are difficult to define on the operational level). Instead, territorial cohesion takes more often the role of the general objective or the developmental principle. On the other hand, it is also more frequently identified with the delimitation of the functional areas and the Strategic Intervention Areas (the instrumental approach).

### **3. Policy Effectiveness. Place-based Policy Paradigm**

Adjusting development policy to unique conditions of different Polish voivodeships has been examined with the use of theoretical framework of the aforementioned *place-based* concept.

Despite rather general outline of the concept of the place-based programming of development there are some common requirements that should be met in order to benefit out of this approach. The most important universal elements of the place-based approach are the following (fig. 2):

1. Recognition of territorial diversity in pursuing overall developmental goals i.e. different ways of addressing developmental goals and priorities for different part of the territory i.e. different “places”

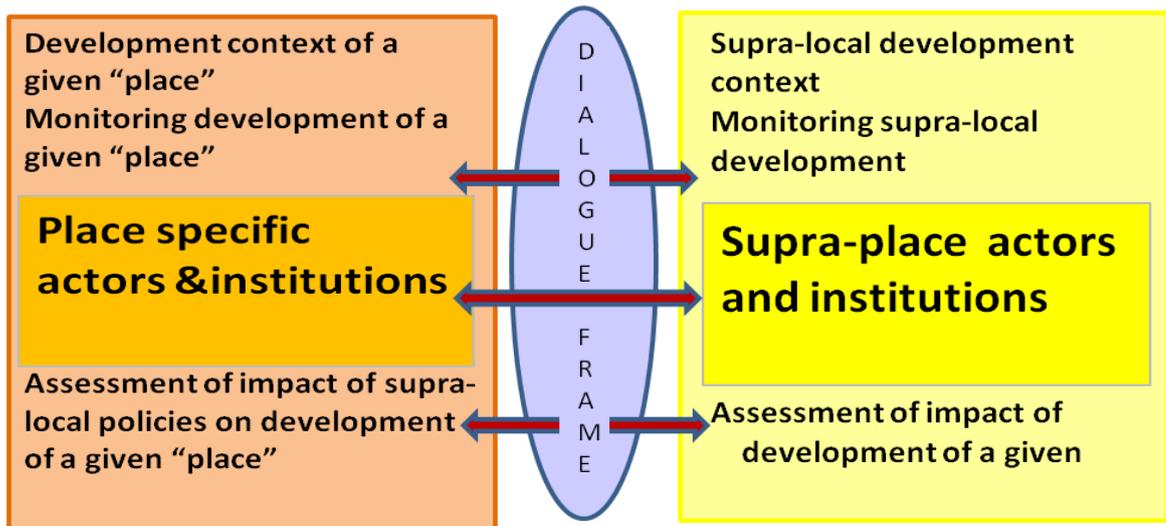
2. Institutions:

- having mandate, or leadership or capacity to harmonize/coordinate, guide in harmony development of different “places”(supra-place actors and institutions),
- having mandate or leadership or capacity to guide, influence and foster development of a “given place”(place specific actors and institutions),
- capable to asses impact of their own actions on the action of other actors.

3. Knowledge:

- on the overall developmental context i.e. developmental goals and priorities for all “places” and the best means for pursuing them and monitoring of the progress to that end.
- on developmental specificity of a given place (territorial capital, other type of local/regional potential etc.).

4. Institutional frame for multiactor dialogue (including instruments), filled in with real dialogue between different developmental agents/institutions described above (territorial dialogue).



**Fig. 2. Key elements of the place-based approach**

*Source: Szlachta J., Zaucha J. (2012)*

In the assessment of the application level of place-based paradigm by Polish regions, focus was placed on the following elements: (i) knowledge of the given territory and manner of sharing it with other stakeholders, (ii) other preliminary conditions of territorial dialogue, and (iii) the dialogue itself that is its institutional framework and instruments, barriers and necessary improvements.

### **3.1. Knowledge**

The territorial orientation of the policies (whether those conducted by the central authorities, or those implemented by the regional or local authorities) requires sound **knowledge** of the given territory, its problems and development opportunities, as well as mechanisms of development or stagnation. This knowledge is the first and the key condition necessary for the implementation of territorial cohesion along all its dimensions. In order for it to become the starting point to the territorial dialogue, a definite degree of objectification is needed (i.e., the evidence-based knowledge), along with standardization. This knowledge cannot uniquely have an intuitive character (even though tacit knowledge is its important constituent), should be gathered and verified continuously, and should allow for the formulation of the prospective judgments, and not only for the retrospective analyses.

It is popular among the Polish voivodeship bodies to collect and process statistical data. The assessment of significance of this manner of gaining knowledge is also high (tab. 3). Another

popular source of knowledge is constituted by the expert reports. In some voivodeships the departments of the Marshall offices or the regional spatial planning bureaus were also mentioned as the sources of knowledge, but quite a share of respondents indicate the importance of information obtained from public authorities themselves (Marshal Offices and other self-governmental units) and institutions subordinated to the Marshall offices, such as, for instance, voivodeship labor offices or regional centers of social welfare. In this context one should also mention various kinds of reports, like, e.g., SEA reports, the monitoring report from the implementation of the development strategy of the voivodeship, reports on the state of spatial development of voivodeships, and yet other ones.

Compared to the NTCCP countries ([Zaucha et al., 2013, 20](#)), Polish voivodeships assign higher significance to the establishment of the systems of continuous regional monitoring. An important number of voivodeships mention the system of information on the area as a source of knowledge and they put high hopes on the establishment of the regional territorial observatories (RTOs). These observatories are being now established, and the evaluations of the process are quite high.

Summing up, regional Poland is in the phase of a change in the ways of gaining knowledge on the regional processes. Increasing emphasis is placed on the creation of consistent systems, as well as on sharing of the existing and owned knowledge. Legal regulations (like the duty of elaborating the reports on the state of spatial development of the voivodeship) take a correct direction and induce the demand for sound, although not necessarily quite current, knowledge on the region. The situation is similar with the requirement of elaborating the strategy of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI).

**Tab. 3. Methods of gathering and processing (for the use of development policy and spatial policy) knowledge of spatial development and socio-economic development by voivodeship authorities and/or administration.**

	Numer of voivodeships indicating given instrument (class of instruments)	Rate of significance in the scale of 1 to 6	Number of answers used
Territorial obeservatories	11	5,5	11
Gathering, processing official statistics data	10	5,5	10
Expert assessment and analysis (commissioned)	10	5,3	10
Process of strategy and/or spatial plan preparation for voivodeship and monitoring of its implementation (including specialist web pages), preparation of voivodeship spatial planning state report	8	6,0	8
Own studies and analyses of Marshal offices' employees and/or studies and analyses of Regional Office for Spatial Planning	7	4,7	7
Land Information System and spatial information systems in Poland	7	5,4	7
Information obtained from regional government institutions such as Regional Center of Social Policy,	6	4,4	6

Voivodeship Labour Office			
National conferences and conferences with different level selfgovernments, formal and informal meeting	4	6	4
Other active methods (e.g. research, modeling)	4	5,40 <sup>1</sup>	5
Other passive methods (e.g. information from local government reports based on UE documents)	3	4,5	4

*Source: own elaboration based on survey results*

A separate issue is constituted by the **manner of sharing knowledge**. An analysis of the survey results suggests however, that the regional authorities do not have a clear idea in this respect. Most frequently mentioned are the ways resulting from the stipulations of the valid law, that is –issuing opinions on and agreeing upon the content of strategic regional documents by the central administration, and vice versa consulting and proposing changes and issuing opinions on the governmental documents from the side of the voivodeship self-governmental bodies. Among the channels of routine sharing of information the respondents mentioned most often the websites, conferences, briefing the national authorities in the framework of direct meetings, discussions during the routine meetings of the voivodeship Marshalls (in Poland we have regular Conventions of all Marshalls), and, sporadically, publications and reports. Yet, to a large extent these are the passive methods. Situation is different with respect to sharing of knowledge with other voivodeships. Here, side by side with consultations and electronic information, most important have become informal contacts, meetings of Marshalls and members of the voivodeship boards, including those during the Marshalls Convention (referred furtheron as a Convent of Marshalls<sup>2</sup>), as well as all kinds of projects and grass roots initiatives. The borderland voivodeships did mention, for instance, as an important forum for sharing knowledge the cooperation with

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<sup>1</sup> The result is lowered by dissatisfaction with modelling, otherwise it would be 6.

<sup>2</sup> Marshalls meet frequently under rotated chairmanship of one of them to discuss important issues for regional self-governments

Germany – both in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation projects and the jointly undertaken studies. Altogether, the process of sharing knowledge constitutes currently a weak side of implementation of territorial cohesion in the context of integration of the development policies in Poland. Knowledge is accumulated but information management is often random.

### **3.2. Territorial Dialogue – key preconditions for starting such a dialogue**

The **territorial dialogue** consists in a kind of matching process for the opinions of various actors in the decision game, with mutual convincing concerning definite actions. It is the necessary condition for the improvement of the effectiveness of conduct of the development policy in the framework of the place-based policy paradigm. It enables a better use of the local, or regional, specificity (conditions, mechanisms, endogenous potentials, including territorial capital), and, at the same time, makes it possible to limit the negative influence of the local and regional egoisms, and perceptions from the perspective of uniquely the interest of a given “place”, without considering a broader (e.g. national) development context. Thus, for instance, the administrators of large cities bear actual responsibility with respect to their respective electorates mainly for the development of these cities, despite the enormous impact, exerted by these cities on the functioning of the entire country. The territorial dialogue may make such limitations less obstructive.

From the perspective of the regional level the initial condition for the dialogue, side by side with possessing the possibly objective knowledge, is constituted by the skill of communicating to other actors of the development game the development priorities of a given “place” (voivodeship) and the conditions for their realization (expectations as to the behavior of the other actors), as well as the capacity of making evaluations of the consequences resulting from the policies of other subjects.

The regional authorities, when asked about the ways of **expressing their expectations** with respect to other actors of the development game, indicated the traditional forms e.g. issuing of opinions on and agreeing upon the content of documents between the levels of public administration. Yet, some additional ways of expressing this type of expectations have also appeared: revealing expectations in the strategic documents (option most often selected) and issuing individual positions by the Boards or Voivodeship Assembly on concrete matters,

as well as “soft” and “informal” ways, that is – exchange of information and talks in the framework of cooperation with other voivodeships and other decision makers.

Formal channels for providing opinions were highest graded, while both informal actions and stating expectations in strategic documents, a little lower. These results demonstrate still significant importance of legal framework for the shaping of territorial dialogue in Poland. Positive assessment of efficiency of recording (placing) expectations in strategic documents, which may seem a very good solution, must be appreciated. But only two voivodeships rated this way of communicating their expectations highest. This indicates that expectations stated in these documents are not in fact a subject of complete and thorough analysis by other participants of development game. Hopefully, the territorial contract instrument will change things, and those expectations will become a key element of negotiating mandate, will be taken into consideration and will be discussed. Highly innovative actions have appeared, such as negotiated mandates for integrated territorial investment or urban functional areas, or concrete projects initiated by the Marshal that subsequently integrate stakeholders from the entire voivodship and created informal networks for exchange of opinions.

In general, an obvious confusion was visible regarding two functions of knowledge, i.e. the creation of a generally friendly developmental context through information sharing and a conscious influence by the use of information technology on actions of other subjects. The respondents appeared unable to differentiate both situations. The underlying reason here might have been the lack of awareness regarding the significance of knowledge dissemination for creating a clear picture of a broader situation in which the development policy is conducted. The respondents mostly perceived the information sharing as a formal process of affecting decisions of others. Here, an awareness of significance of this type of actions was high; however, there were doubts concerning the issue whether the knowledge and information are a sufficient necessary condition for an effective territorial dialogue. This is also most likely where a limited scope (of ad hoc rather than systematic nature) of analyses by regional authorities originates concerning the influence of local and central policies on the development of their voivodeships.

The respondents, asked whether they evaluate the influence of supra-voivodeship policies (national and European ones) on the socio-economic development and spatial structures of

their region, answered positively, that is – nobody chose the answer that such analyses are not conducted. Quite a share (seven out of sixteen), though, indicated the option “partly”, which may signify that these activities are in some manner limited. Studies of comments gives rise to a conclusion that this reply is closest to the truth – also regarding those who confirmed the fact of conducting analyses of this type. As a rule, they are carried out mostly during the preparation of strategic documents of a given voivodeship and from the perspective of their compliance with the National Spatial Development Concept and other strategic documents of the national government (and so: in a limited scope). Analyses were listed which concerned the allocation of EU resources or when European Union announced important development-oriented documents (e.g. Trans-European Transport Networks, cross-border areas). Another opportunity happens when the government announces outlines of new policies. In this context, the most frequently referenced policy was the transport-related one. Those are actions of a one-off (most frequently performed only once in the EU programming period) and passive character. As one respondent indicated, in spite of the fact that those kind of evaluations are conducted – “what fails to be analysed is their /i.e. those policies/ influence on the development of, for instance, GDP”.

There is, however, an evident shortage of frameworks and instruments in those types of analyses. The most frequently cited were the following methods: external expert opinions, consulting sessions with the Ministries of Infrastructure and Development as well as analyses performed by the Convent of Marshals. Their evaluation was relatively negative which signifies that there is a considerable deficiency in this area. The highest evaluations appeared only twice (once in relation to external expert opinions and once in relation to the Convent of Marshals). More positively evaluated were specific tools selected by only a few voivodeships such as: diagnoses of the voivodeships’ condition (for the purpose of drafting strategic documents) – two voivodeships, individual expert opinions and informal analyses of Marshal Office – one voivodeship as well as discussions concerning the topic during the Council of Voivodeship Development – one voivodeship. The shortage of tried methods of conducting such analyses can be evidenced by a large number of individually applied solutions that signifies that voivodeships differ in their approaches to this question.

It is not only the voivodeship authorities that analyse the policies of other authorities and entities – their own policies are analysed by others as well (Table 4). Respondents confirmed

that this indeed takes place; however, they concluded that the scope of those analyses is too narrow and - at the central level - frequently limited merely to checking the formal compliance of voivodeship-level documents with the country's strategic documents.

**Table 4. The frequency of analyses conducted by other actors of the development game in the sphere of the influence of voivodeship-level policies on the socio-economic development and spatial structures of the areas managed by them according to respondents at the voivodeship level<sup>3</sup>.**

National level				Local level			Other voivodeships				
yes	no	partially	I don't know	yes	no	partially	yes	no	partially	by way of exception	I don't know
9	1	3	1	11	0	3	8	1	3	1	1

*Source: own elaboration on the basis of survey results from 14 regions*

On the other hand, at the local level, the analyses of the development policies of the region are being carried out in connection with the process of consultations/elaboration with regard to the regional or local documents. In the first case, the issue is to have the regional documents (in particular – the Regional Operational Program, ROP – but also the voivodeship strategy and the plan) not limit excessively the development capacities of the municipalities. In the latter case, on the other hand, the voivodeship priorities are treated as the conditioning for the local development, sometimes having a verbal character, but sometimes (e.g. concrete studies) taking on a formal (binding) character.

Such analyses are also carried out by neighbouring voivodeships. Some respondents emphasised that it happens only in extreme cases when those regions show interest in elements of strategy that affect their development (common problems, infrastructural or ecological corridor, tourism etc.).

<sup>3</sup> This question was answered by 14 regions.

The set of instruments for conducting analyses of this type and framework within which it transpires is highly limited. Majority of respondents mentioned consultations of strategic documents and procedures related to formal and legal course of drafting planning documents. In evaluations of these actions mostly positive reactions tend to appear – but only two voivodeships gave the highest grades. Therefore, a certain feeling of insufficiency appeared. Only certain voivodeships signalled other types of frameworks such as informal meetings and consultations – but their evaluation was not high. The basic instrument of such evaluations were external expert opinions and individual analyses of responsible institutions.

Summing up, analyses of strategies, plans and programmes (more seldom: policies) are conducted by actors of the development game on whom they exert some type of influence. The respondents at the regional level clearly have a higher opinion of their own accomplishments in this sphere (except for the horizontal assessment) than those of entities at the central and local level. The set of instruments and frameworks of those activities, however, are mostly limited to consultations, opinions and negotiations. There are no such categories as synergy or construction of joint potentials; there is a predominant formalistic effort to avoid conflicts and maintain general agreement. Among the instruments, there are no vertical or horizontal think-tanks, joint groups etc. It is believed, however, that territorial (between national government and regions) and partnership (between regional and local self-governments) contracts will somewhat change this situation.

### **3.3. Territorial Dialogue – frameworks and methods**

When asked about the framework of territorial dialogue, respondents most frequently listed: new instruments, territorial forum, territorial contract, integrated territorial investments (ITI) and Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI) (the option chosen most often), partnership contracts (territorial contracts between communes and voivodeship), as well as other agreements and contracts such as entering into a new cooperation with regions and maintaining cooperation with neighbouring regions (also from other countries). Also popular were more traditional frameworks such as the cooperation within the Convent of Marshals (mostly average grades) or public consultations.

Those new dialogue frameworks were most positively graded (had a higher significance) than traditional actions – although there were very few highest grades for ITI i ASI. It

indicates that there exists a large room for improvement and optimization in this area. More seldom mentioned self-government contracts and regional territorial forums were reviewed as ones with a high significance – and the date of introducing this type of dialogue indicates that it is still a fresh issue.

Situation in the domain of territorial dialogue is different in Poland than in the NTCCP countries in general. In Poland contractual agreements (territorial and partnership contracts) play more prominent role, while in the NTCCP countries (Zaucha et al., 2013, 43) planning over administrative boundaries dominates, along with a hierarchy of the planning documents (which exists also in Poland, but with less of strength, see debates and consultations).

In comparison with the results from the NTCCP study, though, it is interesting to note that the level of satisfaction from the territorial dialogue was higher in Polish voivodeships. In the NTCCP countries 48% of respondents deemed that the dialogue does not function and is not satisfactory (Zaucha et al., 2013, 37). Moderate satisfaction dominates, on the other hand, in Poland. Respondents were, namely, also asked about their general, quantified (on the scale from 0 to 6) assessment of satisfaction with the territorial dialogue, conducted in the framework of the voivodeship, with the neighboring voivodeships, and with other entities (including, in particular, ministries). The averages obtained were altogether high: 4.8 with respect to the “downward” dialogue, and 4.6 with respect to the “upward” dialogue. It is quite characteristic that somewhat lower scores were given in the voivodeships of western and northern Poland, while somewhat higher – in the southern and eastern Poland, although there was no strict rule in this matter. The sources of this differentiation could be traced to the cultural elements (the dialogue being easier on the areas with steadier traditions and population not having been subject to large-scale changes), or to the differences in the expectations initially formulated with respect to the territorial cooperation undertaken.

In the subsequent questions, opinions were collected concerning the main **barriers, hampering the territorial dialogue**. The respondents mentioned a lot of limitations to the correct dialogue, and concentrated on problems in relations between regions and municipalities, and between regions and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development. There was just one voivodeship that declared absence of barriers of this kind (inside the region), and the correct course of the dialogue. The so high number of reservations remains

in a surprising opposition with the previously reported general satisfaction with the territorial dialogue. This would confirm the proposition that at least in some voivodeships the expectations with regard to the quality of the dialogue are quite limited. The most important group of barriers are as follows:

- Barriers associated with the selfish attitude and the apprehension as to cooperation on the local level. This is connected with the perceptible opposition of interests between the levels of voivodeship and municipality, as well as between the particular units of the territorial self-government. On the top of this, municipalities often do not perceive the need for integration of actions and policies. They often undertake the dialogue only in the situations, when it is linked with the possibility of acquiring means (like, e.g., EU funds).
- Barriers associated with the legal stipulations, bureaucracy and the setting of competences at the central and regional levels. Respondents emphasized the excessive burden of formal duties, with which the voivodeships have to deal (at the expense of concentrating on the development policy). A separate significant problem turned out to be the insufficient coordination between the actions undertaken in the framework of the cohesion policy and those undertaken with the support from the Program of Development of Rural Areas.
- Barriers associated with the flow of information and conduct of consultations. In this field primarily the shortcomings of the functioning at the central level were pointed out (Ministry of Infrastructure and Development), mainly in terms of insufficient information policy and too fast schedules of consultations with the regions. Additionally, difficulty was emphasized in reaching a wide spectrum of businesses (as the participants of consultations), which becomes apparent already at the regional level.
- Barriers, associated with the broadly conceived social capital, among which wrong understanding of the concept of integration, and twisting of information, were mentioned. In this context, as well, little transparent (confidential) way of proceeding was underlined, which might result from the lack of mutual trust between the actors of spatial policy. Further, demanding attitudes were noted of the representatives of the local authorities with respect to the regions (partly linked with the lack of knowledge as to the division of competences).

It is an important conclusion from this part of the study that the shortcomings to the territorial dialogue appear virtually in the entire country. This may mean that the foundation for these shortcomings is not of cultural character, and that they are not linked with the level of socio-economic development of the regions. The reasons for the not always satisfactory dialogue ought, therefore, to be sought first of all in the deficiencies of the legal system at the national level. Local conditions constitute in this matter only an additional element.

Here, an opinion is noteworthy voiced in an interview by one of experts (from outside voivodeship level authorities) who pointed to the existence of a barrier related to problems with decision making on the part of officials and civil servants. He noted that there are common considerable reservations concerning making decisions of spatial diversity of actions and policies especially including the territorial concentration of investments (and resources).

As regards the need of applying new instruments of territorial dialogue – the replies were not unanimous. In five voivodeships the necessity to create new instruments was questioned indicating that it would be sufficient to use more effectively and consistently those that already exist. In a few others, the proposed solutions were of a soft character - facilitating forms of dialogue.

#### **4. Territorial Cohesion as a Mean of Introducing Specific Spatial Objectives into Development Policies. Towards territorial utility.**

The research was supposed to evaluate the degree to which the policy of voivodeship development managed to be integrated, i.e. combined into a coherent whole of spatial and economic elements according to the necessity of recognizing territorial diversity. The objective behind it was to practically take advantage of *place-based* paradigm for increasing effectiveness of a regional development policy through taking into account characteristics of various parts of the voivodeship itself. It was assumed that the best indicator would be the coherence of voivodeship-level strategic documents and their mutual permeating.

As in each voivodeship there are de facto four independent documents of a considerable territorial significance: (a) development strategy, (b) spatial organisation plan, (c) regional operational programme (for managing EU investment and structural funds) as well as (d)

territorial contract between regional and national governments (mainly related to national policies and national operational programmes) – the question asked concerned the degree to which all of them managed to be combined in a coherent whole – and how that was accomplished.

As the main way to enable the coordination of the documents in voivodeships the respondents mentioned, first of all, ensuring consistency in the programming process. In this context, in particular, the matrices of consistency were mentioned, along with the discipline in the sequence of elaboration of the documents. Thus, in terms of principle, the objectives of spatial policy ought to be adapted to the goals contained in the Development Strategy of the region. The responses emphasized as the most important instrument in this context the supervision over all the documents mentioned by the same team (department). There are a couple of voivodeships, in which special separate teams were established in order to coordinate the strategic documents. Besides, it was deemed that an important instrument of coordination is constituted by the evaluation, both *ex post* and *ex ante*, as well as constant monitoring of implementation of the stipulations, contained in the documents, along with the internal system of cross-assessment of the documents being elaborated. In some cases the existence of such instruments as Integrated Territorial Investments and Strategic Intervention Areas was indicated as the means of coordination. There were also single regions, which indicated that a way to ensure the agreement among the strategic documents of the region consists in the lists of key projects, as well as the parallel conduct of work on the strategy and on the spatial development plan.

The representatives of the regions were asked, too, about the attention paid in the particular documents (strategy, regional operational program, territorial contract, other) to the internal territorial divisions within the framework of the voivodeships. All of the responses indicated that the divisions are accounted for in the development strategy and in the operational programs. Regarding the territorial contracts, the number of positive answers was eleven, but the remaining respondents not so much negated the existence of respective references or considerations, as deemed the question to be prematurely posed. This apparent agreement with respect to the territorialisation of the conducted intra-regional policy cannot be identified with the scale of this phenomenon. In truth, in Poland

there is a predominance of economic approach. It is the strategies that affect spatial plans and only in special cases this relation is reversed.

In replies, what is clearly apparent is the efforts to treat development in a holistic fashion. Whenever the division of money takes place, pragmatism takes over – and obtaining money from the EU frequently becomes more important than the influence of its spending on a broadly-understood region’s development. In numerous cases the cause can be traced back to inflexible formal procedures of EU.

To reiterate this portion of considerations, it needs to be noted that Polish regions possess instruments and awareness necessary to conduct integrated development policy, and, in practice – they lean towards the traditional methods of conducting policy and, with a few exceptions, do not implement the territorial cohesion concept in its dimension of combining spatial and economic objectives (i.e. territorial utility).

**5. Territorial Effectiveness – Territorial Capital**

Evaluation to what degree and how territorial capital (on this capital see e.g. [Ciołek and Komornicki, 2014](#)) is or has been considered in the development policy of Polish voivodeships was conducted through the use of the territorial key concept ([Zaucha et al., 2014](#)). All of the voivodeships confirmed the use of four keys (accessibility, SeGi’s, territorial assets and functional areas). The last of the keys, dealing with the city network, was mentioned in 13 out of 16 voivodeships, the other ones having noted that this key can hardly be applied at the intra-voivodeship level. This sort of answer corresponds, to a certain degree, with the lack of emphasis on the polycentric patterns as the determinants of the territorial cohesion, already at the stage of defining it. Basic forms of taking advantage of territorial keys in regions were presented in table 5.

**Table 5. Taking advantage of territorial keys**

Territorial key	Application methods
Transport accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 1765 1407 1861">▪ Separation within the spatial development plan areas of poor transport accessibility or peripheral areas</li> <li data-bbox="555 1899 1407 1995">▪ Accessibility as an indicator of monitoring the Development Strategy</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessibility as an indicator for delimiting Area of Strategic intervention</li> <li>▪ Improving accessibility as a strategic objective, priority area or direction in the spatial development plan</li> <li>▪ The basis for subregions delimitation</li> </ul>
Services of general interest (SeGi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One or a few of Strategic Intervention Areas devoted to SeGi</li> <li>▪ Delimitation and inclusion in the Strategy of areas of poor accessibility to SeGi</li> <li>▪ One of the Strategy's sub-objectives</li> <li>▪ As the basis for evaluating projects submitted within the framework of Regional Operational Programmes</li> <li>▪ Defining individual accessibility standards and including them in the overall policy</li> <li>▪ Listing within the strategy specific service categories (medical, educational) as priorities</li> <li>▪ The basis for subregional delimitation</li> </ul>
Local resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delimitation of areas of specific potentials</li> <li>▪ Delimitation of areas characterised by deficiency</li> <li>▪ Delimitation of areas of cultural and natural heritage</li> <li>▪ Delimitation of an Area of Strategic Intervention connected with a specified resource (natural resources, landscape, country boundaries)</li> <li>▪ Delimitation of functional areas on the basis of resources</li> <li>▪ One of the Strategy's sub-objectives</li> <li>▪ As the basis for evaluating projects submitted within the framework of regional operational programmes</li> <li>▪ Local identification as the basis of the Development of</li> </ul>

	Cross-border Infrastructure
Interrelations of municipal centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasizing within the Strategy internal polycentric systems (e.g. lubuskie Tricity)</li> <li>▪ Network interrelations as the basis for delimitation of multipolar functional areas</li> <li>▪ Application of the measure of commute times between cities – but mostly in a hierarchical system.</li> <li>▪ As the basis for evaluating projects submitted within the framework of regional operational programmes</li> </ul>
Functional areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delimitation of functional areas around the main centres</li> <li>▪ Functional areas as Strategic Areas of Intervention</li> <li>▪ Functional areas as Integrated Territorial Investments</li> <li>▪ As the basis for evaluating projects submitted within the framework of regional operational programmes</li> <li>▪ Perception of sub-regions as functional areas</li> </ul>

*Source: own elaboration on the basis of survey results from 14 regions.*

Some respondents remarked in their comments that the territorial keys are made use of mostly in the spatial development plans. An exception is constituted by the key of the functional areas, which appears both in the strategies and in the regional operational programs. Simultaneously, the very responses indicate that two out of five keys have a “hard” character, finding immediate direct reflection in the spatial policy of practically all regions. These are, precisely, the functional areas and the transport-wise accessibility. The two are closely interrelated, since accessibility may be treated as a delimitation index for functional areas. At the same time, improvement in transport-wise accessibility is in several cases written down as a strategic objective, as a direction of action, etc. The keys of the SeGi’s and of territorial assets are also commonly applied, but their understanding is not uniform. In some regions they constitute the basis for delimitation of the functional areas, or of Strategic Intervention Areas, while in the other ones they constitute merely a

complementary differentiating element. The key of city networking was usually understood by the representatives of the voivodeships as corresponding to internal connections. In many cases it was identified with the traditional hierarchical pattern, along with the indication of the need for improvement of accessibility from the peripheral centers to the capital of the voivodeship. It was much less frequent to perceive the significance of the multi-directional interrelations between the towns inside the region (and even if so, this would most often apply to the towns located in the direct mutual neighborhood). It was not seen (or at least it was not declared) that there might be an added value resulting from the participation of the centers from the voivodeship in the network connections with other regions or on the international scale.

When summing up this part of considerations, one should point out a distinct difference between the declarative understanding of the territorial cohesion, and its practical application in terms of paying attention to territorial capital (including the territorial keys). At the level of definitions, the majority of voivodeships agree on the importance of the role of endogenous factors of growth, referring to the territory in positive categories. In the conduct of the intra-regional policy, the dominating approach is already – on the one hand – instrumental, and on the other – more traditional. The regions make use of the existing possibilities in the domain here considered, such as, for instance, Integrated Territorial Investments, or Strategic Intervention Areas, while reducing frequently the internal spatial policy to determination of various kinds of areas. Moreover, the delimitation of these areas is often carried out on the basis of negative criteria (related to the formerly delimited problem areas). This occurs also when the territorial keys are being applied. Accessibility is used, but primarily as a measure of territorial handicap. A similar role is played by the SeGi. This approach is complemented by the treatment of the keys as the instruments of spatial monitoring. Founding of delimitation of the areas inside the voivodeships on the positive elements (the key of territorial assets) is less frequent. A deficit of integrative approach is also quite characteristic. Territory is not treated as a subject of an integrated policy, and, simultaneously, as an opportunity for overcoming the sectoral divisions. In this context it is perceived more like an instrument.

Finally, a rather pessimistic statement might be forwarded, namely that in the practice of the internal policy of Polish voivodeships, territory is seen more in the perspective of

problems and not assets. Yet, at the same time, a certain evolution of this approach can be observed, and even if it is to some extent forced by the regulations of the European Union, it still provides the foundations for a policy that is more territorial on the regional level.

## **6. Good Practices**

The respondents were asked about those innovations and good practices regarding territorial cohesion that, in the opinion of the authorities and public administration representing them, are most highly valued, significant and worth spreading. As a result, a list of 50 such categories was created.

Overall, they can be divided into four general categories: (1) those related to the implementation of the territory-oriented (or *place-based*, as proposed by F. Barca) policy paradigm, (2) those introducing spatial categories, such as accessibility or benefits of agglomeration etc. (with emphasis on the territorial keys), to the intra-regional policy (3) those related to the spatial differentiation of the goals of that policy, although without directly making use of the paradigm of the territorially oriented policy or the territorial keys and (4) others, which are related not to the methods of planning and carrying out of the policy but rather to its content — most frequently specific programmes or multi-annual undertakings and investment proposals pertaining to spatial categories, e.g. the accessibility of local development assets as well as exchanging experiences or accumulating human capital.

Over half (26) of the good practices (proven solutions) pertain to the implementation of the “*place-based*” paradigm in the intra-regional policy. The practices concern: communicating and informing the stakeholders, processing and obtaining information, consultation, participation and organization of stakeholders, forms/instruments of territorial dialogue such as Integrated Territorial Investments or local government contracts and, finally, very comprehensive alterations in the whole intra-regional policy and methods of carrying it out. These methods, as the most interesting issue, will be briefly described.

Local government (partnership) contracts are an instrument similar to territorial contracts; they bind, however, the local and regional governments. In the zachodniopomorskie voivodeship, the contracts are made with local governments that organized themselves (a minimum of three units plus broad participation of non-public and public partners) in order

to solve a specific problem or stimulate development. Such agreements should produce a diagnosis for the area covered by the agreement; prepare a strategy resulting in investments that should be drawn into an indicative list (non-competitive procedure) in the regional operational programme (ROP). Municipalities and counties are aware that only several local government contracts will be signed, but they have unlimited freedom of forming agreements. The contracts will cover the whole area of a voivodeship, excluding ITI. With subtle individual differences, Integrated Territorial Agreements (ITA) are formed in a similar way in the pomorskie voivodeship.

*Strategic Programmes* translate strategic goals of the regional strategy into specific tasks and list entities responsible for their fulfillment, cost estimates and localization of actions. The innovative element emerging in the zachodniopomorskie voivodeships is connected with their functioning as a comprehensive network. Within these programmes, cooperation and communication take place between different stakeholders, e.g. experts, marshal's office workers, voivodeship labour office workers, Investor Support Center workers and many others. Thus, complex multisectoral programs are created, such as labour market or creative time (tourism+culture+education) programmes.

Encouraging communes to cooperate with active incentives from the Marshal's Office of the warmińsko-mazurskie voivodeship is an example of initiating development through leadership. These actions are of network character and allow for a compromise between the interests and priorities of different levels of public administration and other players in the game of development. It is an interesting example of the territorial dialogue framework. The Cittaslow initiative can serve as an example. The Marshall Office deemed this type of development beneficial for the cities in the region. It urged them to learn about the concept, analyze its effects in cities that follow it and establish partnership with these units. The support of the Regional Operational Programme of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship has occurred only when the international cooperation started producing visible effects — there were no financial or non-substantive incentives for establishing the cooperation. This course of action eliminated projects aimed only at obtaining short-term pecuniary benefits.

A large portion of the elements discussed above is included in the małopolskie voivodeship strategic planning package, whose starting point has been the subjectification of subregions

as well as planning across administrative borders of counties and communes. The małopolskie voivodeship works on the assumption that the territorial system (comprising: Kraków Metropolitan Area, Western Małopolska as well as subregions: tarnowski, podhalański, sądecki) constitutes a reference point for voivodeship strategies and public policies within a voivodeship's area of competence. All policies fit into this territorial grid. In each sub-region a sub-region council was constituted. They are advisory and consultative bodies within the framework of the voivodeship strategy and regional operational programme. 50% of their members are local government representatives and the other 50% are social partners: scientific communities, representatives of economy and associations (non-governmental organizations). It is a method of quasi-subjectification of subregions and an attempt at managing/coordination of the implementation of public policies across the borders of communes and counties. In March 2013, the Małopolskie Voivodeship Board approved the projects of nine strategic programs: Intellectual Capital and Labour Market, Regional Innovation Strategy, Heritage and Industries of Leisure Time, Transport and Communication, Rural Areas, Environment Protection along with a forecast about the environmental impact, Health Protection, Social Inclusion and Territorial Marketing. These programs are aimed at fulfilling the Małopolskie Voivodeship Development Strategy for 2011-2020 and are the most important tool for regional development management. Thus, all of the most important developmental processes are fitted into the spatial system of a voivodeship, subjectified by constituting subregional forums.

Many of the good practices implementing the place-based policy paradigm are self-evident and do not require an explanation (e.g. enhancing consultation, ITI, etc.). Creating regional territorial observatories (RTO) is important and exceptionally promising. The małopolskie and the mazowieckie voivodeships have interesting and comprehensive experiences in this regard. The most innovative solution seems to be applied in the zachodniopomorskie voivodeship, where a cloud model was employed as a platform for the regional territorial observatory (RTO). The observatory is to: (1) be a platform for the voivodeship's strategic documents of different stakeholders: Voivodeship Labour Office, Tax Chamber, the Statistical Office in Szczecin and higher education facilities, (2) a center of knowledge exchange between the stakeholders. The RTO actions are to serve the purpose of sharing knowledge and function on the basis of a collegial cloud (*or clouding out*), which stores

problems stated by the stakeholders and suggests information which might be helpful in solving them and experiences that may serve this purpose. The Marshal's Office is to serve as technical support. RTO will be an important instrument of coordination in the sphere of obtaining information, that is: of preventing situations in which different office units commission expert reports on similar topics.

Some of the Good practices, on the other hand, concern the use of territorial keys and spatial categories in intra-regional policies. It does not signify, however, that Polish voivodeships do not place any emphasis on this issue. Voivodeship-level spatial plans usually serve this very purpose. Unfortunately, their "original sin" is the lack of original dimension in relation to socio-economic strategies. Hence, the territorialisation practices of those strategies gain so much significance. An instrument that seems to serve this purpose really well are the Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI). The problem lies in their correct delimitation and use for the purpose of implementation of intra-regional policies. In order to make them serve really well the aim of territorialisation of policy, they should, above all, be delimited on the basis of crucial spatial characteristics of a given region (the most important elements of its territorial capital treated as a development asset). In addition, they should find the reflection in strategic interventions, that is in regional operational programmes (ROP). For instance, in the warmińsko-mazurskie voivodeship, the Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI) were delimited on the basis of prior spatial research conducted, among other things, with the use of territorial keys.

Some of those Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI) have a traditional – that is, "problem-oriented" – character. Some, however, take advantage of a territory as an endogenous development asset – for example, a borderland area or development axis of three biggest cities of a given voivodeship. Both in the warmińsko-mazurskie and pomorskie voivodeships, Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI) are employed as a territorialisation measure of intra-regional policy through the regional operational programme. In a few actions of ROP, there exist preferences for the selected ASI. There are also actions limited to the chosen ASI.

It would be more appropriate, however, to postulate more intensive work aiming to take into consideration the systemic territorial capital in intra-regional policies. Strategic Intervention Areas are a good place to start. What is lacking, however, are other instruments

concerning evaluation of the influence of policies on the territorial capital – or this capital's impact on development.

Eight of the Good practices in the third category indicate the efforts for the sake of territorialisation of development policy undertaken by Polish regions. Various methods are applied here ranging from cooperations in diverse configurations, through the application of spatial analyses to spatial diversification of development objectives. Some of them – through a slight change of accents – could be classified within the first or second category. The fourth category, however, shows attempts of direct implementation of spatial categories and spatial actions for the purpose of regional development. Those ten practices reveal the most attractive – from the perspective of local decision-makers – spatial development projects, i.e. in specific investment in territorial capital such as, for example, transport (infrastructure), natural resources and landscape, human capital, biosphere, renewable energy etc. However majority of them do not stick to the principle of policy integration.

## **7. Way Forward**

The investigations performed show the current picture and direction of changes in the intra-regional policies of the Polish voivodeships. The changes has been attributed to a large extent to the initiation of the discourse in Poland regarding such categories as territorial contract, Integrated Territorial Investments, territorial fora, and territorial observatories. Consequently, in the regions, quite often spontaneously, the necessary mechanisms are being developed for linking the spatial and the socio-economic development and policy territorialisation. Also many regions have recently done several attempts to strengthen their voice in national debates on key policies and actions. The effects of this work are as yet not visible, nor can they be assessed yet. But their direction is encouraging. Also National and EU level supports such type of policy transformation via new instruments such as ITI or territorial contracts.

However, this kind of work is, as a rule, has not been conducted under the banner of territorial cohesion, but their motive force is pragmatism, that is – the imperative of a more effective use of the means disbursed for purposes of developing the regions. Territorial cohesion, as interpreted by the regional elite, appears to have more the character of a buzzword than of a practical (implementable) notion. The representatives of the regional authorities display a relatively good knowledge in the domain of territorial cohesion, but

their understanding of the notion is usually narrower than that from the theoretical elaborates. There is a significant differentiation and lack of uniform understanding of this category, with simultaneous acknowledgment of its importance and emphasis on the need of using it in the regional strategic documents. In many cases, though, territorial cohesion is put on the subordinate position with respect to social and economic cohesion. It is clearly evident that there has been no public debate on this subject – namely what territorial cohesion is supposed to serve, how should it be understood, how should it be used in the practice of programming, and what are the expected benefits therefrom. Some of the respondents became aware only during the interviews that the way they conduct the policy of regional development constitutes an emanation, and in definite cases even the very essence of the territorial cohesion.

In the application of territorial cohesion in the development programming process a weaker emphasis is visible on the territorial capital, while stronger – on the manner of conducting the development policy and the attempts of strengthening of its integrated character. This is evidenced, in particular, by the structure and scope of the solutions tested. Although the voivodeships apply by themselves the concept of territorial keys, but this is done often in order to determine the traditional problem areas, and not in terms of an instrument for involving the territorial capital in the strengthening of the regional development. Hence, a postulate arises of a more intensive work aiming at the consideration of the systemic territorial capital in the intra-regional policy. The Strategic Intervention Areas (ASI) may make a good start. There are, however, no other instruments, concerning the assessment of the influence exerted by the policies on the territorial capital, or the influence of this capital on development.

It seems, on the other hand, that Polish regions are on the correct path towards the implementation of the place-based policy paradigm. All of the component elements of this paradigm are present in the policies of the Polish voivodeships. Owing to the leadership of the national level a positive turn is taking place in the methods of gathering knowledge. The system of territorial observatories is emerging. The issue of compatibility of knowledge and information gained on various spatial scales remains, however, unresolved. The weakest link in the system is constituted by the ways of sharing the knowledge acquired. The passive methods dominate. There is no bright idea on managing development through knowledge

sharing. There are less problems concerning the interaction with other actors of the development game. Generally, the territorial dialogue was altogether assessed in a positive manner. Owing to new instruments (such as, e.g., integrated territorial investments, territorial contracts), this dialogue becomes increasingly intensive, and, in view of the improving methods of acquiring knowledge, also increasingly substantive.

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