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Europeanisation of urban governance in Poland: dimensions, trends and challenges¹

Abstract

The concept of Europeanisation occupies an important place in the study of European integration. However, the starting point for the reflections presented in this paper is the observation that the researchers studying Europeanisation have not investigated the impact of these pressures within the complexity of the urban level in any great detail, particularly in the context of Central Europe. That is why this paper seeks to enhance the understanding of the process of urban Europeanisation, focusing on examples of institutional practices in selected Polish cities. The author provides the basic information about institutional arrangements concerning three dimensions of Europeanisation at the urban level.

Keywords

Europeanisation – urban governance – urban Europeanisation – Polish cities – Polish urban policy

Introduction

The concept of Europeanisation occupies an important place in the study of European integration. However, the starting point for the reflections presented in this paper is the observation that while it is commonly accepted that European pressures have created a multi-stage process of domestic change in EU member-states, the researchers studying Europeanisation have not investigated the impact of these pressures within the complexity of the urban level in any great detail. Meanwhile, since the early 1990s with the completion of the single market, the European integration process has significantly affected local governments across Europe. The European Union and Europeanisation has accompanied the cities at a time marked by transnational integration, internationalisation, economic interdependence and intensifying locational competition [John 2000, 61-92]. Nowadays cities are the economic, political, and cultural centres of Europe. They have been recognized by the

¹ This part of the book is a result of research conducted under a project financed by the National Science Centre, on the basis of agreement no. UMO-2013/09/B/HS5/04522

European Union as a new political space offering new opportunities. Cities in the European Union benefit from various EU programmes, which can be used as transmission belts for urban change and local modernisation processes. They implement European regulations which can directly affect important urban policy areas and are obliged to ensure compliance with EU regulations under their jurisdiction. Moreover, cities are affected by employment and growth strategies devised on the EU level and deal with opportunities and constraints created by key integration projects like monetary union or EU enlargement. Although cities are not directly represented at the European level, they are affected by European integration as around two thirds of the legislation implemented by local authorities is EU legislation [Zimmermann 2006, 27]. The implementation of EU programmes and initiatives at local level can alter the preferences of local entities as well as their practices and policies. But on the other hand activities of European cities shape the development of EU programs, policies and initiatives [Marshall 2005, 672].

Having this in mind, the paper generally refers to theoretical debates around Europeanisation with particular attention being paid to urban governance. This approach emphasises the involvement of the local framework, development of more urban partnerships and involvement of a wider range of actors in multi-level territorial interaction. On the one hand it abandons grand theories of European integration which either demand EU institutions (in coalition with local/regional and other actors) to take over executive control from the governments of member states or, alternatively, expect these governments to strictly control the extent of European integration. On the other it acknowledges the utility of historical/sociological institutionalist approaches, terms of “top-down” and “bottom-up” Europeanisation as well as the conceptualization of the extent, “the horizon” and the scope, the “deepness” of the EU impact. In this context we may wonder at the lack of an in-depth knowledge of urban Europeanisation linked to Central Europe. That is why the aim of the paper is to reflect on the current conceptual debate on the issue with particular attention being paid to urban governance in Poland. In the paper the author examines the basic issues concerning Europeanisation at the urban level. She discusses the question of challenges relating to institutional practice in Polish cities after the political transformation of 1990 and EU accession in 2004. In addition, she presents aspects relating to public policies on urban governance. In the empirical part the author analyses examples of institutional practice in selected Polish cities with regard to the implementation of urban Europeanisation. She seeks to establish whether European integration has provoked shifts in the institutionalised norms, beliefs and values of participants in governance at the urban level in Poland.

Europeanisation and urban governance – a few conceptual remarks

Europeanisation in cities occurs as a consequence of intensive political and economical interactions. The range of dissemination and harmonisation processes resulting in development of a common European culture can be summarised under the notion of Europeanisation. It appears at both the national and regional levels, and is determined by different types of adaptation pressures and “mediating” institutions operating within different actors (bodies) of governance [Marshall 2005, 17]. Europeanisation emphasises the involvement of the local framework, development of more urban partnerships and involvement of a wider range of actors in multi-level territorial interaction. Apart from the question whether the European integration itself should be regarded as a form of Europeanisation, an approach rejected by most authors [Quaglia et al. 2007, 408], the Europeanisation approach seems to be the most appropriate one to provide an explanatory framework which makes it possible to assess the current place of cities in the political system that is the EU and their engagement within the European integration with the impact on the European level.

Having this perspective in mind, Bache and Jordan define Europeanisation more precisely as follows: “the reorientation or reshaping of aspects of politics in the domestic arena in ways that reflect the policies, practices and preferences of European level actors, as advanced through EU initiatives and decisions” [Bache, Jordan 2004]. This definition makes it possible to specify new modes of governance on city level - urban governance - which entails both a reorganisation of established networks and alliances in the city as well as a reorganisation of the political-administrative system itself. As a normative concept, urban governance calls for inclusion, visionary leadership and enduring partnerships between private, social and public actors. The normative attraction of this shift from top-down government to participatory governance is clear: it promises a focus on added value of the municipality, cooperation, increased autonomy and enhanced (financial) capabilities. In contrast to “government”, the idea of “governance” involves working across boundaries within the public sector or between the public sector and private or voluntary sectors. EU-financed programmes, largely because of their requirements for long-term partnership, force the expansion of the number of players at the local decision-making table, bringing non-governmental organisations, representatives from the community and voluntary sectors, business leaders, and other social partners into the increasingly complex world of urban

governance [Marshall 2003; Bache, Marshall 2004]. In this context, urban governance is defined as “the actions and institutions within an urban region that regulate or impose conditions for its political economy” [Sellers 2002, 9]. Within this framework governance is a process of coordinating political decision-making implicating different actors, social groups and institutions in a particular institutional context to attain appropriate goals that have been discussed and collectively defined in fragmented, uncertain environments. The multi-level governance approach starts from the assumption that the EU has become a system with multiple levels or spheres of governance, including European, national, and sub-national arenas [Hooghe, Marks 2003]. This concept differs from classical approaches which explain the European integration at least in two respects: first, the approach does not consider the levels of governance as parts of a stable hierarchical arrangement. Instead, multi-level governance approaches assume that competencies between local, national and supranational governmental institutions are shifted not only upwards to the European Union but also downwards from the nation-states to regions and cities [Rosenau 2003]. Second, this approach is not limited to state-based forms of regulation, but includes the entire range of governance types, such as public-private partnerships and non-state regulation. As a consequence of these underlying assumptions, authority becomes dispersed both across multiple territorial levels and among a variety of private and public actors. In a multi-level system it becomes difficult to determine the boundaries between different policy arenas because actors pursue multi-level strategies such as venue shopping [Rosamund 2007, 120] and may start parallel initiatives at different levels.

One of the first researchers who tackled Europeanisation of urban governance, A. J. Marshall, derives his understanding of Europeanisation from a New Institutional perspective, which implies that researchers must investigate the impact of “mediating institutions” at multiple territorial levels, as these attenuate processes of Europeanisation and ensure that unique and long-standing patterns of local governance are not subsumed into a single, reductionist paradigm [Marshall 2003]. Building on a model articulated by Green Cowles et al. [Green Cowles et al. 2001], he argues that Europeanisation at the urban level results in a four-stage pattern of interaction and adjustment:

- EU Initiative (Structural Fund/Community Initiatives/Urban Pilot Projects) ;
- adaptational pressures (“degree of fit” between EU/domestic norms);
- mediating institutions (local, regional, national institutional context);
- urban structural change (institutional shifts / governance change) [Marshall 2004].

In a more in-depth study Marshall and Bache define Europeanisation as “the redirection or reshaping of politics in the domestic arena in ways that reflect the policies, practices or preferences of EU level actors/institutions” [Bache, Marshall 2004]. Beyond this definition, they distinguish between “direct Europeanisation” – the intended impact of an EU initiative – and “indirect Europeanisation” – the inadvertent impact of an EU initiative. It is based on the assumption linked to the definition of Europeanisation proposed by Marshall, which refers to changes in policies and/or practices and/or preferences “in the domestic arena” rather than changes in “domestic policies and/or practices and/or preferences”. Marshall and Bache also make a further heuristic distinction between “voluntary Europeanisation” (i.e., embraced by key domestic actors) and “coercive Europeanisation” (i.e., opposed by key domestic actors). According to them, there is a distinction between direct and indirect impacts. Thus, “voluntary-direct Europeanisation” is the ready adoption of EU decisions in a given area (e.g., compliance with EU regional policy regulations); while “voluntary-indirect Europeanisation” refers to the adoption of EU preferences and/or practices and/or policies in another area (e.g. adopting EU approaches to regional policy in domestic regional policy). Similarly, “coercive-direct Europeanisation” refers to the forced acceptance of European preferences and/or practices and/or policies in a given area, while “coercive-indirect Europeanisation” links to spillover consequences of “coercive-direct Europeanisation” in one area to another [Bache, Marshall 2004. 5-6]. Following this, Marshall proposes his own understanding of Europeanisation with regard to urban governance and indicates four varieties of this processes in cities:

- Europeanisation of local government (“download”, “coercive-indirect” and “voluntary-indirect”);
- Europeanisation of non-statutory actors involved in processes of urban renewal and governance (“download”; “voluntary-indirect”);
- Europeanisation of local regeneration partnerships and networks (“download”; “voluntary-indirect”);
- Europeanisation that engenders dissemination of local practices to the supranational level, and thus to other cities via trans-national networks (“upload” and “crossload”; “voluntary-direct”) [Marshall 2005].

Considering the next important aspect of Europeanisation with regard to urban governance, depicting the scope of this processes, that is the “deepness” of the EU impact on domestic policies and political structures, is one of the major issues in the current debate on

Europeanisation. In this context there are three dimensions of Europeanisation, which appear to be most relevant for the Europeanisation of cities with regard to a set of possible concerning urban governance:

- the top-down perspective: How do EU regulations, particularly EU Structural Funds programmes, impact local governance? Do they result in new forms of urban governance? Can EU membership significantly influence the way in which cities are governed?
- the bottom-up perspective: Why and how to get cities involved with the European Union? What explains the particular profiles of their EU involvement?
- horizontal perspective: What kind of initiatives do cities undertake to cooperate without the participation of the European Union? What is a key driver of this cooperation? What are new participatory arrangements? (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Dimensions of Europeanisation at urban level

Dimensions of Europeanisation at urban level	Features	Institutional aspects
Top-Down	It concentrates on the implementation of EU decisions in the Member States, in particular on the dimensions and mechanisms of domestic change. It means “the redirection or reshaping of politics in the domestic arena in ways that reflect the policies, practices or preferences of EU level actors/institutions” [Bache, Marshall 2004; Marshall 2004].	Local authorities are regarded as part of a hierarchically structured nation-state. Although they are in charge of implementing European legislation, they do not have direct access to EU decision-making. Thus, from this point of view, local authorities are considered as affected objects rather than active subjects. Under this approach different political structures of each member state operate as a filter, which refracts Europeanisation in different directions and styles.
Bottom-Up	Any involvement of urban actors in European initiatives and every extension of EU legislation to subnational territorial units can result in new expectations and interests on behalf of the local actors vis-à-vis the European level, which provides for transfer of innovative urban practices to the supra-national arena, resulting in the incorporation of locally inspired initiatives in EU programmes or other urban frameworks.	Cities develop their own initiatives and try to influence EU decisions directly, they change from being policy-takers to policy-makers and become actors in the process of European integration. They try to participate in European policy-making, e.g. by influencing the positions of their national governments or directly lobbying EU institutions according to their own policy preferences. Participation in trans-national organisations and networks enables cities to make their presence felt at the EU level. Even supposedly symbolic arrangements, such as twinning and cultural exchange, foster changes in the behaviour of urban actors in relations with European institutions.
Top-Down and Bottom-Up	It is s “a process whereby European ideas and practices transfer to the core of local decision-making as well as from local policy-making arenas to the supranational level. The European function is a means whereby public authorities can innovate and initiate	Europeanization as the result of a bidirectional process where member states shape EU policies and institutions by “uploading” their own policies and institutions to the European level and then adapt to outcomes made at the EU level by “downloading” EU policies and institutions into the domestic arena [Quaglia et al., 2007, 406].

	policies and programmes in the context of trans-national co-operation and European policy-making” [John 2000, 73].	
Horizontal	<p>It assumes vertical relations between regions, nation states and the European Union as well as their transformation. It can take place even if the EU institutions are not directly involved in the process. The multi-level institutional ties between diverse organisational bodies (EU, nation states, regions and local governments) contain no clear hierarchy: they also involve private sector actors and parts of civil society themselves managing what used to be provided by the national or local government. Compared to hierarchy-based arrangements in which top-down relations set rules in a relatively bureaucratic manner, this type of governance arrangements (<i>governance-beyond-the-state</i>) rules with more participatory, inclusive networked relations between socio-cultural, political and business elites where trust among the stakeholders is high, despite conflicts and oppositional agendas.</p>	<p>This entails a shift from traditional top-down decision-making centred on public administration and municipal government towards governing through broad, complex and informal coalitions of public and non-public actors. As decision-powers of the local authority are increasingly shared with non-governmental interests, the municipality adapts to a new role of steering, mediating or facilitating policy processes. Furthermore, it encompasses the creation of new networks including actors from the political-administrative system, from (neo-)corporatist organisations, the business sector and civil society. Its structures can also emerge within the domain of public administration, as new forms of cross-departmental cooperation are instigated by the EU programmes. They induce new ways for incorporating actors from civil society into political decision-making at the local level. New participatory arrangements and participation processes increase the access to local political-administrative systems for citizens possessing different economic, social and cultural capital. Networks among public authorities, social partners, non-governmental and community organisations as well as private business further reinforce citizen involvement. Although EU institutions play either no role here or merely a facilitative one (e.g., through project funding), this is an important, still increasing, aspect of Europeanisation at urban level. In recent years the European Union has developed an approach which systematically supports the exchange of experience, learning from peers, and best practice transfer. As European towns and cities face similar challenges, they have developed strategies to facilitate best practice transfer. They cooperate transnationally, exchange experiences and jointly develop innovative solutions. Urban policies are evolving towards the creation of more integrated strategies for regeneration that involve not only multiple public stakeholders, but also private actors including social and community organisations.</p>

Source: Own compilation based on: [Bache, Marshall 2004; John 2000, Marshall 2004; Quaglia et al. 2007].

The concept of *urban governance* becomes particularly significant in the context of Europeanisation [Wiktorska-Świećka 2015]. It is an attempt to imagine possible scenarios for the development of metropolitan areas in the Europeanisation process unfolding in a rapidly changing reality, and formulate recommendations for more efficient provision of public services as well as implementation of policies stimulating the social and economic

development of urban centres and metropolitan areas. We are witnessing a shift of focus: from a policy referring to the entire territory (of a region or state) to what is key to the development of subregions, i.e. urban centres and functional areas around them (metropolitan areas). Desirable forms of activity in urban governance today are actions geared towards

- ensuring democratic legitimacy through cooperation mechanisms;
- systemic inclusion of social actors (participation in management and governance);
- systemic and regular communication and information as a central function of governance [Wiktorska-Święcka 2010].

Other important characteristics of the urban governance approach are: a new political culture that provides for flexible and responsive administration, structural participation of citizens (clients, users of the city), and decentralised decision-making mechanisms. Answers to the above questions will make it possible to explore the role of member state actors (including cities) in the unique political system of the EU as well as factors driving domestic actors to get involved with the European Union, which can have an impact the European arrangements. Thus urban governance requires the formulation and implementation of an urban policy which comprises the economic, social and spatial spheres, and which takes into account an integrated approach to development.

The main challenges and directions of the development of Polish cities

The social and economic transformation begun with the collapse of the communist system in 1989 in Poland brought with it a return of the market economy. This was accompanied by a shift of control over urban space from the national to the local level following the emergence of real local self-government representing the interests of local communities, an increase in the number of actors competing for urban space and specific locations as well as a change in the criteria of space allocation: from political to economic. What became particularly significant was the development of private enterprise and rise in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as modernisation of methods of urban organisation and governance. Political, social and economic processes launched after 1989 have led to Poland's greater openness to globalisation as well as European integration, processes bringing with them modernisation. This has been accompanied by phenomena associated with "catching up" or making up for the lost ground caused by post-war perturbations, political transformations of 1989 and accession to the European Union.

Polish cities are becoming Europeanised fairly quickly, with the process having an impact on all dimensions of governance: spatial, socio-economic, political-administrative, cultural and environmental. This has both positive and negative consequences. Phenomena that are becoming a challenge to urban governance in Poland include growing heterogeneity resulting from variances in income, increasing share of poor citizens, growing social inequalities as well as growing ethnic and cultural diversity. The shift from welfare economics to neoliberal reforms has limited access to various benefits for citizens and has made services less well suited to their needs. Urban infrastructure has become less universal, which has created new challenges local authorities now have to face. They are the ones expected to pursue a development policy that will make the city attractive to its various users. In cities with deep social and spatial divisions, lack of social mobility is limiting the participation of citizens in the formal economy as well as their integration with society. This increases a sense of uncertainty and has a negative impact on public mood. Consequently, public and private funds are used, at the expense of services and investments, to pay primarily for actions aimed at increasing the level of safety and security. In addition, the crisis of municipal finances limits the capacity to solve problems by means of traditional methods and leads to cuts in spending on culture, sport, leisure and education. Moreover, the expansion of the global urban model also causes spatial changes. In this spatial dimension we are witnessing rapid urbanisation, deurbanisation and reurbanisation processes. A characteristic feature is the so-called urban sprawl, which generates a delimitation of new settlement units:

- morphological units: urban agglomerations, conurbations and urbanised areas;
- planning units: urban complexes;
- functional units: metropolises and metropolitan areas (apart from Warsaw, of regional significance).

The growing economic competition between cities and differences in the level of economic development have become the basic elements shaping the extent of urbanisation and attraction of new residents. Competitiveness of cities, largely dependent as it is on inherited resources but also on the policies pursued by the local authorities, determines their investment attractiveness. When it comes to attracting investments and people, the most competitive metropolitan areas have been those of Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Kraków, Tri-City, and, to a lesser extent, other capitals of regions. The general rule whereby the investment attractiveness of Polish cities decreases as we move from west to east changes the qualitative and quantitative nature of urbanisation. In the western regions of the country urbanisation undergoes restructuring in the form of more rapid suburbanisation and

emergence of a network of medium-size cities, and substantial migration between cities (from smaller to larger cities). In the eastern part of Poland the dominant form of urbanisation involves migration from rural to urban areas. The structure of the settlement system in Poland is fairly balanced, as a result of which Poland is listed among the most polycentric countries in Europe [ESPON 2005]. Such a structure was and still is a positive characteristic making Poland stand out among other countries in Europe. Among the largest urban centres in the European Union, the so-called MEGAs, are several Polish cities: Warsaw, Kraków, Gdańsk-Gdynia, Wrocław, Poznań, Katowice with the Silesian conurbation, Łódź and Szczecin.

Poland has seen a positive economic growth characterised by a clear concentration in the economically strongest agglomerations and largest cities, which have become drivers of growth for the national economy and drivers of job creation, and thus the main areas of the promotion of structural change. What remains problematic in this respect, however, is the insufficient utilisation of the potential of these cities as the main nodes of the settlement network generating economic growth for the entire country (through innovation, know-how), as well as the transfer of resources, through penetration and complementation, from them to other cities constituting important nodes in the country's polycentric settlement system and to neighbouring areas.

Globalisation is influencing the characteristics of Polish cities (e.g. historic centres with low buildings except for old religious and state edifices, centrally located squares accessible to the general public, integrated residential districts, marked out boundaries, densely built up inner cities with high population densities, coherent public transport system), which acquire imported features of non-European cities, features like concentration of office buildings in a central business district, gerontification of old residential districts, division of the city into classes according to new configurations, suburbanisation, changes in the functions of post-industrial areas. At the same time the rapidly developing metropolitan areas in Poland – even if only of peripheral significance from the perspective of the European Union's competitiveness – are prompting a paradigm shift in development policy: innovations and jobs are created in metropolises, this is where universities and research institutes are located, this is where clusters and international companies set up their centres, this is where key transport networks intersect. Integration of national urban systems and the expanding global dimension of the economy enhance the domination of large metropolitan centres. The incorporation of the Polish settlement network into the international system of information, capital and investment flows has led to a departure from the concept of even development of the country in favour of the strengthening of metropolitan areas. The formation of

metropolitan areas provides a legal framework for the functioning, side by side, of urban and suburban areas, established by various administrative units having their own budgets and pursuing their own policies. This enables these units to collaborate for the benefit of the entire region, which – irrespective of whether it is formalised or not – functions in practice and the authorities of the metropolitan centre are often responsible for that functioning. When it comes to the structural dimension, it has to be said that metropolitanisation in Poland is linked to the creation of metropolitan areas distinguished by means of the functional criterion. The metropolitan function should be region building, because by definition it links the centre to the region surrounding it, and should maintain its exogenous nature, supporting the development of a network of external connections. The metropolitanisation process in Poland is also marked by a shift from sectoral to functional specialisation. The biggest Polish cities specialise in various business and professional services, financial, insurance and real estate brokerage services (Advanced Producer Services). However, in this respect Polish cities and the regions surrounding them are largely inferior to the cities and regions of other EU countries, especially in Western and Northern Europe. Compared with them, Poland's main urban centres are marked by shortcomings in their development of metropolitan functions, especially control functions in economic governance, transport functions, research and development functions and, to some extent, also symbolic functions. Their level of innovation is low, as is the share of knowledge-based economy, especially when it comes to advanced technology industries.

However, the higher quality of life in Poland's metropolitan centres is associated with considerable regional disproportions in national income per capita. This is accompanied by growing social and spatial differences in cities and metropolitan areas. Urbanisation is no longer an element of success or economic and social progress. Social problems and poverty enclaves emerging in cities are consequences of not only unemployment but also low qualifications and marginalisation on the labour market. New economic, social and political regulations, adaptation to the requirements of globalisation of the urban economy often put some groups at a disadvantage in the competition for well-paid jobs. Transformation of ownership, especially privatisation, and rejection of subsidised housing have led to a strong residential segregation in cities when measured by the resident wealth criterion. The urbanisation process, hitherto usually associated with spatial mobility and social mobility up the hierarchy, is losing this quality. Upward mobility in the social hierarchy gradually takes the form of spatial mobility or suburbanisation, i.e. move of successful city dwellers to the suburbs.

Other challenges determining the development of Polish cities stem from the fact that the political role of the state is changing, as is thus the political role of local governments. Large areas of public sphere governance are being privatised owing to financial considerations. This applies to housing policy, regeneration, municipal services; cooperation with private entities within the framework of the so-called public-private partnership is becoming a daily practice in cities' policies. The traditional, bureaucratised urban policy has become impossible today for a variety of reasons. When it comes to political-institutional and administrative transformations, researchers stress that the metropolitan question has two basic dimensions in Poland demanding a debate and reform [Hausner 2013, 23]: objective and subjective dimensions. The former include challenges facing national public authorities: country-wide development and integration of the metropolitan network, which should strengthen the creative and innovative development potential of the country, and, consequently, improve Poland's position in the globalised world. Another aspect is the organisation of the development of the various metropolitan areas, which – in a technical and social sense – are in themselves multifunctional settlement networks. With regard to the subjective dimension, researchers see the metropolitan question with respect to the organisation of government administration on the central and regional levels, since they construct legislative acts and government documents of strategic nature. The subjective aspect concerns the existence of a metropolitan government entity within the structure of regional government that would be a partner for the central and local authorities [Hausner 2013, 23-26].

Finally, what remains a challenge is the continuing presence of certain elements of historical legacy within social structures, elements that are disadvantageous in the market economy. This concerns e.g. continuing disrespect for the law, low level of civil society development and low social capital, residents' lack of involvement in matters of the city, domination of entitlement attitudes and substantial share of the informal sector. A prerequisite for further development of cities in Poland and for achieving standards of wealthier EU countries is much broader citizen participation in the management and planning of urban development in the economic, cultural and spatial spheres.

Europeanisation of cities in Poland: institutional dimension

The transformations of Polish metropolitan areas demand a redefinition of the concept of governance in such structures. One of the consequences of Europeanisation is the

formulation of public policies which respond to the EU efforts to strengthen the significance of urban areas to the development of Europe, and the urban dimension of cohesion policy. Thus urban policy has begun to grow in importance in Poland, although virtually since the end of the 2000s issues relating to it have remained divided between the various levels: national, regional and local. However, so far urban policy has not been autonomous, integrated or systemic, nor has it been treated as a priority. Historically speaking, even before its EU admission Poland had pledged to carry out thorough legal and economic reforms. The reforms concerned not only governance of the country but also administration on all levels in Poland. The very concept of a new administrative division and creation of local and regional self-government, which was implemented in 1999, was a response to Poland's accession aspirations and readiness to modernise. Yet the change process did not end with Poland's accession to the EU; it is still being continued. This applies particularly to national urban policy.

The starting point for the evolution of the current system for managing development in Poland, including that of cities, was the definition of co-governance as a desirable standard of public governance. This is why we should first of all refer to a document entitled *Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe* [Poland 2030. Development Challenges] [*Polska 2030* 2009], the nature of which is in some respect ideological and normative when it comes to the strategic perspective of the country's development. The principle of public co-governance is defined explicitly under Priority 9: Efficient state. According to the authors, a strategic orientation in governance should consist in:

- modernisation of the public sector (services relating to education, health, administration, justice, state security);
- deregulation (healthy, freedom-focused philosophy of law): enterprise and creativity;
- democracy, participation, advocacy, dialogue and cooperation in the strengthening of civil society.

The perspective of public co-governance is taken into account in the document as a horizontal principle in the remaining nine priorities. In addition, the document for the first time takes note of the significance of urban areas to Poland's continued development. The authors of the report call for a strengthening of large cities; they believe that Poland's development should conform to a polarisation-diffusion model. This means that in addition to supporting growth centres, we should also create conditions for a diffusion of developmental impulses from metropolises to the regions surrounding them. The state's economic policy should focus on catching up and supporting new competitive advantages of these centres. The

advantages stem from the growth of the knowledge-based economy, availability of transport as well as internal and external functional connectivity [*Polska 2030* 2009].

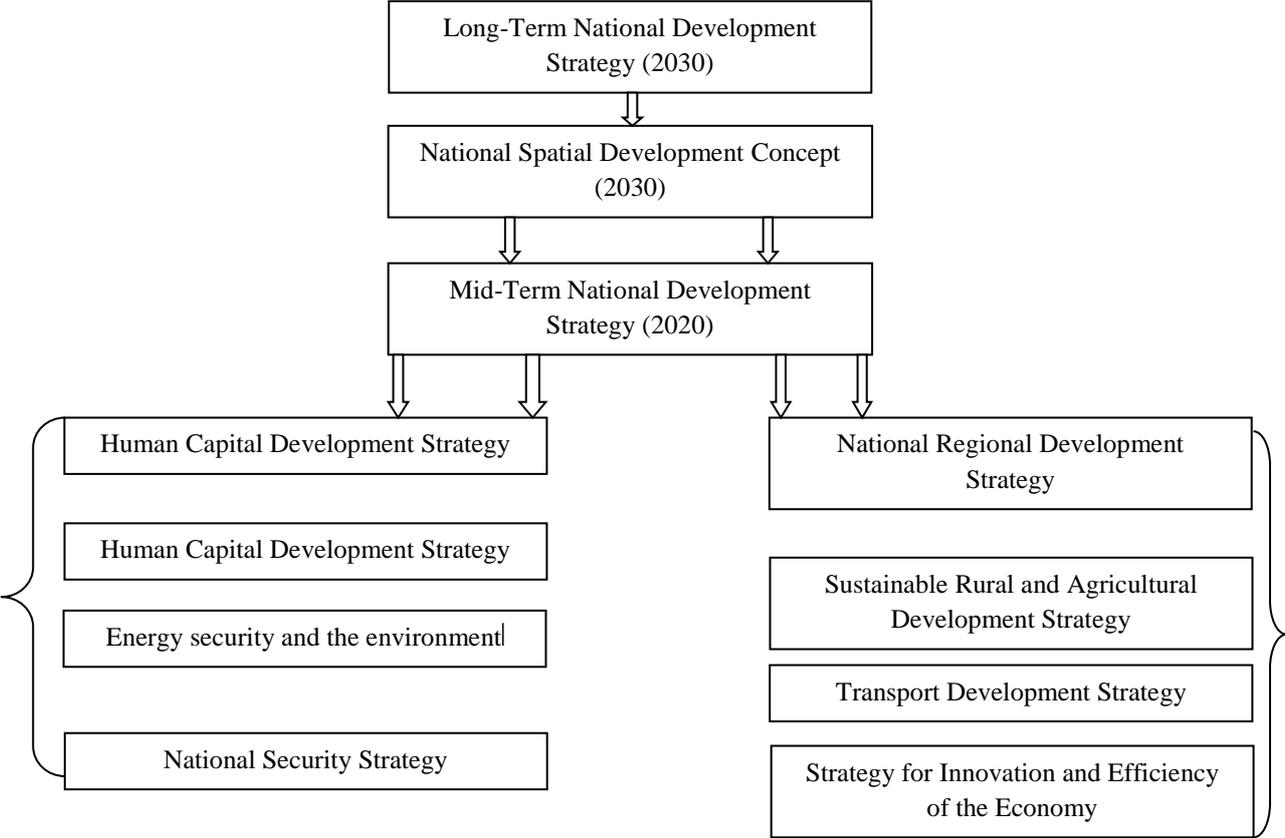
The implementation of the document launched a process of systemic and integrated management of the country's development. In its first stage the Council of Ministers adopted, on 27 April 2009, a document entitled *Założenia systemu zarządzania rozwojem Polski* [Principles of the system of managing Poland's development] drafted by the Ministry of Regional Development in collaboration with the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Strategic Advisory Team.

It contained proposals for a model of development management system the objective of which would be to increase the effectiveness of the programming and implementation of development policy, and the quality of the functioning of public institutions. The model was to become the basis for further actions reforming the implementation of development policy in Poland. At the same time the authors noted that "(...) Poland lacks a clearly defined government policy focused on cities – urban policy understood as development policy" [*Założenia systemu...* 2009]. In view of the above the Ministry of Regional Development undertook to formulate principles of such a policy, which was then to be integrated with strategic documents on the governmental, regional, metropolitan and local levels. In addition, the Council of Ministers adopted a *Plan uporządkowania strategii rozwoju* [Plan of revising development strategy] the objective of which was to:

- limit the number of strategies and policies to 9 (**Figure 1**);
- create an effective system for managing the country's development, taking into account greater cohesion and complementarity between the various documents; abandon the sectoral approach in strategic planning and plan budgetary expenditure more effectively;
- ensure territorial cohesion [*Plan...* 2009]².

² The document was updated on 10 March 2010 and 30 April 2011, and on 12 July 2012 the Council of Ministers reviewed its decision of 24 November 2009.

Figure 1. Structure of strategic management of Poland’s development taking into account urban governance



Source: Author’s own compilation

According to the *Plan*, development of cities and metropolitan areas falls under the *Krajowa Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego – Regiony – miasta – obszary wiejskie* [National Regional Development Strategy – Regions – Cities – Rural Areas] adopted by the Council of Ministers on 12 July 2010. Strategic challenges presented in the document include better utilisation of the potential of the most important urban areas to create growth and employment, and boost the development of the other areas [Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010, p. 24]. The strategy takes note of the territorial dimension; the territorial approach should be taken into account in all developmental activities (acknowledging diversity, strong coordination, multi-level governance). When it comes to functional units, policies should be adapted to specific places, taking into account areas generating growth, areas interlinked functionally and peripheral areas [Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010]. Strategic challenges to regional development in Poland include better utilisation of the potential of the most important urban areas to create growth and employment, and boost the development of the other areas, as well as raising institutional capacity to manage development on the national and regional levels. It is worth noting that the analysed document lists metropolitan areas among functional areas of

cities as well as those of the greatest significance to territorial development. They denote strategic intervention areas. Development priorities include creating conditions – within the framework of regional policy and other public policies coordinated by it – for better utilisation of the potential of capitals of regions as “urban network nodes” in Poland and including them in competition with the most important European and world centres [*Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego* 2010, p. 28]. The document accepts the essence of the approach drawing on the idea of public co-governance and points to partnership as a key principle in achieving strategic objectives [ibidem, 74].

Subsequent horizontal strategic documents – *Długookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju* [Long-Term National Development Strategy] [2013] and *Średniookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju* [Mid-Term National Development Strategy] – also rank the territorial dimension as an important element of all development-oriented policies and public actions [2012]. In the *Koncepcja Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju 2030* [National Spatial Development Concept] that stems from these documents, spatial policy has its reference point in urban functional areas which include functional areas of capitals of regions, including metropolises (metropolitan areas). The first of the six strategic objectives presented in the document is raising the competitiveness of the main urban centres [*Koncepcja* 2012, 6]. It is to be achieved through:

- support for the development of metropolitan functions of the main urban centres;
- intensification of functional connectivity between metropolitan areas on the national and international levels;
- integration of functional areas of the main urban centres [cf. *Koncepcja* 2012].

The objectives can be achieved through an integrated approach which should take into account:

- the principle of the hierarchical nature of objectives which ensures coordination of activities of entities making decisions respecting the organisation of self-government, which is to prevent e.g. the emergence of negative spatial phenomena;
- the principle of dynamic zoning and delimitation of planning areas as the foundations of functional planning to use local, subregional and regional potentials, which is to be achieved primarily by delimitation of metropolitan areas;
- the principle of public participation (defined in the document as “social participation”) [ibidem].

It took a relative long time, i.e. until May 2012, for the principles of the National Urban Policy to be submitted for a public debate. They include the principles

- of integrity (i.e. subordinating the national urban policy to the development policy);
- of integrated approach to territorial governance;
- of multi-level governance [*Krajowa polityka miejska* 2012, 6].

As the previous documents, this one, too, points to the key role of cities and their functional areas in development. The document indicates the main problems of unsustainable development of Polish cities. The problems have their roots in history; they stem from the country's civilisational underdevelopment, lack of sufficient resources to solve them as well as inefficiencies of property markets compounded by a regulatory and financial system not suited to the needs of a market economy. That is why the state's urban policy denotes a set of strategic actions taken by the government – especially in legislative and regulatory matters, in collaboration with regional and urban governments as well as entities that can and are willing to collaborate with those authorities under public-private partnerships – to ensure a sustainable development of cities in the spatial and socio-economic dimensions, especially sustainable shaping of their spatial structure, regeneration of degraded areas and reurbanisation of large residential estates, protection of cultural heritage and environmental systems as well as sustainable development and functioning of transport. Thus the development goals included in the urban policy document concern:

- raising the competitiveness of metropolitan areas and their capacity to create development, growth and employment;
- rebuilding development capacity through regeneration of socially, economically and physically degraded urban areas;
- supporting sustainable development of urban centres, including counteracting the negative phenomena of uncontrolled suburbanisation;
- creating conditions for effective, efficient and partnership-based management of development [*Krajowa polityka miejska* 2012, 12].

Significantly, the document took several years “to mature” and was adopted by the Council of Ministers only in October 2015. Its implementation is to make the state territorially oriented in its actions for sustainable development of cities and their functional areas and to use their potentials in the development of the country [*Polityka miejska państwa* 2015]. Worthy of note is the fact that the time horizon of the *National Urban Policy – 2023* – is the same as that of the implementation of programmes under the current EU financial perspective. At the same

time, however, the scope of topics and interventions tackled in the document goes beyond the Partnership Agreement and cannot be equated with it. Urban policy is not an element in the system of implementation of EU-funded programmes, but an important factor in optimising the way in which EU funds are used. Thus the document contains information about the actions and extent to which the pursuit of its goals can be financed by EU funds. When speaking about Europeanisation, we should note that the framework for the National Urban Policy is provided by several important EU documents: above all the Treaty of Lisbon, which introduced the territorial dimension as equal to the economic and social dimensions, and thanks to which the territorial dimension is taken into account in various EU policies, including cohesion policy. Sustainable development of European cities is the subject of the Leipzig Charter – document adopted during an informal meeting of EU urban development ministers in Leipzig in 2007. The same direction is reflected in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Important documents in this respect also include a European Commission report on economic, social and territorial cohesion of 2014, “Investment for jobs and growth: promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities”.

On the regional level there is no uniform standard when it comes to regulating urban issues. This issue is usually included in development strategies of regions, although the “scope” and “deepness” of these documents often do not correspond to documents adopted on the national level. There are provisions concerning sectoral aspects associated with cities in regional programmes (e.g. dealing with waste management). They are also reflected in initiatives aimed at implementing the EU’s regional policy (Regional Operational Programmes, Integrated Territorial Investments). However, it is still difficult to determine the links between them; the fragmentary nature of the solutions suggested runs counter to their alleged integration with the national policy in this respect.

When it comes to the implementation of urban policy the local level matters most from the perspective of regulating functional challenges and ensuring quality of life for citizens. That is why development strategies should be regarded as so important, as they provide an integrated set of development goals and adapt various solutions (tools, actions) which are “tailor-made” for each city.

The opinion on the documents regulating matters determining the development and governance of cities and metropolitan areas in Poland remains ambivalent. On the one hand their presence in the administrative and institutional structure should be regarded as positive (they emerged late but emerge they did...; in addition, compared to other European Union member states, the organisation of the institutional system in Poland is very efficient), but on

the other the qualitative part of this opinion leaves a lot to be desired. Firstly, there is an institutional chaos (powers and responsibilities are spread among various ministries), which leads to an overlapping of contents and actions. Secondly, the process is politicised (whether a given city will be included in specific documents depends on the political forcefulness of the local authorities and politicians lobbying for the city). Finally, the hurry with which the documents were adopted led to shortcomings in important matters, e.g. lack of an unequivocal definition of “metropolitan areas”. Yet their biggest weakness is the fact that they are still created quietly by officials and in theory, on a “drawing board” and as such do not correspond directly – and if they do, it is only to a limited extent – to the reality of Polish cities.

The programming of institutional solutions concerning further urban development in Poland is influenced by Europeanisation, which sometimes even necessitates redefinitions of existing practises. It could even be said that were it not for the condition of adapting the institutional framework to the EU requirements, action in this respect would not be taken. However, the Europeanisation of Polish cities has a broader, not only top-down context (Table 2).

Table 2. Europeanisation in Polish cities – overview of selected practices

Dimension of Europeanisation	Institutional form
Top-down	Establishing an association for the purpose of Integrated Territorial Investments
	Current urban development strategies take into account EU public policies focused on urban issues
	Use of structural funds
	Europeanisation of local government
	Europeanisation of non-governmental actors involved in the processes of urban renewal and governance
Bottom-up	Europeanisation of local regeneration partnerships and networks
	Activity of representatives in the Committee of the Regions
	Activity of representatives in the cities’ lobbying networks
	City representation office in Brussels
	Implementation of urban development projects using EU funds other than structural funds, e.g. under the URBACT initiative
Horizontal	Europeanisation that engenders dissemination of local practices to other cities via trans-national networks and EU institutions
	Town twinning
	Active participation in supranational networks of cities focused on joint project implementation
	City representation in other European cities

Source: Author’s own compilation

Top-down Europeanisation of Polish cities

Poland became a member state of the European Union in May 2004. It can be said for pragmatic reasons that over the last 12 years the main and leading manifestation of top-down Europeanisation of Polish cities has been the use of structural funds. This dimension of Europeanisation has been common and has also constituted the strongest driver prompting leading urban centres to compete for as much EU aid measures as possible. On average, cities received one in four Polish zlotys allocated to EU projects in 2007–2013. Gdańsk has been the most successful in using the funds – the value of EU funded projects since 2007 per one resident has been as much as PLN 20,300. Wrocław has been ranked fifth in this category with PLN 15,200, and Warsaw tenth with PLN 13,800. Using EU funds cities have renovated roads, bridges, tram lines, and bought new rolling stock. In addition, they have renovated historical monuments, built science centres, sports facilities, science and technology parks and waste treatment plants. It must be noted, however, that in the other aspects of this dimension of Europeanisation the commitment of cities is by no means even. It depends primarily on the activity of the local governments, leadership style, previous experiences, e.g. in collaboration with other local governments to pursue shared goals. Generally, it can be said that the mobilisation to be active among Polish cities has not been uniform with regard to the adoption of top-down guidelines. It remains much higher, if it means a possibility of more substantial use of European funds (e.g. Europeanisation of local government consisting in establishing a functional union for the purpose of implementing Integrated Territorial Investments). This type of Europeanisation can be described as “top-down pragmatic coercion”. On the other hand, if the central level does not formulate expectations with regard to cities (e.g. when it comes to including the directions of EU public policies concerning urban issues in current urban development strategies), the cities themselves usually do not undertake such initiatives. Even weaker is the top-down Europeanisation concerning changes in the way of governing cities in the institutional dimension as well as the shift from bureaucratic to participatory governance. Processes associated with the Europeanisation of non-governmental actors involved in the processes of urban renewal and governance are extremely weak, a fact linked to the poor condition of civil society, low level of democratic culture and the decision makers’ reluctance to accept public participation [Wiktorska-Święcka, Kozak 2014]. When assessing this dimension of Europeanisation, we could say that from a pragmatic point of view only the first measure – attracting structural funds – enjoys a wide popularity. On the one hand this should be linked to the fact that Poland, a net contributor, benefits from a lot of aid measures,

which make it possible to eliminate developmental differences and catch up in terms of infrastructure, which is why they are of such interest to local governments and are treated as a priority. On the other they translate fairly quickly into tangible results (new roads, sewage systems, public facilities), which in turn often translate into political success. Other measures associated with top-down Europeanisation appear less attractive as a result: not only does their management often require new, innovative approaches (e.g. partnership-based projects), but they also fail to quickly translate into spectacular results. In addition, they are linked to arguments which at this stage are not interesting to urban decision-makers, e.g. sharing experiences, acquiring new knowledge.

Bottom-up Europeanisation of Polish cities

The strongest manifestation of bottom-up Europeanisation is the formation of various associations of cities, which since the EU accession have been active internationally on the European level, indirectly and directly influencing decision-making processes in the EU. An example of this type of Europeanisation is the Association of Polish Cities, which delegates representatives to the Committee of the Regions and is active on the international forum. It is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which brings together organisations of municipalities and regions from over 35 countries of Europe. It also has its representatives in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE), a consultative body representing local and regional governments at the Council of Europe, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – both in its World Council and Executive Bureau. Yet the activity of the organisation, which brings together nearly 300 Polish towns and cities, does not translate into visible presence of Polish cities on the European level. The Association does provide an opportunity to influence decision-making processes in Europe, but in practice it has focused for more than ten years mainly on domestic processes. To a certain extent this reflects a lack of interest on the part of the cities to be active on the supranational level. This translates directly into a relatively low awareness among representatives of cities of what possibilities they have in the supranational dimension and who represents local and regional governments on the EU level. A survey has found that not all representatives of Polish cities are able to name the Committee of the Regions³. In their erroneous answers, the respondents usually ascribe the role of the Committee of the Regions

³ In total 326 answers were included in the survey, with 155 answers coming from urban municipalities, 49 from counties [*powiaty*], 109 from cities and 13 from regions [*województwa*].

to the European Commission, European Parliament, Ministry of Regional Development, municipal or marshal's offices, Association of Polish Cities, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Eurocities [Fuksiewicz et al. 2012].

If cities do cooperate internationally, their main goal is creation of opportunities for international exchange of citizens (78%), international promotion of local governments (75%) and opportunities for transferring good practices from foreign local and regional governments to Poland (70%). According to the respondents, a slightly less important reason for being active internationally is the possibility of applying for funds under European and international programmes (57%), as well as broadening the knowledge and developing competences of local government officials as well as those of the partner institution through regular exchange (50%). 25% of the respondents indicate that local governments get involved in international cooperation for the sake of prestige. Only 6% of the respondents claim that they do so thanks to encouragement from the Polish administration, including central government administration. This hierarchy of reasons shows that the respondents stress primarily arguments relating to mission – doing something for the citizens or the municipality, which is far more important than reasons relating to money, prestige or benefits for officials. A rather infrequent reason is a desire to have some influence on decisions taken on the level of the European Union. As other results show, this type of activity of Polish local and regional authorities, including cities, is relatively low [Fuksiewicz et al. 2012]. Over two thirds of local and regional authorities (70%) do not take part in any consultation, decision-making and lobbying processes within the framework of EU institutions or other entities working for European integration. If a local government becomes involved in a consultation process, this involvement usually takes the form of participation of its representatives in general assemblies and forums of organisations (38%), working groups of these organisations (31%) or executive bodies of these organisations (20%) [ibidem]. Thus if we compare the activity of Polish cities in this respect with the possibilities and results achieved by other cities from Western and Northern Europe, we will see their still relatively limited influence on the EU's urban policy. This may be associated with the requirement of permanent presence in Brussels, e.g. thanks to permanent representation offices, which Polish cities are yet to open [ibidem].

In addition, publicly available data make it hard to verify to what extent and on which level Polish urban development projects using EU funds other than structural funds are implemented. The study referred to earlier shows that only one fifth (21%) of the local and regional governments surveyed, mainly cities (38%), say that they take part in the “Europe for

Citizens Programme”, and one in ten – cities (17%) – in the URBACT Programme. The available data show that the second edition of this initiative featured 23 cities (Białystok, Bytom, Częstochowa, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Dębica, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Gliwice, Katowice, Kielce, Kraków, Leszno, Lublin, Łomża, Łódź, Poznań, Radzionków, Ruda Śl., Słubice, Starogard Gdański, Warsaw, Wrocław, Zabrze)⁴, out of over 900 cities in Poland, which constitutes about 2.5%. Such low interest can be explained primarily by the fact that cities are focused on obtaining structural funds, as has been said earlier, that there is a lack of understanding of what benefits such initiatives bring, lack of experience in this respect, lack of qualified personnel and, finally, lack of belief in the benefits that may be associated with them.

Horizontal Europeanisation of Polish cities

Cooperation between cities in Poland is relatively weak; the dominant tendency is competition and not development of complementarity of urban systems. Generally, stronger functional connectivity occurs between metropolitan centres, weaker between other regional centres, including the remaining capitals of regions. Development of functional links is to a large extent hampered by an underdeveloped transport infrastructure, both when it comes to roads and railways. Cooperation is much better in the interregional dimension of Polish cities, which should be associated with the emergence of self-government in Poland shortly after the political transformation, when e.g. relations were established under twinning programmes. Polish local and regional governments have contributed a lot to this movement and are now benefiting greatly, e.g. by attracting foreign investors and know-how.

What appears in a positive light, on the other hand, is the activity of Polish cities in the horizontal dimension of international cooperation as such. Involvement in international cooperation is declared by nearly three quarters (72%) of local and regional authorities, i.e. 85% of regions, 95% of cities, 86% of counties and 52% of rural municipalities. Most partners in international cooperation of local and regional authorities come from Germany. Next comes Ukraine, followed by France, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Russia and Belarus [Fuksiewicz et al. 2012].

Various cities are also active in networks of European cities. One of the most important among them is EUROCITIES, which today brings together 140 local urban

⁴ <http://www.urbact.pl/> (retrieved: 2 February 2016).

governments from 30 European countries. The network is a platform for an exchange of knowledge and ideas. It works with the European Union on issues concerning life in cities. Its main objective is to reinforce the role of local governments in a multi-level governance structure, shape the opinions of Brussels stakeholders and ultimately change EU legislation in a way that will allow city governments to tackle strategic challenges at the local level⁵. Polish members of the network are Białystok, Gdańsk, Katowice, Łódź, Lublin, Poznań, Rzeszów, Warsaw and Wrocław. Another large European network of cities is METREX (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas), which provides a platform for knowledge and experience sharing in metropolitan affairs, and joint action on issues of common interest. The network contributes the metropolitan dimension of policies, programmes and projects on a European scale. It is a partner of European institutions, the research community, governmental organisations and other networks. Its members are over 50 metropolitan regions and areas in Europe⁶. Polish METREX members are Kraków, Szczecin and Wrocław. The presence of only 3 out of the 12 largest urban centres in Poland shows that this activity is surprisingly limited in quantitative terms.

Ultimately, only one in four cities (26%) declares that it participates in a supranational network or supranational association [Fuksiewicz et al. 2012]. The respondents' answers show that apart from the best known organisations like Eurocities, local and regional governments can participate in the work of organisations like ACTE – European Textile Collectivities Association, Cities for Children, Network or Regional Culinary Heritage, Energy Cities, WHO Healthy Cities Network, European Route of Brick Gothic, Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) (ibidem).

The question of horizontal cooperation of cities without an EU initiative has not been studied in any great detail so far. Although most Polish cities have twinning agreements with many cities in the world, including those in the European Union, an overview of the existing practices has demonstrated that no Polish city has so far opened a representation office in its partner city (or other city) to promote itself. Nevertheless Polish cities do declare their willingness to cooperate with other cities in Europe; though it should be noted that the activity of Polish local governments primarily concerns official meetings: visits of local authorities and officials to other countries or analogous visits by foreign partners to Poland [Fuksiewicz et al. 2012]. This cooperation is less to do with cooperation of schools and educational institutions, cooperation of cultural institutions, joint projects, cooperation of non-

⁵ <http://www.eurocities.eu> [retrieved: 2 February 2016].

⁶ <http://eurometrex.org> [retrieved: 2 February 2016].

governmental organisations, citizens exchange programmes, joint sporting events, trade missions and cooperation of businesses.

Conclusion

After 12 years of Poland's EU membership Polish cities have changed: they are more beautiful, better organised, have better infrastructure with modern transport solutions and constantly improving rolling stock. Their image has changed considerably. With the modernisation of the basic infrastructure the country has seen an improvement in the quality of life thanks to investments in educational, cultural and sports facilities. What surprises in this context is the "inward-looking" nature of Europeanisation of cities in Poland. So far it has been limited to the use of structural funds, which will be available until 2020. After that date we should expect that the huge flow of funding will be limited and Poland as well as Polish cities will face the challenge of developing the ability to join supranational projects in collaboration with other cities. This is what happened in other member states of the European Union, e.g. Spain and Italy, which coped with the new situation to a varying degree. Thus a likely scenario of the Europeanisation of Polish cities may have an optimistic dimension. However, what is essential are broader information campaigns focusing on existing opportunities and potential benefits, incentives on the part of central and regional administration, bottom-up initiatives of citizens and openness of urban authorities to these initiatives as well as competences and skills needed in a supranational environment.

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