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ID 1715 | PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO REGENERATION PROCESSES IN POLISH CITIES AND REGIONS

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1 INTRODUCTION – METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Cities are changing day by day - they are in the constant circle of life - arising, decaying, reviving. However, their changes are mostly connected with its users - nowadays we can observe increasing participation of inhabitants, local activists and non-governmental organizations in the urban regeneration processes (Żylski, 2014). Authors present the impact of EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 on regeneration processes which are implemented in Polish towns, cities and metropolis when emphasizing general formal and legal framework including examination of the possible distribution of EU funds for regeneration projects within the regional operational programs. Authors focus on different approaches to the implementation of Cohesion Policy in Polish regions - and researched into Pomeranian province and Mazovian Voivodship as study cases.

First, there is a need to establish definition needed to the research. The definition of the regeneration process used in the research comes from the Polish legislation (Act on regeneration, 2015). The regeneration process is defined as 'a process of counteracting crisis situation in the degraded areas, lead in complex approach due to integrated actions in favor of local community, space and economy, concentrated territorial, conducted by regeneration stakeholders, basing on local regeneration program'. Moreover, it is important that the groups of stakeholders are also listed there. Among them, inhabitants of the area, owners, perpetual users, administrators, other inhabitants, local entrepreneurs, units of local government are mentioned. The importance of various stakeholders' participation is also mentioned in The Guidelines for regeneration actions in operational programs 2014-2020 prepared by Polish Ministry of Economic Development (2016). Participatory approach is important for the social dimension of the regeneration. Participation of the local communities and multiple stakeholders in reimagining and reinventing public spaces. Moreover, it strengthens the connection between the place and its users (Placemaking and the future of city – draft, 2012). The pioneer in the placemaking – community-based approach to the regeneration process - is U.S. nongovernmental organization Project for Public Spaces which has helped numerous communities in creatina public spaces together. Basing on the polish

legislation, the participatory approach consists of preparation, leading and evaluation the regeneration process ensuring the active participation of stakeholders during consultations and works of The Regeneration Committee (JL, 2015). In that part of the research, more important than the definition of participation method is the methodology of it. There is a growing need for authorities but especially for communities to understand that the consultation of the regeneration process is not the only activity for various actors to participate the whole process. Creighton James L. (2005) in his publication mentioned 4 steps of Continuum of participation: 1. Inform the public, 2. Listen to the public, 3. Engage in problem solving, 4. Develop agreements. However, the step: 'Engage in problem solving' is the most extensive in tools for co-operation between various actors. Moreover, Sherry Arnstein (1969) evolved eight-rung Ladder of Citizen where the highest rungs are 'Delegated Power' and 'Citizen control' what shows how much citizen are able to do. The rightness of choosing the participatory approach for the urban planning involves Jane Jacobs' philosophy - 'Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody' (Jacobs, 2014).

2 REGENERATION PROCESSES IN THE CONTEXT OF EU COHESION POLICY

The fundamental, overarching document regulating regeneration processes in Poland is partnership agreement between the Poland and the European Union signed in May 2014 (Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, Programming Financial Perspective 2014 -2020 - the Partnership Agreement). Both the Assumptions of the Partnership Agreement and the resulting draft of this document were prepared in cooperation with key stakeholders - ministries and regions. Into account have also been taken the opinions of the social and economic partners. Objectives of the Agreement are identical to the objectives of the Poland National Development Strategy 2020 while maintaining synergy with the Strategy Europa 2020, ie. increase competitiveness, social and territorial cohesion and improving the efficiency of the administration. The instruments for implementation of the Partnership Agreement are national operational programs, including the National Regeneration Plan, and in consequence also voivodship development strategies, regional strategic programs and regional operational programs decisive for the allocation of funds from the European Union. The intervention of regeneration processes within the Regional Operational Programs 2014-2020 is based on funding from the two European funds: the European Social Fund (axis 6 Education) and the European Regional Development Fund (axis 8 Conversion). Financial support for regeneration activities from EU Funds through ROP's (Regional Operation Programs) is possible only through an integrated regeneration project involving interventions both the social (Axis 6 ESF) and spatial (Axis 8 ERDF) aspect. The implementation of the two-fund project formula is a conclusion drawn from the 2007-13 mechanism in which various actors involved in degraded areas often failed to coordinate the work of the joint vision set out in the strategic document. More on the impact of ROP's in regeneration processes on the example of Pomeranian voivodship (below).

3 REGENERATION IN POLAND

Over the past quarter century, the socio-economic transformation in Poland, triggered primarily by the transformation of the political system and the challenges of pioneering free market economy, has revealed the progressive process of urban degradation. In recent years, unfavorable demographic and spatial processes have also contributed to this, among them: the depopulation and aging of the inhabitants of the centers, the uncontrolled dissipation of urban development and the dominance of individual motorized transport in urban areas. Based on the results of 2010 research, which identified in total at least 120,000 ha of areas that require regeneration in Poland – it's almost 22% of all urbanized land in Polish towns and cities, of which 11 percent are historical inner cities, 4,2% post-industrial lands, 2,6% large-panel building estates and 3.3% post military, post railway lands. About 2.2 million people lived in the city center's requiring regeneration (Ziobrowski and Jarczewski, 2010).



Figure 1 - Evolution of regeneration processes in Poland
 Source: own study based on Musiał-Węclawowicz (2007).

Regeneration in Poland, over the last twenty years, is gaining in importance and intensification (figure 1). It is now regarded as a factor in the development and improvement of living conditions. It is also clearly highlighted in the government documents defining the country's development directions: National Strategy for Regional Development, National Spatial Development Concept 2030, National Development Strategy.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF REGENERATION IN POLAND

Regeneration requires as much holistic approach as possible. This means that many legal acts have to be respected when implementing regeneration projects. The process is a unique conglomeration of various activities, so each change in a statutory should facilitate the comprehensive measures, while no legislative change should not hinder and complicate them (PMID, 2014).

Since 2015 the regeneration processes in Poland are being conducted out within the legal framework set by the dedicated basic act of Polish law - Act on Regeneration (JL, 2015). For the first time Polish legal system, presents an issue of regeneration as a multilevel, complex approach within multi-unit co-operation. The act anchors the implementation of regeneration processes within the competence of Gminas (eng. basic land administrative units/municipal offices) by introducing a definition on regeneration and its stakeholders, adding regeneration processes to Gminas own tasks (by the amendment of the Act of 8 march 1990 on municipal self-government (JL, 2016) and public purpose within the meaning of the Act on real estate management (JL, 2016), enhance local participation, equip municipalities with dedicated planning tools - special zone of regeneration and local regeneration plan.

The enrollments of the Act on Regeneration obliges Gminas to prepare a complex Municipal Regeneration Program (pl. Gminny Program Rewitalizacji) fulfilling the guidelines set by the experts representing Marshals' Offices (polish provincial offices). It is a strategic document which includes diagnoses, plans and coordinates actions to achieve the expected changes after regeneration. It also coordinates the regeneration activities with a number of other municipal documents, resulting in extensive effects. Moreover, according to the provisions of the Act, the Regeneration Committee is set up for mediation and advisory purposes and to ensure the participation of all interested stakeholders. What is important, the act emphasizes the importance of participation of local inhabitants by introducing this concept regardless the notion of consultation existing in the earlier legal framework. Municipal regeneration program which is a resolution of the municipality council, does not constitute a local law - it is therefore not a source of common law provisions, it does not bind the addresses of legal norms. It is an internal document binding its principal leader (and the project promoter) - the mayor of the municipality. Even though ESF and ERDF support is dedicated to the areas where there is the worst socioeconomic situation, it is important to remember that the municipal regeneration program – similarly to any economic program - refers to the whole area of the town over a longer period of time. The mandatory components of the Program referred to in the Act are shown at figure 2.



Figure 2 - Mandatory components of Municipal Regeneration Program in accordance with the Act on regeneration (2015)
Source: Own study based on the Act of 9 October 2015 on regeneration (2016)

Even though the Act contains a number of general principles for conducting this process, such as a mandate for participation or a duty to rely on analysis, there are no rigid premises for the designation of regenerated areas and detailed rules for its conduct. This remains the competence of municipalities, which should shape this process adequately to their needs. Support is provided by the Marshal's Office as a leading institution of the ROP, and is based on the Ministry of Economic Development's guidelines (2016). The ministry guidelines are only a part of larger regeneration thematic module, led by the mentioned above National Regeneration Plan 2022 (2014). The Plan is an extended interpretation of the conduct of regeneration processes as a comprehensive and integrated action. It defines regeneration programs as the operational framework and coordinating platform for regeneration activities, formulating the principles for their creation and implementation.

3.2 REGENERATION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

The European Union has allocated to Poland 82.5 billion EUR over the 2014–2020 period, which makes Poland the largest beneficiary of Union assistance. The new EU Funds perspective, as well as new Polish law, have definitely changed the way of regenerations programs realization. Firstly, the delimitation of regenerations area is more restricted. This is the field of cooperation between Municipals' and Marshals' Offices. Compared to the previous billing period, the role of an adequate, in-depth diagnosis, based on multifaceted socio-economic analysis has increased. Nowadays it is necessary to fulfill the restrictions of regeneration areas delimitation worked out by Marshals office experts.

	Mazovian Voivodship	Pomeranian Voivodship
Organizer	Mazovian Unit of Implementation EU Programs	Voivodship Regeneration Work Group (representative of Marshall's Office)
Participants	Gminas of Mazovian Voivodship.	Two groups of participants: - 9 municipals belonging to Metropolitan Area of TriCity negotiating within framework of metropolitan development strategy - 22 municipals outside the metropolitan area competing in the competition for implementation of ROP integrated projects
Objective	Helping Gminas to initiate processes leading to the regeneration of degraded areas thanks to preparing programs of the regeneration processes.	Negotiate a best solution for sustainable development of the region with respecting local conditions and needs.
Funding	Contest for Gminas for co-financing the process of preparing or actualization of the programs on regeneration.	Funding for Municipality Regeneration Program comes from PO POWER; the integrated regeneration projects are funded by ROP's funds: part of it determined by ITI Strategy of Metropolitan Area of TriCity, rest have a contest for co-financing.

Table 1 - Comparing approaches in the Mazovian and Pomeranian Voivodship. Source: Own study.

4 MAZOVIAN VOIVEDOSHIP

Regional Operational Program for Mazovian Voivodship 2014-20 (ROP MV) is based on The Guidelines for The Regeneration Process in Operational Programs 2014-20 (Polish Ministry of Economic Development, 2016). ROP MV provides funds for complex regeneration process of crisis areas.

Funding is possible only if regeneration project of particular Gmina is listed in the List of Mazovian Voivodeship regeneration program, There are two ways to register the program on the list. One is to take part in Contest for Gminas for supporting the process of preparing the regeneration programs. The other is to take part in the recruitment. Gminas which apply to fund their projects have to fulfill such requirements as: following the rules from the Regeneration Program, being at the List of Marshall's Office mentioned before, meet basic criteria of particular elements and features (complexity, concentration, complementarity – of space and problems, procedures, finances etc.).

In the Instruction for preparing regeneration programs for ROP prepared by Mazovian Marshall's Office there is underline the importance of social participation and structural changes in crisis area in those programs. In the regeneration program there should be the description of participation of diverse groups of stakeholders in the way enabling to check the level of the participation. Moreover, the stakeholders' contribution is defined as the foundation of each part of the process. Despite the obligation of incorporation of various stakeholders, there are any imposed tools of participation, what gives Gminas opportunity to individual choice (Instruction..., 2016).

5 POMERANIAN VOIVODSHIP

In the Pomeranian Voivodship the regeneration is determined by the assumption of two strategic documents

- the POMERANIAN 2020 Strategy and the Regional Strategic Program ACTIVE POMERANIANS 2020, whose provisions are the main basis of the Pomeranian ROP for the years 2014-2020. ROP Pomeranian includes thematic objectives such as inclusion in the labor market (ESF funds), social services (European Social Funds), and support for physical, economic and social regeneration of the poor – comprehensive regenerative actions (European Regions Development Funds). Funding for the integrated regeneration projects is implemented in the Pomeranian Voivodship in two ways:

- the towns within the Metropolitan Area of the TriCity are supported by the mechanism of the Integrated Territorial Investments,
- the towns outside Metropolitan Area can be supported within competition. Different funding conditions results with different conditions for implementing the regeneration processes (figure 3).

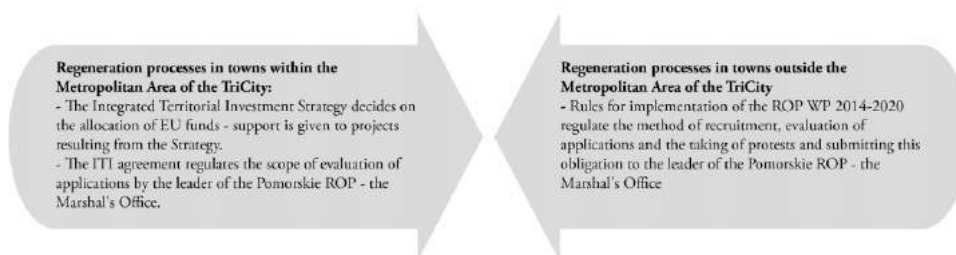


Figure 3 - The differences in conducting revitalization processes in Pomeranian towns
 Source: Own study based on Wieczorzak (2017).

Regeneration, which is based on the funds of the new financial perspective in the Pomeranian Voivodship, started with a series of trainings for urban self-governments. The result of the meetings was the declaration of accession signed by the local self-governments. Both the rules of who and how should be involved in the Regeneration Working Group were discussed during the meetings. The team assess the merits of the submitted applications by Gmina's, both in terms of giving feedback on the projects of regeneration programs as well as the delimitation of regeneration areas themselves. The working group consists of 12 people from different departments of the Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodship

(regional programs, regional and spatial development, European funds, education and sport, Pomeranian Office for Regional Planning and Regional Center for Social Policy). Such a group of experts guarantees comprehensive care of the process, with particular emphasis on competences in social services, socio-occupational activation, NGO specificity, spatial planning and community management.

In the meantime, the legal framework for regeneration processes has been changed (2015 – National Regeneration Plan, Act of Regeneration) as well as the ministry guidelines have been updated. Under which the Ministry of Development has shown willingness to co-organize the competition for the preparation of regeneration programs. The self-government of the Pomeranian Voivodship, in cooperation with the Ministry of Development, has used the support from the POWER program to equip local governments with funds and tools to develop their own principles for the implementation of comprehensive regeneration activities within the Municipal Regeneration Program.

After signing the agreement between the Ministry and the government of the Pomeranian voivodship, the task of formal and substantive evaluation of programs was officially entrusted to working team for the voivodship the Regeneration Working Group. It was the group that had consulted and approved the municipal regeneration programs of Pomeranian towns and cities. It also decides on the range of Integrated Regeneration Projects. This process follows the successful model of negotiation developed during the initiation of ITI and Integrated Territorial Agreements (ITA – ITI based model of negotiations between regional and local government. Described in details in 5.3.). At present (May, 2017) the competition for Integrated Regeneration Projects has started. 31 cities of the Pomeranian Voivodship joined the contest: 9 out of 13 cities metropolitan area and 22 out of 27 cities outside the metropolitan area. In this financial perspective, as in the financial perspective of ROP 2007-2013, the biggest beneficiary will be the capital of the Pomeranian Voivodship - Gdansk. In all of the Pomeranian Voivodship the total area designated for regeneration is 2,485 ha (0.1% of the total area of the voivodship). All in all, over 143,000 people live here (6% of the voivodship's population) (Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodship, 2016).

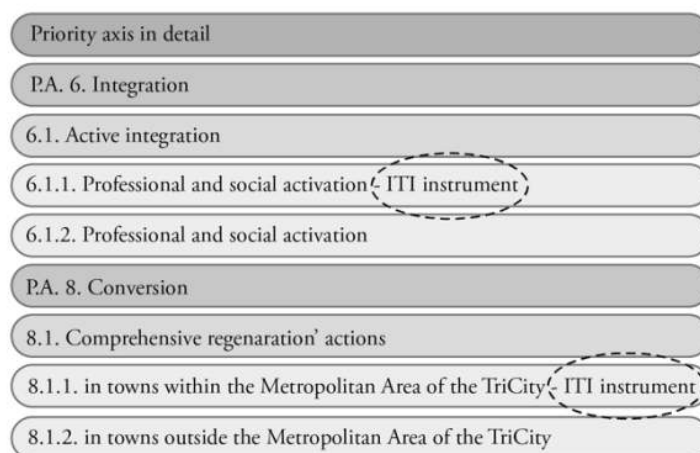


Figure 4 - Priority axes within ROP 2014-2020 dedicated for comprehensive regeneration of degraded areas
Source: Own study based on ROP 2014-2020

5.1 NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

The process of negotiating both public and EU funds for regeneration processes is derived from the practices of ITI - refer to the Metropolitan Area of the TriCity, and ITA - for the remaining eight Functional Urban Areas. The negotiations within the framework of ITI and ITA was primarily to provide preferential access to EU funds under the ROP 2014-2020 for investments in favor of development of the region, at the same time corresponding with the local needs. In this way financing from the ROP is accomplished by prioritizing projects that are diagnosed within the framework of agreements of local government units affiliated by the ITI and the ITA, and then negotiated with the managing authority of ROP WP 2014-2020 (the Pomeranian Voivodship Board).

The first stage of cooperation with local governments was the consultation on the delimitation of regeneration areas aimed at identifying the part of the city which is in the relatively worst socio-economic situation. This is based on an analysis of the internal potential, depicting the differentiation and general condition of the city, in line with the Guidelines for the programming of regeneration projects under the ROP WP for 2014-2020. The methodology of in-depth socio-economic analysis indicated by the experts of the team assumes the use of various sources of spatial information as well as analyzes of the contents of literature and others. The indicators chosen for the analysis focused on two groups: the mandatory indicators, referred to the average values in the region and optional, referred to the average values in the analyzed town in the indicated subsystems, with the latter are chosen during the consultation. The reports resulting from the delimitation of regeneration areas were the starting point for further work on municipal regeneration programs and for reconciling the scope of the integrated regeneration project.

As a director of the Regional Program Department of the Marshal Office of the Pomeranian Voivodship, Jan Szymański, said “The admission of the formula for an integrated regeneration project within the framework of the Regional Operational Program for the Pomeranian Voivodship 2014-2020 aims to ensure the coherence, efficiency and sustainability of the regeneration programs for degraded areas” (Attractive cities for active residents. Preparation of regeneration programs for integrated operations in the Pomeranian Voivodship (2016) Gdansk: Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodship, 2016)

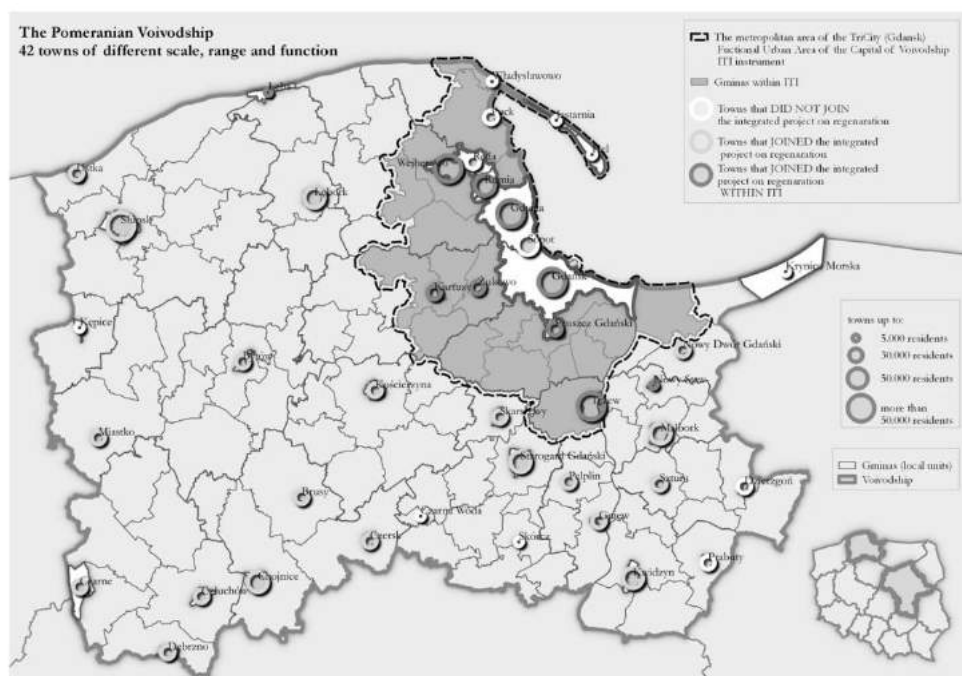


Figure 5 - An integrated project on regeneration within ROP WP 2014-2020
 Source: Own study based on ROP WP 2014-2020.

5.2 THE CASE STUDY OF THE CITY OF GDANSK

Gdansk is a city in the north of Poland, one of the main academic centers and the most important port city in Poland. It currently lives in about 430 thousand inhabitants. The city is particularly important for the identity of the Poles, due to the over-thousand-year tradition of the city -port, the Free City of Gdansk, and, above all, the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, which in the 1980s liberated Poles from Communism. Urban tissue, drastically destroyed after the Second World War and then hastily rebuilt and consolidated by modernist prefabricated blocks of flats, has suffered a severe degradation in the face of unfavorable social and economic trends. Degradation progresses both in terms of technical consumption and aging of functional infrastructure and residential development as well as erosion of social relations and the emergence of numerous economic problems. Regeneration in the full sense has been taken related to the Local Regeneration Program in the years 2009-2015.

5.2.1 LOCAL PROGRAM ON REGENERATION IN GDANSK (AN OLD APPROACH)

The municipality of Gdansk in the years 2009-2015 carried out 4 revitalization projects in the following districts: Dolne Miasto, Dolny Wrzeszcz, Nowy Port and Letnica. All projects were co-financed by the ERDF under the Pomeranian ROP 2007-2013 axis 3 Urban and metropolitan functions. City of Gdansk completed projects for approximately 104 million PLN (around 24 million EUR) with ERDF co-financing of 56% of the value of the projects.

5.2.2 MUNICIPAL REGENERATION PROGRAM OF GDAŃSK (A NEW APPROACH)

In the financial perspective for the years 2014-2020, the aim is to implement projects that will respond to the challenges of socio-economic activation of inhabitants of regeneration areas.

The area of regeneration	Approximate number of inhabitants of the area in 2016	Approximate area in hectares
Bishop Hill-Old Chelm	2 484	126
Down Town-Rampart Square	6 129	69
New Port-Letnica-Wisloujście Fortress	10 111	178
Orunia	6 933	102

Table 2 - Basic characteristic of the regeneration areas in Gdansk
 Source: Own study based on: Municipal Regeneration Program of Gdansk

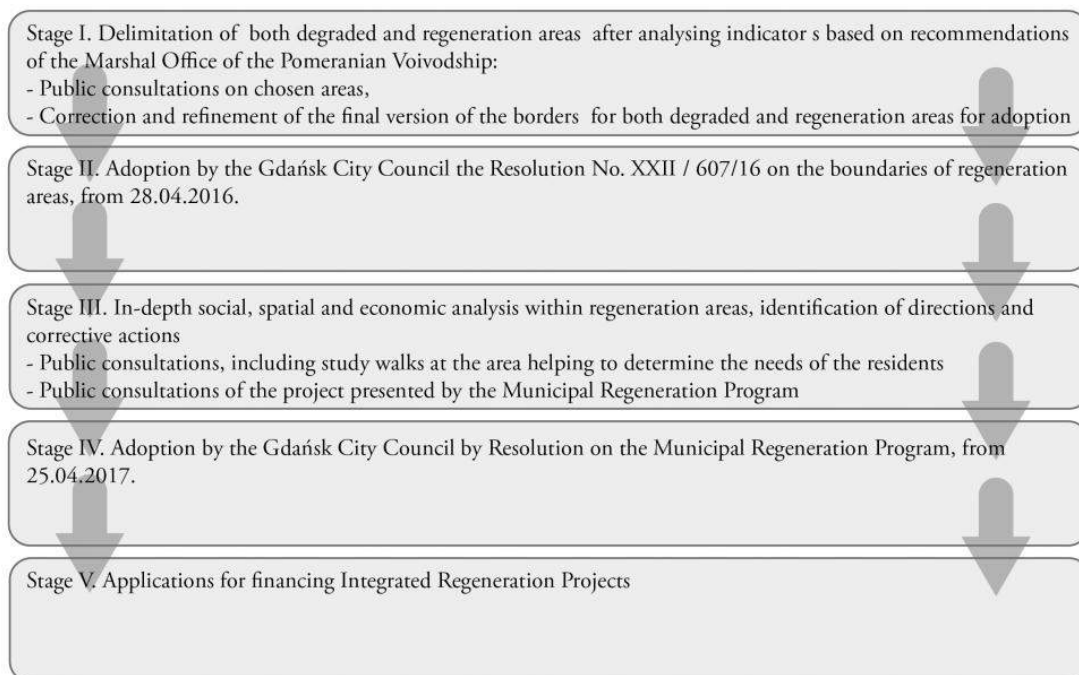


Figure 6 - The chronology of the process of regeneration of the new financial perspective in the city of Gdansk Source: Own study based on Municipal Regeneration Program of Gdansk.

Before joining the negotiations on Integrated Regeneration Projects, the municipality of Gdansk consulted with voivodship regeneration working group about selecting and delimiting of the regeneration areas. Based on the indicators developed in the consultation, an in-depth socio-economic analysis of urban space was undertaken to identify 12 areas requiring intervention. As a result of further analysis, 4 regeneration areas were selected from the above: Biskupia Górka with Stary Chelm, Orunia, and once again as a continuation, Nowy Port with Wisloujście Fortress and Dolne Miasto with Wałowy Square. Selected areas represent a small percentage of both the area and the number of inhabitants of the city

(table 2). Every effort has been made to ensure that the revitalization program is integrated, multi-faceted, including a crisis area identified on the basis of the diagnosis.

5.3 LOCAL PROGRAM ON REGENERATION IN BYTOW (OUTSIDE THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF TRICITY AND THE ITI INSTRUMENT)

The authorities of the town of Bytów (located in the central part of the Pomeranian Voivodship) chose an „old approach” which was practiced before the act on regeneration has been adopted and is still accepted within Polish framework. The new Local Regeneration Program will be a required instrument for applying for funds within ROP 2014-2020. It is worth noting that the process of working on the document took place in parallel with negotiations between Pomeranian towns and the voivodship regeneration working group (explained above). This is an important element of integrating both regional and local policy concerning regeneration processes.

At the beginning of the work on the document mentioned above, there was a series of workshops and information meetings organized where, as a result, the delimitation of the degraded areas of the town of Bytów was established. This was a summary of the important first stage of the planning of regeneration process because shortly thereafter, the Management Board of the Pomeranian voivodship with the Resolution No. 1325/101/15 approved the list of recommended areas to support them with the integrated regeneration projects within ROP 2014-2020.

An important stage within the work on the Local Regeneration Program was a survey conducted among residents. The main aim of the study was to get acquainted with the opinion on the attractiveness of the area of "Miła Street" (delimited degraded area), the problems noticed there, its strengths and weaknesses, and possible directions of development. The survey form was available on the website of the town and in paper version available at the Municipal Office in Bytów. In addition, the questionnaires were distributed to students and teachers of local schools, housing managers, members of the consultative team, NGOs, entrepreneurs working in the delimited area, councilors, representatives of Bytów municipality councils and residents. As part of the questions, the respondents indicated the most attractive investments which should be implemented in the first place.

The detailed range of the regeneration process has been worked out within the meetings addressed to the group mentioned above and related with the area of "Miła" (ie. streets: Gdańska, Słoneczna, Miła, Działkowa, Pogodna, Wery, Sikorskiego, Górna, Pochyła, 1 Maja, Staszica, Mierosławskiego i Sychty) conducted by an external company.

Completion of the preparation of the document coincided with the Pomeranian Voivodship Board' Resolution No. 1374/201/16 reconciling the range of integrated regeneration projects that were negotiated by the Regeneration Team of the Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodship with the Towns entitled to support within ROP 2014 - 2020 located outside the Metropolitan Area of the Tri-City.

The document is finished and its partial financing was negotiated. Now it is the time to observe the process of implementation of agreed projects and applying for funds from other sources, which will enable to complete planned regeneration process.

6. LESSON LEARNT

The role of regeneration processes in the regional policy implemented in Poland after 2020 is bound to increase. At the same time, in a new financial perspective, one can expect a significant reduction in the scale of the EU intervention or at least a change of its structure, as different priorities and areas will be supported when the category of some Polish regions, probably including Pomerania, will change from Less-Developed to Transition regions. There is a need to create more independent systems of the EU funding schemes and could carry out the regeneration processes supported in institutional, organizational and financial manner. In order to achieve this goal, the greater involvement of national funding sources – managed by central, regional and local authorities, is required. There is also a need for a new type of development projects – multithreaded, based on partnership and creating a competitive advantage, which

also needs to be based on the improved thematic and spatial concentration of intervention. The 2014-2020 perspective shows new, better approach to the regeneration projects - not only the renovation of public space will be taken into consideration, but also activities increasing social development. Instructions and guidelines prepared by the government for Gminas encourage to incorporate various stakeholders into the regeneration process and do not show the preferable tools of participation what gives Gminas the opportunity for individual choice. A question may be asked: is the participatory approach useful in the improvement of inter-communal cooperation? They surely show an innovative approach to the bottom-up development programming at supra-local level. When the projects within regeneration programs are negotiated, the shape and range of various investments, crucial for the development of the territories in question, is decided. When all parties involved sit down together, they are able to reach a compromise allowing for the implementation of the most important projects for improving the life quality on polish cities and towns.

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ID 1722 | MIND THE GAP: TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE AND SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEMS IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION

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ABSTRACT: Starting from the 1990s, an increasing number of studies and reports focussed on the heterogeneous landscape for territorial governance and spatial planning in Europe. The geographical coverage of these comparative analyses broadened over time, paralleling the progression of the EU integration process. However, until now the Western Balkan countries have been ignored by the majority of the studies, mostly due to their fragmentation and geopolitical instability. As the pre-accession negotiation proceeds, such analytical gap should be overcome through the collection of evidence that may support the EU in developing a more sound and effective cohesion policy. This paper makes a first step in sketching out and comparing the evolution of the territorial governance and spatial planning in the Western Balkan Region since the late 1980s. More specifically, it first presents a general overview of the geographical and socio-economic situation, to then explore the evolution of the administrative and legal frameworks for spatial planning as well as of the tools that characterise each national context. Highlighting similarities and differences between the countries at stake, our work exposes the complexity of the subject and sets the stage for further research on the matter.

KEYWORDS: Spatial planning system, Territorial governance, Western Balkan Region, European integration, Transition.

1 INTRODUCTION

Modern spatial planning systems rose as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, when increasing urbanisation rates, and the movement of population away from agriculture towards the industrial and services sectors created substantial development pressures across countries. In response, most government established procedures to channel these pressures and resolve conflicts between competing