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Introduction

The processes observed in the modern world are characterized by various kinds of changes, often of a rapid and concurrently multidirectional (turbulent) character, resulting in a considerable increase in the level of uncertainty in all areas of socio-economic life. This is compounded by the fact that spatial development is marked by constantly increasing complexity, which is a result of the increasing degree of openness in social and economic life, together with deepening specialization, widening multisubjectivity as well as differentiation in functional-spatial arrangements. The openness of socio-economic life leads to an increase in population mobility, goods transfer and the accelerating dynamics of information civilization, which results in new standards of behaviour which challenge current value systems. Increasing scientific and professional specialization enhances society's creative abilities, enabling the utilization of more advanced technologies. Specialization directly affects the improvement of quality and competitiveness, forcing far-reaching reforms in the spheres of education, production organization and public services. Since not all spatial units adapt to these dynamic changes in a similar manner, this brings an escalation of disproportions in their development level. This differentiation is deepened as a result of the phenomenon of polarization caused by various degrees of susceptibility on the part of spatial elements to the absorption of modern achievements of human activity. Hence the phenomenon of differentiation in the level of socio-economic development is observed in the modern space. The concurrent empowerment of society of particular spatial elements (regions, subregions, local units) means that they are more interested in the creation of development processes.

In this issue of the "Regional Journal", the readers will find a collection of interesting scientific articles devoted to current issues and problems regarding local and regional development, cities and regions, spatial development in contemporary reality, regional policy, public administration as well as creativity and innovation.

We would like to wish you pleasant reading, and hope that the findings presented in this publication will inspire further discussion and research devoted to regional development.

Stanisław Korenik, Piotr Hajduga