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TERRITORIAL ASPECT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW COHESION POLICY

Summary: In the last ten-odd years we have been observing a discussion held in the European Union on the change of the regional policy paradigm in terms of its objectives, priorities, tools and the geographical scope of intervention. Changing development conditions require modification of the European cohesion policy model, the main priority of which still is to equalize the level of development of regions in the Community Member States. At the turn of the centuries we can see changes in the way the European cohesion policy is implemented and also the orientation of the equalization policy (which compensates the social and economic backwardness of regions) towards the development policy (which supports competitiveness, takes advantage of the endogenous potential for development and eliminates various barriers). Such policy is to contribute to a more effective use of the potential for development in the entire Community to stimulate growth, employment and cohesion. This paper aims at attracting attention to the evolution of the European cohesion policy model towards a place-based policy.

Keywords: regional development, regional policy, cohesion policy, territorial cohesion.

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1. Introduction

The debate on the territorial cohesion in the European Union started as early as in the middle of the 1980s, although it did not gain significance until the second half of the 1990s. On the one hand, it was connected with the European cohesion policy; on the other, with a spatial approach, i.e. a place-based approach to regional development in the Community. Therefore, it combined both fundamental objectives of the European cohesion policy expressed most fully in the Treaty that formed the European Community¹ and the spatial development perspective, which gained a program and institutional dimension upon approval of the ESDP, European Spatial Development Perspective

¹ Cf. Art. 2 and Art. 158 of the Treaty establishing the European Community... [2005, pp. 12, 110].

[cf. European Commission 1999],² in Potsdam and commencement in 2000 of a research program called the ESPON, i.e. European Spatial Planning Observation Network,³ oriented towards comprehensive examination of EU spatial structures.

Another example of EC's involvement in spreading the idea of territorial cohesion is the Goteborg Strategy of the European Council [Commission of the European Communities 2001] of 2001, which adds the environmental dimension to the Lisbon Strategy [Szlachta, Zaleski 2009, p. 156].

A token of acceptance of the actions taken was approval by the EU Member States, in an informal meeting of the ministers of urban development and territorial cohesion, which took place in Leipzig in May 2007, of the *Territorial Agenda of the European Union – Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions* [2007]. The document created the framework of cooperation for Member States, Community institutions as well as partners and non-governmental organizations in the scope of territorial cohesion on the national and European levels. An important element connected with the *Territorial Agenda of the European Union* was the so-called *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* [2007], which defined common grounds for the development policy of urban areas and pointed to the necessity for sustainable spatial organization based on the Community polycentric urban structure [Szlachta, Zaleski 2009, p. 157].

As a result of the ongoing discussion, the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on December 1, 2009, was supplemented with a third dimension of cohesion, i.e. territorial cohesion, beside economic and social dimensions. Art. 3 of the Treaty states that “(the EU) shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States.” This way territorial cohesion became a politically accepted objective of the European Community.

The last element in this sequence of European documents was the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion – Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength* [Commission of the European Communities 2008], published by the European Commission in October 2008, which officially commenced an all-European debate to broaden the understanding of territorial cohesion and implications for policies, including the future cohesion policy after 2013.

This paper aims at attracting attention to the evolution of the European cohesion policy model towards a place-based policy, taking into account in particular the financial perspective for 2014–2020.

² A document agreed by ministers of EU Member States responsible for spatial planning and regional development of the Community. The objective of the ESPON is to coordinate various elements of the development policy as well as to increase the cohesion and consistency of policies in order to eliminate territorial inequalities and achieve more spatially balanced economic development.

³ The ESPON aims at creating a platform for analysis and examination of the space of EU Member States and states that are not official members of the organization, such as Norway, Switzerland, Island or Lithuania. The analyses performed as part of the program produced a number of research reports that describe various aspects of spatial planning in the Community. The ESPON has increased the knowledge about territorial aspects of territorial development and created an integrated and innovative platform for exchange of information about spatial differentiation of the social and economic structure in Europe.

2. Place-based development – a new approach in the cohesion policy

Social and economic development has had a territorial dimension [Szlachta, Zaleski 2009, p. 150], and the concept of place-based development is founded on achievements of the academic thought in the scope of regional development, focusing in the recent years on the analysis of the spatial dimension of social and economic development processes. In the first decade of the 21st century we could observe a vital redefinition in the regional development doctrine, expressed, among others, in new theoretical currents, i.e. new economic geography [Fujita, Krugman, Venables 2001; Krugman 1995], place-based policy [Barca 2009] as well as economics of networks and transfers [Castells 2008a; Castells 2008b]. It led to a fundamental enhancement of the status of the territorial dimension, including the regional one, social and economic development processes as well as modification of macroeconomic doctrines, which used to be anti-spatial [Szlachta 1992]. It resulted in changes in the lexicon of the regional policy, which was broadened to include new aspects, such as regional competitiveness, self-learning regions, endogenous potential for development, knowledge-based economy, information society and ICT [Szlachta 2013a, p. 27].

We can discern this impact of social and institutional determinants on development of territorial units also in documents drawn up by EU institutions. *The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion – Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength* points to competitiveness and well-being as those elements of development, which more and more depend on capabilities of inhabitants and enterprises of a given area. The document presents four basic directions of the European Community's impact on territorial cohesion. These include [Commission of the European Communities 2008]:

- concentration, i.e. overcoming negative consequences of differences in concentration of economic functions;
- creation of connections between territories, i.e. overcoming the distance and increasing accessibility levels;
- cooperation resulting in overcoming of differences by creating networks;
- dealing with issues of areas with specific geographical conditions.

Development strategies in the cohesion policy started to cover a wide range of direct and indirect efficiency factors and focused on endogenous territorial characteristics (instead of exogenous investments and transfers). Tools applied in the new regional policy focus on integrated “soft” and “hard” instruments, and cover, in particular, business environment, relational capital, multi-level governance and better coordination of development processes. What is also emphasized is “good governance,” which engages regional and local authorities to the broadest possible extent [Słupińska 2013, p. 10].

The evolution of the regional policy paradigm (cf. Table 1), widely described by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), covered several essential issues [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010a, pp. 2–3]:

- transition from traditional redistribution of resources to an approach assuming the strengthening and taking advantage of the territorial potential of all regions;
- departure from the division into inter- and intraregional policies in favor of the creation of one common policy, which defined objectives for all public entities in a territory;
- departure from the model of short-term top-down-distributed subsidies “for the most disadvantaged areas” in favor of the model of long-term decentralized development policies addressed to all regions;
- a multi-sectoral (horizontal) approach to place-based development actions;
- departure from dispersed intervention in favor of more selective (concentrated) investments;
- enhancement of the role of the regional level in launching development processes in the multi-level governance system;
- diversified approach to various types of (functional) territories.

Individual segments of the new regional policy paradigm are based on modern development factors. The relation of the two key directions of intervention of public policies oriented towards cohesion or (and) competitiveness was profoundly modified in favor of competitiveness. Directly and indirectly the proposals indicated, among other things, special significance of programming of social and economic development in functional systems [Szlachta 2013b, p. 26].

The changes taking place in the regional policy are founded on the place-based approach. It is a part of the process of integration and coordination of territorial public policies with objectives of the regional policy set for individual areas of strategic intervention. In the territorial system, the priority role in initiating development with the help of multi-level governance was assigned to the regional level. Compared to the old paradigm of regional policy, the new approach is implemented in multi-sectoral way, in the form of integrated development-oriented undertakings, with the use of individually selected soft and hard tools, which ensures better coordination and efficiency. The integrated undertakings implemented as part of place-based development actions are planned at least over the medium term, which allows territorial results to come into being, and also allows for becoming part of the EU programming period [Rynio 2013, pp. 273–274].

According to the new paradigm of the regional policy, direct and short-term intervention in equalization of levels of social and economic development is supplanted by long-term actions conducted as part of the development policy and by results of strategic programming on a large scale, on a scale of all regions. The subjects of intervention are integrated on each level and in various cross sections. Equalization of levels of social and economic development is connected with the potential and resources of a territory, which determines concentration of actions on

Table 1. Old and new paradigm of the regional policy

	Old paradigm	New paradigm
Strategies	Sectoral approach	Integrated development undertakings
Objectives	Competitiveness	
	Naming a number of elements in the social and economic structure as determinants of competitiveness; the result: overlap of various uncoordinated actions.	Strategic direction of the regional policy (spread of growth) taken in all regions, including the most competitive centers. Precisely defined factors of competitiveness and strategically selected directions of its improvement. Multi-sectoral place-based approach.
	Equalization	
	Strong emphasis put on equalizing actions, however, all they brought was counter-productive – ever greater differences, scattered resources.	Enhancement of cohesion as a result of enhancement of the potential for absorption (greater transfer of capital, people, knowledge and innovation). Special “equalizing” actions adjusted to potentials of individual regions, important for the entire country, focused on selected areas, conducted in order to discover their potentials and take advantage of them, allowing for achieving the “critical mass” necessary for further development.
Tools	Subsidies and public support.	Integrated “soft” and “hard” instruments, business environment, social capital, networking, better coordination.
Territorial dimension	Regions treated homogeneously, no attention paid to their inner and outer diversity. The territorial dimension is not paid enough attention, the primacy of the sectoral approach, the so-called “poverty algorithm.”	Place-based approach in all development-oriented actions (taking into account diversity, strong coordination, multi-level governance). Integrated programs dedicated to areas of strategic intervention, at the same time maintaining spatial integration being part of the regional policy.
Territorial units	Administrative units. The town/city-countryside relation is not taken into account in policy instruments, one approach to rural areas in the entire country.	Functional units. Diversified approach to different types of territories. Place-based policy taking into consideration dependencies of areas that generate growth, areas linked functionally and peripheral areas.
Actors	Government and voivodship local government.	All levels of public administration, social actors and business representatives.

Source: Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego [2010b, p. 15].

given areas. A decision on intervention is followed by concentrated and selective investments rather than current and scattered actions. The intervention lasts until the territory is capable of self-development. The fundamental issue of the new paradigm of the regional policy is the spread of growth of all regions, regardless of their level of social and economic development to date. It is determined by positive selection of

competitiveness factors as well as strategic programming of improvement of the region's competitiveness [Rynio 2013, p. 274].

The concept developed by OECD experts was reflected in a report prepared by F. Barca, which justified usefulness of the place-based approach in the cohesion policy. The approach concerns more efficient use of hidden or wrongly used resources, including human resources, as well as specialization of individual territories in regions characterized by differentiated levels of development. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to strive after better coordination of other public politics of territorial influence and after ongoing assessment of their impact on a territory. A stronger place-based approach means also more intense involvement of local authorities in shaping and implementing the regional policy. The new regional policy should respond to specific needs of territories and be based on their endogenous potential for development. The place-based approach envisages multidimensional nature of development processes, which allows for taking into account social, economic and environmental determinants as well as the diversity of areas where the processes are carried out. The place-based policy is a policy oriented towards taking advantage of the inner potential for development, including knowledge, and a policy allowing for interventions that respond to development challenges on the one hand, and interventions adjusted to local conditions, on the other [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010b, pp. 16, 76]. So the European cohesion policy departs from the former model of redistribution of resources to more disadvantaged areas in favor of supporting the development of endogenous mechanisms and factors of social and economic development. The best and most appropriate way to define the potential and needs of individual areas requires close cooperation with local authorities in order to define detailed objectives of public intervention [Słupińska 2013, p. 11].

3. Major changes in the cohesion policy 2014–2020

The Community debate on the future of the cohesion policy after 2013 officially began in fall 2007 with the publication of the Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion. The last financial and economic crisis redefined the overly optimistic assumptions of the Lisbon Strategy regarding the acceleration of the economic growth and rise in employment, and threatened co-financing with state and regional budgets of a number of development projects supported by the European Union. However, the *Fifth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion* presented by the European Commission in November 2010 gives a positive opinion on the impact of the cohesion policy on development of the poorest regions to date, and calls for further increase in investments in this scope in the new programming and budgeting perspective. As for specification of directions of changes in the cohesion policy after the year 2013, it started with the publication of *Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart,*

Sustainable and Inclusive Growth [European Commission 2010] and proposals for new multiannual financial frameworks [Jóźwik, Sagan (eds.) 2012, pp. 65–66].

On October 6, 2011 the European Commission presented the so-called legislative package for the cohesion policy 2014–2020, which contains postulates concerning its implementation in that period as well as rules pertaining to the functioning of funds financing the cohesion policy. The changes mentioned in the European Commission’s initiatives concern, in particular, focusing on Europe 2020 priorities, i.e. intelligent and sustainable development that favors rise in employment; awarding high efficiency; supporting integrated planning; focusing on results – monitoring of progress in achievement of agreed objectives; supporting territorial cohesion and simplifying the support system [*Polityka spójności 2014–2020...* 2011, p. 1]. So the concept of the cohesion policy proposed by the European Commission refers to the objectives of Europe 2020 and the call for place-based development mentioned in F. Barca’s report. The EU budget proposal 2014–2020 envisages EUR 376 billion on implementation of the cohesion policy, including funds for a new instrument called Connecting Europe Facility, which is to support implementation of cross-border investments in the power industry, transport and IT [Massot Marti et. al. 2011, p. 48].

Table 2. Region categories and criteria of allocation of funds among Member States based on the European Commission’s proposal of October 6, 2011

Region category	Region qualification criteria within the scope of the following objective: “Investments for economic growth and rise in employment”	Criteria taken into account in allocation of funds among Member States
Less developed regions	GDP <i>per capita</i> lower than 75% of the average UE-27 GDP	Qualifying population, wealth of the region, wealth of the state and the rate of unemployment in less developed regions and transitional regions
Transitional regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New region category* • Replaces the current <i>phasing-out</i> and <i>phasing-in</i> system • GDP <i>per capita</i> within 75–90% of the average UE-27 GDP 	Qualifying population, wealth of the region, rate of unemployment, employment rate, level of education and population density in more developed regions
More developed regions	GDP <i>per capita</i> higher than 90% of the average UE-27 GDP	Population, wealth of the state and the area in the case of the Cohesion Fund

* – all regions in which the GDP *per capita* for the period 2007–2013 was lower than 75% of the average UE-25 GDP, but in which the GDP *per capita* increased to more than 75% of the average UE-27 GDP obtain at least two-thirds of their allocation for the period 2007–2013. For each region category there will be a minimum share of the Social European Fund (SEF) set in the budget allocated for the cohesion policy (25% for less developed regions, 40% for transitional regions and 52% for more developed regions).

Source: Słupińska [2013, p. 14].

Referring to the geographic scope of support, the European Commission's proposal assumes a division into three types of regions (cf. Table 2) based on the level of development achieved, measured with the gross domestic product (GDP) *per capita*.

The created region categories will take advantage of the support offered as part of European funds, i.e. the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund.

A significant change proposed by the European Commission in the new financial perspective for the years 2014–2020 is inclusion of the postulate articulated for many years now for greater influence of regions on the implementation of the European Commission's cohesion policy, in accordance with the place-based development concept. The regions will be provided with certain competence in the scope of programming, management and control of results of operational programs [Słupińska 2013, p. 15].

The reflection of the integrated program approach in the cohesion policy is to be the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) on the European Union level, a document covering key actions to be supported with all European funds, i.e. the ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) as well as the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Next, on the Member State level, a Member State will conclude a Partnership Agreement with the European Commission, which will contain a description of planned operational programs financed based on the CFS. Simultaneously with the general Partnership Agreement, the European Commission will adopt concrete operational programs prepared by a Member State [Kudełko 2013, p. 220].

There is no doubt that the European Commission's proposal regarding the new programming period for the years 2014–2020 includes the territorial dimension called for by F. Barca as territorial governments play ever greater role in shaping and implementation of the cohesion policy. However – which also should be considered a key change – what is also ever greater is the responsibility of regional administration for creation of adequate conditions necessary to obtain support (conditionality) [Słupińska 2013, p. 15].

Conclusion

The European Commission's proposal concerning the shape and rules of implementation of the cohesion policy in the new financial perspective for 2014–2020 introduces a number of significant changes compared with the period 2007–2013, which result in more attention devoted to the concept of development based on the potential and characteristics of a territory. Undoubtedly, directions of the reforms have been affected by findings and research conducted by the OECD (the

new paradigm of the regional policy) on the one hand, and conclusions arising from the report prepared by F. Barca (place-based development, greater involvement of regional and local authorities as well as social partners in the process of programming and implementation of the cohesion policy) on the other [Słupińska 2013, p. 16].

When considering the new paradigm of the regional policy, apart from transferring our attention from barriers to potential possibilities for development of individual regions, we should pay particular attention to the following aspects [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010b, p. 17]:

- increasing the importance of the regional level in launching regional processes;
- strong orientation towards territoriality;
- fundamental differences between the territorial approach and the sectoral approach.

The build-up and right use of the territorial potential as well as competitive advantages should be based on local knowledge, experience, skills, specializations and networking. In this context, the European cohesion policy stresses the use of multi-level governance, contract-based commitments of actors of individual levels as well as share in the build-up and facilitation of local institutions, development of the social capital, partnership and networking allowing for the spread of knowledge and experience [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010b, p. 17].

Another element characterizing the new cohesion policy is strong orientation towards territoriality. This approach arises from actions taken on the European level, where we can observe a noticeable increase in the significance of the place-based approach in development. The promotion of the territorial cohesion concept was reflected in EU documents, while the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion – Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength* published by the European Commission in fall 2008 officially initiated the all-European debate aimed at better understanding of territorial cohesion and implications for policies, including the future cohesion policy after 2013.

There is a number of significant differences between the sectoral approach and the territorial approach. The territorial approach is based on the assumption that development processes are multi-dimensional, which allows for taking into consideration social, economic and environmental determinants as well as the diversity of areas in which development processes take place. The place-based approach requires an integrated approach covering inter-sectoral relations, at the same time allowing for sustainable public intervention and maximizing the synergy of implementation instruments. In the sectoral approach, on the other hand, the territorial dimension is not paid enough attention, even tends to be neglected. One of the key flaws in this approach – from the point of view of territorial management – is exclusion of regional and local entities from implementation processes. It decreases efficiency while the resources are limited and should not be allocated to the same objective time after time [Słupińska 2013, pp. 16–17].

The place-based approach characterized by multisectorality and integrated influence on regional development requires also more attention paid to the territorial dimension in other sectoral policies of the European Community. An important source of information on possible solutions allowing for stronger orientation of public policies towards the territorial dimension is the so-called methodological principles⁴ laid down in a document compiled and approved by ministers of cohesion policy during the French presidency in the EU Council. The document contains, among other things, recommendations concerning the necessity to take into consideration territorial influence of major sectoral strategies and policies already on the strategic planning level. Another postulate concerns improvement of complementarity and interrelations between key strategies and sectoral policies and the cohesion policy. In this context the EU Council recommends taking actions aimed at broadening knowledge of territorial influence of major sectoral strategies and policies, conducting all necessary analyses and research, and ensuring the monitoring and assessment of decisions of territorial impact based on rates adjusted for this purpose. In order to be efficient, those actions require proper coordination on both Community and state levels, as well as support and promotion of the place-based approach and territorial projects in all sectoral policies of strong territorial influence [Słupińska 2013, p. 17].

The final shape of the cohesion policy for 2014–2020, which to a large extent depends on its financial dimension, will be a major step towards making the cohesion policy a real instrument for supporting competitiveness of regions by supporting and shaping their inner potentials.

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TERYTORIALNY ASPEKT ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO W NOWEJ POLITYCE SPÓJNOŚCI

Streszczenie: Ostatnie kilkanaście lat to okres toczącej się na forum Unii Europejskiej dyskusji nad zmianą paradygmatu polityki regionalnej pod kątem jej celów, priorytetów, narzędzi, a także geograficznego obszaru interwencji. Ulegające przeobrażeniom uwarunkowania rozwojowe wymuszają konieczność przekształcenia modelu europejskiej polityki spójności, której podstawowym celem nadal pozostaje wyrównywanie poziomu rozwoju regionów krajów członkowskich Wspólnoty. Na przełomie wieków zaobserwować można zmiany w sposobie realizacji europejskiej polityki spójności oraz ukierunkowanie polityki wyrównawczej (rekompensującej zacofanie społeczno-ekonomiczne regionów) w stronę polityki rozwojowej (wspierającej konkurencyjność, wykorzystującej endogeniczne potencjały rozwojowe, jak również usuwającej różnorodne bariery). Tak zorientowana polityka ma się przyczynić do bardziej efektywnego wykorzystania potencjału rozwojowego całej Wspólnoty na rzecz kreowania wzrostu, zatrudnienia i spójności. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na ewolucję modelu europejskiej polityki spójności w kierunku polityki ukierunkowanej terytorialnie (*place-based policy*).

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój regionalny, polityka regionalna, polityka spójności, spójność terytorialna.