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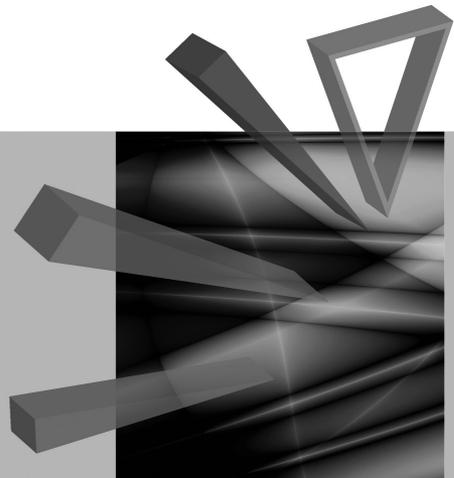
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## Contents

<b>Preface</b> .....	7
<b>Marcin Baron, Artur Ochojski:</b> The cluster of clusters concept in the perspective of regional policy-making and business practice .....	9
<b>Jacek Chądzyński:</b> Cooperation between communities and non-governmental organizations in Poland – results of a survey .....	27
<b>Niki Derlukiewicz:</b> Prospects for innovation development in the European Union according to the new Europe 2020 strategy .....	37
<b>Paweł Dziekański:</b> Financial synthetic index and the economic security of the region in the context of local government efficiency .....	46
<b>Dariusz Głuszczuk:</b> The enterprise financial sources and expenditure for innovation – case of Polish regions .....	62
<b>Magdalena Kalisiak-Mędelska:</b> Some aspects of public administration reforms in Poland after 1989 – the revenue autonomy of local governments .....	70
<b>Magdalena Łyszkiewicz:</b> Cost assessment in the delivery of municipal services .....	82
<b>Anna Mempel-Śnieżyk:</b> Smart specialisation and clusters in economic growth .....	92
<b>Katarzyna Mischczak:</b> Contemporary spatial planning and case of Poland ...	104
<b>Mirosława Marzena Nowak:</b> Place of dairy cooperatives in the regional development: case of Łódzkie voivodship, Poland .....	117
<b>Ирина Солошич, Валентина Пидлиснюк:</b> «Зеленая» экономика в контексте обеспечения перехода Украины к устойчивому развитию .....	126
<b>Monika Szymura:</b> Protection of authors' rights in knowledge-based market economy .....	136
<b>Teresa Topczewska, Waldemar Siemiński:</b> Integrated urban development planning at the regional level in Poland .....	144
<b>Mehmet Topcu:</b> Impacts of gated housing estates on housing values: Case of Konya, Turkey .....	155
<b>Alicja Zakrzewska-Półtorak:</b> Metropolization of the Polish space and its implications for regional development .....	167

## Streszczenia

<b>Marcin Baron, Artur Ochojski:</b> Koncepcja klastra klastrów w perspektywie polityki regionalnej i biznesu .....	26
<b>Jacek Chądzyński:</b> Współpraca między społecznościami i organizacjami pozarządowymi w Polsce – wyniki ankiety .....	36

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<b>Niki Derlukiewicz:</b> Perspektywy rozwoju innowacji w Unii Europejskiej według nowej strategii Europa 2020 .....	45
<b>Paweł Dziekański:</b> Syntetyczny wskaźnik bezpieczeństwa ekonomicznego regionu w kontekście działalności władz lokalnych .....	61
<b>Dariusz Głuszczyk:</b> Wydatki oraz źródła finansowania innowacji w przedsiębiorstwach – przypadek polskich regionów .....	69
<b>Magdalena Kalisiak-Mędelska:</b> Wybrane aspekty reform polskiej administracji publicznej po 1989 roku – samodzielność dochodowa jednostek samorządu terytorialnego .....	81
<b>Magdalena Łyszkiewicz:</b> Zarządzanie kosztami w procesie świadczenia usług komunalnych .....	91
<b>Anna Mempel-Śnieżyk:</b> Inteligentne specjalizacje i klastry a wzrost gospodarczy .....	103
<b>Katarzyna Miszczak:</b> Współczesne planowanie przestrzenne na przykładzie Polski .....	116
<b>Mirosława Marzena Nowak:</b> Miejsce spółdzielni mleczarskich w rozwoju regionalnym: przypadek województwa łódzkiego, Polska .....	125
<b>Iryna Soloshich, Valentina Pidlisnyuk:</b> Green economy within the framework of implementation of sustainable development in Ukraine .....	135
<b>Monika Szymura:</b> Ochrona praw autorskich w gospodarce opartej na wiedzy .....	143
<b>Teresa Topczewska, Waldemar Siemiński:</b> Zintegrowane planowanie rozwoju miast na poziomie regionalnym w Polsce .....	154
<b>Mehmet Topcu:</b> Wpływ zamkniętych osiedli mieszkaniowych na wartość mieszkań: przykład Konya w Turcji .....	166
<b>Alicja Zakrzewska-Półtorak:</b> Metropolizacja polskiej przestrzeni i jej skutki dla rozwoju regionów .....	175

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## **INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL IN POLAND**

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**Abstract:** The article presents the results of the analysis and evaluation of the current situation with respect to legal, institutional and planning solutions for urban development policy at the regional level. The study included regional operational programmes for the years 2007–2013 and updated (since 2011) development strategies and spatial development plans of selected six voivodships: Dolnośląskie, Lubelskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Pomorskie and Śląskie.

**Keywords:** urban development planning, regional planning, integrated planning, urban policy, “urban sprawl”.

### **1. Introduction**

Cities, especially metropolitan ones, are of particular interest to the European Union due to their increasing role in socio-economic development of the Community. The need is raised to formulate the urban development policy not only on national, but also on regional level.

The European Parliament resolution on actions relating to the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter of 2008 [Rezolucja PE z 21 lutego 2008] called for the development, on all levels of management, of a holistic and well-coordinated urban development strategy, supported by the public and private sector. Attention was drawn to the need for creating urban development strategy at the level of regions and sub-regions. The European Commission was called to take a greater interest in the issue of urban sprawl, and the Member States – to force through effective measures and strategies to restrict urban spatial development. The Member States were recommended to give priority to internal urban development. Attention was drawn to the need to intensify efforts to improve integration and social and territorial cohesion by overcoming defects in the built environment and by improving environmental conditions.

In the new Polish strategic papers, such as the National Regional Development Strategy (below referred to as NRDS) for 2010–2020 [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010] and the National Spatial Development Concept 2030 (NSDC 2030) [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2012a], attention was drawn to the problem of degradation of urban areas and the problem of chaotic, uncontrolled urbanisation of suburban areas (“urban sprawl”). However, no instruments of counteracting urban sprawl were indicated. The principle of “regeneration (renewal) preference over occupying new areas for development” and the principle of “vertical and horizontal coordination and public participation” were adopted in the NSDC 2030. The problem of adverse effects of spontaneous suburbanisation was noticed only in the context of spatial order. “Restoration and consolidation of spatial order” is one of six objectives of the government spatial policy.



**Figure 1.** Researched voivodeships

Source: own elaboration.

The most important eight challenges for Poland in the Guidelines of the National Urban Policy 2020 [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2012b]

included: “counteracting the socio-economic and spatial degradation of urban areas” and “improving the spatial order in urban areas and deterring the spontaneous suburbanisation.” Five objectives of the national urban policy were formulated, including: “rebuilding the capacity for development through regeneration of socially, economically and physically degraded urban areas,” “promoting a sustainable development of urban centres,” including “counteracting adverse phenomena of uncontrolled suburbanisation,” “creating conditions for efficient, effective and partner management of development in urban areas, especially metropolitan ones.” Changes in the spatial economy system that will enable counteracting adverse phenomena of suburbanisation were announced.

In preparation for the development of regional operational programmes for the years 2014–2020 voivodships<sup>1</sup> were required to adapt their basic planning documents, such as development strategies and the spatial development plan, to the NRDS 2010–2020 and NSDC 2030.

The aim of the paper is to present the results of the analysis and the assessment of the current situation with regard to the legal, institutional and planning foundations for conducting of the regional urban development policy. The study included regional operational programmes for the years 2007–2013 and updated (since 2011) development strategies and spatial development plans of selected six voivodships: Dolnośląskie, Lubelskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Pomorskie and Śląskie. In these voivodships (with the exception of the Lubelskie Voivodship) there is a particularly high share, in the total area of municipalities, of agricultural and forest land for non-agricultural and non-forest purposes.

## **2. Legal and institutional framework of urban development planning on regional level in Poland**

The following legal documents constitute the legal and institutional framework of development and spatial planning of voivodships:

- the Act of 5 June 1998 on the Voivodship Local Government [Ustawa z 5 czerwca 1998],
- the Act of 27 March 2003 on Spatial Planning and Development [Ustawa z 27 marca 2003],
- the Act of 6 December 2006 on the Principles of Development Policy Making [Ustawa z 6 grudnia 2006].

According to the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, “voivodship local government bodies draw up the voivodship spatial development plan, carry out analyses and studies and prepare concepts and programmes relating to the areas

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<sup>1</sup> Poland is divided into 16 voivodships (provinces). A voivodship is an administrative unit of a higher rank. Inhabitants of a voivodship form by law a regional local government community.

and spatial development issues according to needs and objectives of works undertaken in this field. [...] The arrangements of the voivodship's development strategy are included in the voivodship spatial development plan" and among other the following are specified: the basic elements of the voivodship's settlement pattern and their communication and infrastructure links, problem areas with the principles of their development as well as metropolitan and support areas<sup>2</sup>. "A partial development plan of the metropolitan area is adopted for a metropolitan area as part of the voivodship's spatial development plan."

The voivodship's development policy,<sup>3</sup> in accordance with the Act on the Voivodship Local Government and the Act on the Principles of Development Policy Making, is set out in the voivodship's development strategy. This is achieved with the help of the Regional Operational Programmes (ROP) and other legal and financial instruments specified in separate regulations. The voivodship's development strategy and operational (and implementing) programmes are subject to consultations with local government units, social and economic partners and the Joint Commission of the Government and Local Government.

The voivodships' development strategies are paramount in relation to spatial development plans. According to the provisions of the Act on Conducting Development Policy they are acts of integrated planning, including social, economic, spatial and environmental aspects.

In the light of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, the voivodships' spatial development plans should play a coordination function in the system of spatial development plans (taking into consideration the arrangements of the NSDC, government programmes, which concern public investments, voivodships' development strategies and implementing programmes and taking into consideration the arrangements of voivodships' plans in "municipal studies"). However, in practice, this function is poor due to lack of connection of socio-economic planning with spatial planning in Poland and the lack of a hierarchical system of spatial planning documents. The voivodships' spatial development plans are not binding for municipalities. There is only a statutory obligation to agree the content of studies of conditions and directions of the municipality's spatial development with the voivodship's spatial development plan.

Since 27 November 2013 issues of the voivodships' strategic and spatial planning in Poland have belonged to the competence of the Minister for Infrastructure and Development. Previously, the strategic planning fell under the

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<sup>2</sup>Support areas are identified according to the existing development problems. They are subject to specific actions of the Council of Ministers, the government administration and local government units.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Act on Principles of Conducting Development Policy "the development policy is understood as a group of interrelated actions carried out and implemented in order to ensure the sustained and balanced development of the country and the social, economic and territorial cohesion on a national, regional or local scale", including "the development of cities and metropolitan areas."

competence of the Minister of Regional Development and the spatial planning under the competence of the Minister of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy.

There are regional planning departments or divisions in the organisational structures of the marshals' offices of analysed voivodships. In two voivodships the regional development units are also responsible for spatial planning (the Department of Strategic Planning and Spatial Development at the Marshal's Office of the Śląskie Voivodship and the Department of Regional Development and Planning at the Marshal's Office of the Pomorskie Voivodship). The Spatial Policy Team has been designated in the Department of Regional Policy of the Marshal's Office of the Małopolskie Voivodship. The development strategies and spatial development plans are drawn up by budget entities subject to voivodship local governments. However, they are being developed as part of separate planning processes and with the use of different methodological principles and different procedures.

### **3. Urban issues in the voivodships' planning documents, problems to solve, actions planned, an approach to planning**

#### **3.1. Regional Operational Programmes for the years 2007–2013**

Regional Operational Programmes for the years 2007–2013 were based on the objectives set out in the National Strategic Reference Framework for the years 2007–2013 and updated, according to this document, voivodships' development strategies.<sup>4</sup> They concerned the urban development and regeneration.

Results of the SWOT analysis by separate strategic fields (thematic areas) were presented in each ROP. Development factors relating to the cities were included in the studied voivodships in the following fields (areas): "Infrastructure, natural aspects, environment" (Dolnośląskie Voivodship), "Territory" (Lubelskie Voivodship), "Space" (Małopolskie Voivodship), "Economy" (Mazowieckie Voivodship), "Environment and infrastructure conditioning the competitiveness and cohesion of the region" (Pomorskie Voivodship), "Environmental protection and space" (Śląskie Voivodship). The following were mainly considered as weaknesses (barriers) for urban development: a large proportion of degraded urban areas (Dolnośląskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Pomorskie and Śląskie Voivodships), the low level of urbanisation (Lubelskie, Małopolskie Voivodships), scattered settlements (Małopolskie Voivodship) and lack of appropriate links between urban centres (Mazowieckie, Pomorskie Voivodships).

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<sup>4</sup> However, the arrangements of the voivodships' spatial development plans, drawn up according to the Spatial Planning Act of 1994, were not taken into consideration prior to Poland's accession to the EU.

The urban regeneration was recognised as a priority in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship (“Regeneration of degraded urban areas in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship”). In other voivodships the regeneration was set as an action, undertaking, project or objective in line with broadly specified priorities (“Attractiveness of urban areas and investment areas” – Lubelskie Voivodship, “Intra-regional cohesion” – Małopolskie Voivodship, “Strengthening the role of cities in the region’s development” – Mazowieckie Voivodship, “Urban and metropolitan functions” – Pomorskie Voivodship, “Sustainable Urban Development” – Śląskie Voivodship). Only in two operational programmes cities were indicated, where regeneration activities were to be funded from EU funds (in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship – cities of less than 20 000 inhabitants, in the Śląskie Voivodship – cities with more than 40 000 inhabitants).

### 3.2. Voivodships’ development strategies

The analysis covered the diagnostic and conceptual part of the development strategy of the Dolnośląskie and Małopolskie Voivodships and draft strategies of other voivodships – from the point of view of urban issues. The most important arrangements for the issues of urban development and the proposed objectives and actions, within the highlighted priorities (“thematic areas”), were summarized and analysed.

New, compared to the previous edition of the strategy, method of presenting development issues, namely with regard to highlighted areas – the whole voivodship, urban, metropolitan and rural areas, should be emphasised. This “area approach” to the voivodships’ strategic planning is being introduced in accordance with the indications of new Country Strategy Papers. It is an attempt to move away from sectoral planning, characterising the previous edition of the voivodships’ development strategies, for integrated planning.

In the diagnostic part of the development strategy of studied voivodships (with the exception of the Lubelskie and Pomorskie Voivodships) the phenomenon of uncontrolled suburbanisation and the associated degradation of space, especially around large cities, was mentioned as the weakness (problem) of urban and metropolitan areas. In addition, main problems included the degradation of development resources (in the Mazowieckie and Śląskie Voivodships), difficulties in the management of functional areas, including in the metropolitan area (in the Pomorskie and Śląskie Voivodships), the loss of economic functions in some centres (in the Mazowieckie and Śląskie Voivodships), the lack of spatial order (the Dolnośląskie Voivodship) and uneven development of urban centres (in the Mazowieckie Voivodship).

In the conceptual part of the strategy, in relation to urban and metropolitan areas, strategic objectives, actions and tasks were defined. In addition, higher level

objectives were formulated as main or priority. In the Mazowieckie Voivodship preventing excessive suburbanisation and creating spatial order is both the voivodship's priority objective and a strategic objective in relation to urban areas. In the Małopolskie and Pomorskie Voivodships the prevention of suburbanisation by "supporting the process of regeneration" and "striving for the implementation of regulatory and planning instruments" are tasks implementing broadly formulated strategic objectives. In the Śląskie Voivodship the spatial order and the efficient use of space (operational objective) are to be achieved through the implementation of regeneration undertakings on degraded areas. This means the differentiation of the policy of voivodship local governments towards the cities.

The studies carried out so far show that knowledge of the processes of regional urbanisation is insufficient. For this reason, the problems to solve are formulated in general terms. On the other hand, the lack of legal instruments for counteracting the phenomenon of urban sprawl makes it impossible to plan specific actions. In addition, there are no guidelines in the voivodships' strategies for the urban development and regeneration that should be included in the regional operational programmes for the years 2014–2020.

### **3.3. Voivodships' spatial development plans**

The first edition of voivodships' spatial development plans was made in 2002–2004 under the Spatial Development Act of 1994. They were adopted after the voivodships' development strategies were approved. Most plans failed to specify "support areas" and to indicate degraded areas as problematic. In 2006, each voivodship assessed the implementation of arrangements of plans and prepared reports on the condition of changes in spatial development. They have recently commenced changing the spatial development plan in the process of updating development strategies.

Only the Dolnośląskie Voivodship adopted the change in the spatial development plan. Up to now the Mazowieckie Voivodship presented the "Assumptions of updating the plan," the Lubelskie Voivodship – "External conditions (synthesis)", and the Małopolskie Voivodship performed only a new review of changes in the spatial development. The Śląskie Voivodship has not made public information concerning updating the plan. The Pomorskie Voivodship changed the plan in 2009 and, therefore, before the approval of Country Strategy Papers.

The problem of uncontrolled spontaneous suburbanisation was identified based on the analysis of changes in the condition of the spatial development in five voivodships (with the exception of the Śląskie Voivodship). The problem areas included, among others, metropolitan areas and functional areas of some cities. Actions to stop the adverse effects of suburbanisation were proposed. They were general in nature and covered primarily planning measures (integrated,

comprehensive planning of urban development), implementation of regeneration undertakings, use in the planning principles of environmental protection and shaping of compact build-up areas.

Instruments for implementing the adopted measures were not indicated in the approved spatial development plan of the Dolnośląskie Voivodship. Recommendations to the national spatial policy and government administration actions on legal regulations limiting the scattering of the development, forcing spatial order and counteracting suburbanisation were presented.

#### **4. Public consultations of the voivodships' development strategies, with particular emphasis on urban issues**

The report on consultations of the Dolnośląskie Voivodship's development strategy shows that there was a debate in the media on the "Dolnośląskie cities. Problems of regeneration and suburbanisation." It was not summarized. The consulted problems were not summarised at all in the Mazowieckie Voivodship.

In wide-ranging consultations of the Lubelskie Voivodship's development strategy the strengthening of the metropolitan functions of Lublin were supported, not seeing in it the limitation of the support for other cities (with the exception of concerns of Biała Podlaska). A policy against cities was strongly emphasised in consultations of the Małopolskie Voivodship's development strategy. In the Małopolskie and Śląskie Voivodships priority was given to issues of development of metropolitan areas. Issues related to the regeneration of degraded areas were raised in both voivodships during the consultations of the strategy. During consultations of the Pomorskie Voivodship's development strategy the approval for strengthening the Tri-City metropolitan functions, and at the same time the fear of marginalisation of cities not being the capitals of districts, was revealed.

The problems of urban development and regeneration were not the exposed subject of public consultations in all voivodships. The urban thread in the discussion appeared stronger in the voivodships in which public consultations were extensive and were conducted with the appropriate commitment (especially in the Małopolskie and Śląskie Voivodships). This style of consultations of the voivodship's development strategy creates a platform for genuine social agreement for the development of the region, including strengthening the role of cities.

#### **5. Summary and conclusions**

One of the major problems of managing the development of urban areas on a regional scale is the spread of urban development. The phenomenon of urban sprawl in developed countries of the EU and of the world is counteracted by the regeneration of urban degraded areas and the use of multiple spatial planning

instruments that allow for the rationalisation and control of urban development to the outside<sup>5</sup>. In Poland, the concepts of regeneration of internal critical urban areas are not always associated with measures to prevent “urban sprawl”. There is no coordination of the voivodships’ spatial planning with local development and regeneration plans. There are no approved spatial development plans for metropolitan areas.

The spatial development law existing in Poland does not take into consideration the European *acquis* in the area of integrated planning of development of cities and metropolitan areas on a regional scale. The regional policy of socio-economic development is closely linked to the spatial policy and sectoral policies. Voivodship local governments do not have adequate competence in the coordination of urban development. So far, there are no legal provisions to support an integrated approach to urban development on all levels of management and planning, governing the issues of regeneration of degraded/emergency areas and governing planning and management of metropolitan areas.

The update of the voivodships’ strategic planning documents currently carried out in Poland is aimed not only to adapt them to the new national priorities, but planning rules, which include: moving away from sectoral to horizontal (comprehensive) planning, the use of the territorial approach to development, the focus of public interventions and resources on key areas and undertakings.

Designers of voivodship planning documents seek to achieve cohesion of arrangements on urban development with national arrangements. The main objectives (priorities) of the voivodships’ spatial policy refer to the objectives and tasks set forth in their development strategies. A positive feature of new documents of the voivodships’ development strategies is a territorial approach, both in the diagnostic and conceptual part. There are urban, metropolitan and rural areas. The weaknesses of the strategy include the lack of achievement of objectives relating to urban areas. They are formulated only for the purpose of the whole voivodship’s development. The lack of specific solutions for the environment and landscape protection and shaping, as well as the development of urbanisation in the voivodships’ spatial development draft plans, raises questions. Only general principles of development are formulated. The problem of spontaneous suburbanisation is primarily considered in the context of shaping the spatial order (similarly as in the NSDC 2030). This problem is not shown in the economic aspect. Only the use of planning instruments is indicated.

The progress is visible in the process of public consultation of the voivodships’ development strategy. However, there are differences in the approach to

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<sup>5</sup> In many EU countries (mainly in Great Britain, France and the Nordic countries) the suburbanisation has been limited as a result of proper activities of government and local government authorities. The urban regeneration is planned, the permissible range of urban areas is determined and areas permanently protected against development are defined on regional level.

consultation. Some voivodships aim to simplify and shorten the consultation process. There are also voivodships that give a multi-stage and complex structure to consultations, highlighting various aspects of consultations (including urban development). Thus, the consultations' organisers consciously form common ground for the voivodship's development.

In the current legal conditions the voivodship's spatial development plan is not an effective instrument of the spatial policy. The implementation of the plan is possible only in a situation of transferring its arrangements to the local planning acts. However, municipalities do not have a statutory obligation to update the study of conditions and directions of the municipality's spatial development due to non-compliance with the revised voivodship's spatial development plan. On the other hand, the ability to directly transfer the arrangements to the local plan is not used due to the need to agree with municipalities on financial terms (expenditure on compensation and for the increased costs of implementation of municipalities' tasks). It is necessary in the current planning situation to transfer the conceptual contents of the voivodship's spatial development plan to other planning documents. On regional level, these are spatial development plans of functional areas (including the metropolitan area) and development programmes (regional operational programme and sectoral/subject-specific programmes).

Regional operational programmes should play a special role in the years 2014–2020. Their quality will depend on the degree of adaptation to new priorities and rules of planning the voivodship strategic planning documents. Therefore, poorly advanced process of changes in the voivodships' spatial development plans remains of concern.

System changes are needed in the spatial planning and development, which has long been pointed out by experts. They should *inter alia* involve:

- introducing a hierarchy of planning in order to ensure its effectiveness,
- strengthening the role of voivodship local governments in spatial planning, allowing the creation of local law acts in relation to key issues.

Each voivodship should define its policy towards the cities, assuming challenges and objectives formulated in the Guidelines of the National Urban Policy 2020 as a starting point.<sup>6</sup>

It is necessary to organise in Poland a coherent and integrated institutional system that will enable the management of the development of cities and metropolitan areas.

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<sup>6</sup> The draft concept of balanced urban policy was prepared by the Pomeranian Voivodship.

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### ZINTEGROWANE PLANOWANIE ROZWOJU MIAST NA POZIOMIE REGIONALNYM W POLSCE

**Streszczenie:** W artykule przedstawiono wyniki analizy i oceny aktualnej sytuacji w zakresie podstaw prawnych, instytucjonalnych i planistycznych prowadzenia polityki rozwoju miast na szczeblu regionalnym. Badaniami objęto regionalne programy operacyjne na lata 2007–2013 oraz aktualizowane (od 2011 r.) strategie rozwoju i plany zagospodarowania przestrzennego wybranych sześciu województw (dolnośląskiego, lubelskiego, małopolskiego, mazowieckiego, pomorskiego i śląskiego).

**Słowa kluczowe:** planowanie rozwoju miast, planowanie regionalne, planowanie zintegrowane, polityka miejska, *urban sprawl*.