

# URBAN REGENERATION AS A NEW TREND IN THE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN POLAND

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**ABSTRACT:** Regeneration of degraded areas takes an important position in the Polish development policy. It is included in the legal framework resulting from the Regeneration Act and the Physical Planning and Spatial Development Act. It constitutes a significant element in the programming of socio-economic and spatial development. This is largely thanks to the EU funds which are the basis for financing the projects and programmes for regeneration. In the country's development policy a complex approach to regeneration is promoted, manifested by the concentration of activities in the most neglected areas, integrated activities carried out with a broad social participation which will be continuously monitored and evaluated on this basis. The Polish model of regeneration, formulated in such a way, gives hope for the elimination of critical situations in cities and communes.

**KEY WORDS:** regeneration of cities, renewal of cities, national development policy, national development strategy

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## Introduction

In Polish regulations, a development policy is understood as a system of interrelated measures undertaken and implemented to ensure stable and sustainable development of the country, socio-economic, regional and spatial cohesion, to enhance the competitiveness of the economy and to create new jobs at national, regional or local scale (the Development Policy Act). Izdebski indicates (2012) that it is a functional approach, presenting a development policy from the management point of view, showing a wide range of general objectives related both to different public policies and different territories. Regardless of what would the development policy understood in such a way refer to, it usually starts with a

political decision which is then consulted with the public so to adopt the form of a prepared strategy in the end. Particular public policies resulting from the implementation of strategies, are most frequently related to the process of introducing specific changes in applicable law regulations. Within the management system of the development policy, they (strategies and changes in the law) constitute a programming subsystem serving to initiate trends in activities and the adoption of a chain of goals. It is the starting point for next stages in the cycle of development management, which are: the implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Hausner 2008).

In the phase of programming the Polish development policy understood in this way, the regeneration of degraded areas occupies an

important position (Topczewska 2007). It results from the socio-economic and spatial problems observed since the mid-1990s, such as a) a crisis in traditional industrial areas (Domański 2000, 2001; Świerczewska-Pietras 2009), b) the degradation of city centres and its accompanying suburbanisation (Parysek 2005, 2008, 2011), c) a gradual “shrinkage” of cities (Stryjakiewicz et al. 2012, Stryjakiewicz 2014), and d) an increase in a so-called “renovation gap” (Billert 2007, Lorens 2010). Additionally, as Noworól (2012) notices, one of the challenges for the country’s development in terms of regeneration is the necessity to make change processes spring from endogenous values. Parysek (2015) indicates that the following areas require a fast regeneration in Poland: 1) old-town historical buildings, 2) tenement houses from the 19th and early 20th centuries, 3) factory housing estates from the same period, 4) blocks of flats from the 1950s and ‘60s, 5) post-industrial areas, 6) degraded storage areas, 7) unused and post-transport areas, 8) degraded port areas and river banks, 9) post-military areas, 10) sub-standard housing estates, 11) other areas with constructions that do not fit the place and internal structure of a city.

In effect, in the recent years the regeneration has been included in the key documents shaping the socio-economic and spatial development of the country. This is largely due to the policy of the European Union within which the projects for social, economic and spatial renewal of neglected areas are funded. Since recently, it has been accompanied by legislative changes which aim to accelerate and organise the renewal process in degraded areas. The article seeks to set in order, analyse and assess the current development policy of the country in terms of regeneration. On this basis, the main principles of the Polish regeneration policy have been formed.

## Source materials and working methods

The analytical work carried out within the research included legal regulations and strategic documents concerning the programming of regeneration activities. In order to do that, use was made of the desk research method supported by qualitative content analysis. A desk research consists in the collection and analysis

of information obtained from many secondary sources (Makowska 2013; Bednarowska 2015); whereas qualitative content analysis is a technique for formulating conclusions based on the specific content features and consists in extracting fragments, quotations or examples from written sources to support any observation or relations (Buttolph Johnson et al. 2010).

The current legal regulations have been characterised, i.e. the Regeneration Act of October 9, 2015 and the Spatial Planning and Development Act of March 27, 2003 (Fig. 1), as part of the analysis of the position of regeneration in the Polish development policy. At present, these two acts are of crucial importance for the renewal process of degraded areas. The article also presents the national strategic framework for regeneration established in the documents responsible for:

- the socio-economic policy, i.e. the Strategy for Responsible Development (national level), the National Regional Development Strategy (regional level), the National Urban Policy (urban level), and above all the National Regeneration Plan, and
- the spatial policy, i.e. the National Spatial Development Concept.

The EU funds play a significant role in the regeneration process in Poland. They are currently the basic source of financing regeneration programmes and projects. The basis for their spending is the Partnership Agreement (2014) which determines the directions of intervention of three EU policies in Poland in the years 2014–2020 – the Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. In accordance with this document, the most important for regeneration are national and regional operational programmes as well as the guidelines formulated by the ministry and marshal offices, determining detailed principles for financing the regeneration from the EU means.

Naturally, the local level is of key importance for regeneration. All of the above documents, however, are clear guidelines for the programming of renewal of degraded areas in cities and communes. Regeneration programmes with the guidelines determined in the Regeneration Act, EU documents and the National Regeneration Plan and also indirectly in other documents shaping the socio-economic development of the country are the basis for the formulation of the

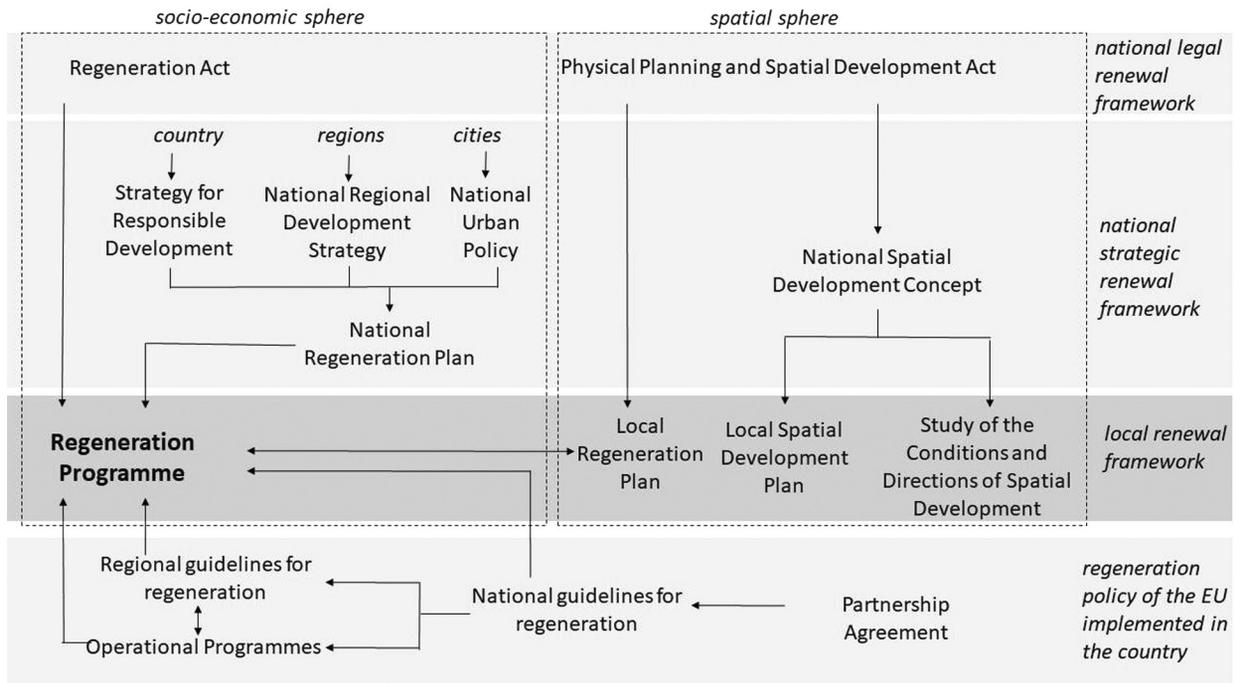


Fig. 1. National framework for regeneration activities and their relations to the local level.

Source: own study.

regeneration policy at the local level. In turn, planning issues are determined in local regeneration plans, local spatial development plans and in the study of the conditions and directions of spatial development. Regulations for these documents are included in the Physical Planning and Spatial Development Act and also in the National Spatial Development Concept. The national framework for regeneration activities indicated above is described in the further part of the article.

### National legal framework for regeneration and its influence on the local level

Regeneration is an issue which was not regulated for many years. It was one of the main obstacles to the activities concerning the renewal of Polish cities. As a matter of fact, the issue of problem areas and also the areas requiring the transformation and rehabilitation of existing development appeared already in the Act on Spatial Development of July 7, 1994. Pursuant to this Act, the borders of the rehabilitation areas of existing development and technical infrastructure and the transformation of degraded areas were established in the local spatial development plan.

The continuation of these provisions can also be found in the currently effective Act on Physical Planning and Spatial Development of March 27, 2003. Pursuant to this Act, local plans should include (depending on the needs): the borders of the rehabilitation areas of existing development and technical infrastructure, and also the borders of the areas requiring transformation and recultivation. The study of the conditions and directions of spatial development (binding for a local plan) shows areas requiring transformation, rehabilitation and recultivation, and also other problem areas. Problem areas are those with a particular socio-economic phenomenon or with spatial conflicts. The Act does not define rehabilitation and recultivation areas. These are also not regulations which would embrace regeneration activities as a whole. As Ciesiółka and Rogatka (2015) notice, with no regeneration acts they made it possible, at least to a certain degree, to give a legal framework to the adopted solutions concerning the renewal of degraded areas. It was also possible to make spatial and socio-economic analysis jointly and to hold public consultations. In the present legal situation, the study and local plans supplement the regeneration programme and are tools for the implementation of the spatial solutions indicated in these programmes.

Moreover, the term regeneration appeared in the Act on Public-Private Partnership of July 28, 2005 as one of the measures which can be implemented in the forms established by this act. However, it was repealed in 2009. Since then, the resolution of the Minister of Regional Development of June 9, 2010 on supporting regeneration within regional operational programmes has been the only legally binding act which partly regulates the issue of the renewal of degraded areas.

The situation changed on October 9, 2015 when the Sejm adopted the Regeneration Act, which was the result of many years of work (Skalski 2007). The main aim of this act is to ensure the effectiveness and a universal nature of regeneration activities, and also the comprehensiveness and the introduction of coordination mechanisms, which will make it possible for degraded areas to break out of the crisis. The Act, in particular:

- defines regeneration as a process of helping degraded areas break out of the crisis, conducted in a comprehensive way, through the integrated, territorially-oriented actions for the local community, space and economy, taken by regeneration stakeholders on the basis of the commune regeneration programme,
- determines regeneration as an optional own task of a commune which is implemented openly and transparently, assuring an active participation of stakeholders at each stage,
- indicates that a social participation in the regeneration process involves preparing, conducting and assessing regeneration in a way assuring the active participation of stakeholders, including public consultations and appointing the Regeneration Committee, understood as the cooperation forum and dialogue of stakeholders with commune bodies regarding the preparation, conduct and assessment of regeneration and also giving an opinion,
- determines the principles of the designation of degraded and regeneration areas, defining a degraded area as a commune area being in a crisis due to the concentration of negative social phenomena, especially unemployment, poverty, crime, a low level education or social capital and insufficient public and cultural participation, and additionally negative environmental, economic, spatial and functional

or technical phenomena; and defining a regeneration area as the entirety or part of a degraded area with an exceptional concentration of negative phenomena where, due to the importance for local development, a commune intends to perform regeneration.

- enables determining, in a regeneration area, pre-emption rights for a commune to buy all the properties situated there and introducing a ban on issuing a decision concerning building conditions,
- determines the legal basis for a commune regeneration programme, including the range of the document, the rules of its establishment and also the ways to assess its topicality and the degree of implementation,
- links the regeneration programme with spatial planning, especially introducing the obligation of moving the provisions of commune regeneration programmes to the study of the conditions and directions of spatial development,
- introduces the possibility to create Special Regeneration Zones which, in order to improve the implementation of regeneration projects, allow, e.g. the introduction of a ban on issuing a decision concerning building conditions,
- introduces the possibility to pass a local regeneration plan (full regulations are included in the Physical Planning and Spatial Development Act and in the Implementing Regulation) which is a special kind of a local spatial development plan, making it possible to, e.g. enter into urbanist agreements with potential investors and also to make detailed urban analyses including the visualisation of the future development.

Current legal measures are not ideal. Lorens (2016) notices that the Regeneration Act determined clearly what regeneration was. However, the Act also indicated that there were certain types of measures which did not have to be planned within it, but which are important for the development of a city. Some provisions of the Act seem to be inflexible, limiting at the same time its potential in some cities and communes, especially those which have already initiated remedial actions, and also in rural communes. Particularly the complex procedure of the delimitation of a regeneration area appears to be over-regulated. There are no regulations which would protect

from negative effects of regeneration, such as an increase in rents and the expulsion of the original inhabitants (Billert 2015). Nevertheless, most of the provisions are a milestone in a new approach to regeneration. A clear assignment of the renewal of degraded areas to a commune's own tasks, clear definition and also the emphasis put on the assumption that regeneration is a project undertaken for the common interest can be deemed the most important issues which should make the renewal process of degraded areas more dynamic in a short term (Rogatka et al. 2015).

### National strategic framework for regeneration

Over the years the significance of regeneration in the country's strategic policy has grown. One of the first strategic documents embracing the renewal of degraded areas was the 2001–2006 National Regional Development Strategy. Previously, the measures aiming at socio-economic and spatial transformations were undertaken within several unrelated government programmes, e.g. Government Programme 4 "Saving historical cities" (1995–1998), the reform of the hard coal mining industry (1998–2002) and its improvements and the programme for the restructuring of the iron and steel industry in Poland (1998–2002) (Jadach-Sepiolo 2010). In the next years attention should be paid mostly to the 2007–2015 National Development Strategy in which the scope of regeneration in different Polish regions was indicated, which allowed the establishment of specific objectives to help these areas break out of the crisis. At present, regeneration is firmly anchored in strategic documents shaping a socio-economic policy (Strategy for Responsible Development, National Regional Development Strategy, National Urban Policy, National Regeneration Plan) and spatial one (National Spatial Development Concept). Described below are the main assumptions of these documents in the context of regeneration activities.

*The Strategy for Responsible Development* is a strategic tool in the management of the country's mid- and long-term economic policy. The document presents the aims to be implemented by 2020 and 2030, indicates how to achieve them

and determines the most important projects. The Strategy is based on three specific objectives: 1) sustainable economic growth increasingly grounded in knowledge, data and organisational excellence, 2) socially sensitive and territorially sustainable development, and 3) an effective state and institutions serving the growth as well as the social and economic inclusion. The Strategy indicates the main development challenges for cities. One of them is the regeneration of degraded urban areas. It particularly shows that over 1/5 of the cities inhabited by 2.4m people are subject to degradation processes, half of these areas being old central districts. Therefore, the objective of the Strategy in the field of an urban policy is the creation of conditions for the sustainable development of city centres, developing mechanisms for cooperation in their functional areas, strengthening their ability to create jobs and raising the quality of inhabitants' life. It is necessary to improve the capabilities of urban centres to stimulate development, growth and employment, support sustainable development (e.g. by counteracting negative phenomenon of suburbanisation, reusing areas previously developed, regenerating degraded urban areas), and urban centres affected by problems.

*The National Regional Development Strategy 2010–2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas* determines the most important challenges, assumptions and aims of the regional development policy in Poland. It also indicates the principles and mechanisms of cooperation, and coordination of activities between government institutions and voivodeship self-governments. The document specifies areas of strategic challenges to which a regional policy – supporting competitiveness of regions and assuring the country's territorial cohesion – must respond through detailed solutions. One of them is ensuring the internal cohesion of the country and not allowing major spatial differences. For that reason it is vital to counteract the threat of losing current socio-economic functions of some urban areas. Thus, a challenge to the regional policy will be finding appropriate instruments to assist large urban areas in returning to the growth path as well as to support a complex regeneration and socio-economic restructuring of the areas at smaller spatial scales. This challenge is continued in the objectives of the country's regional policy planned to 2020. Within objective

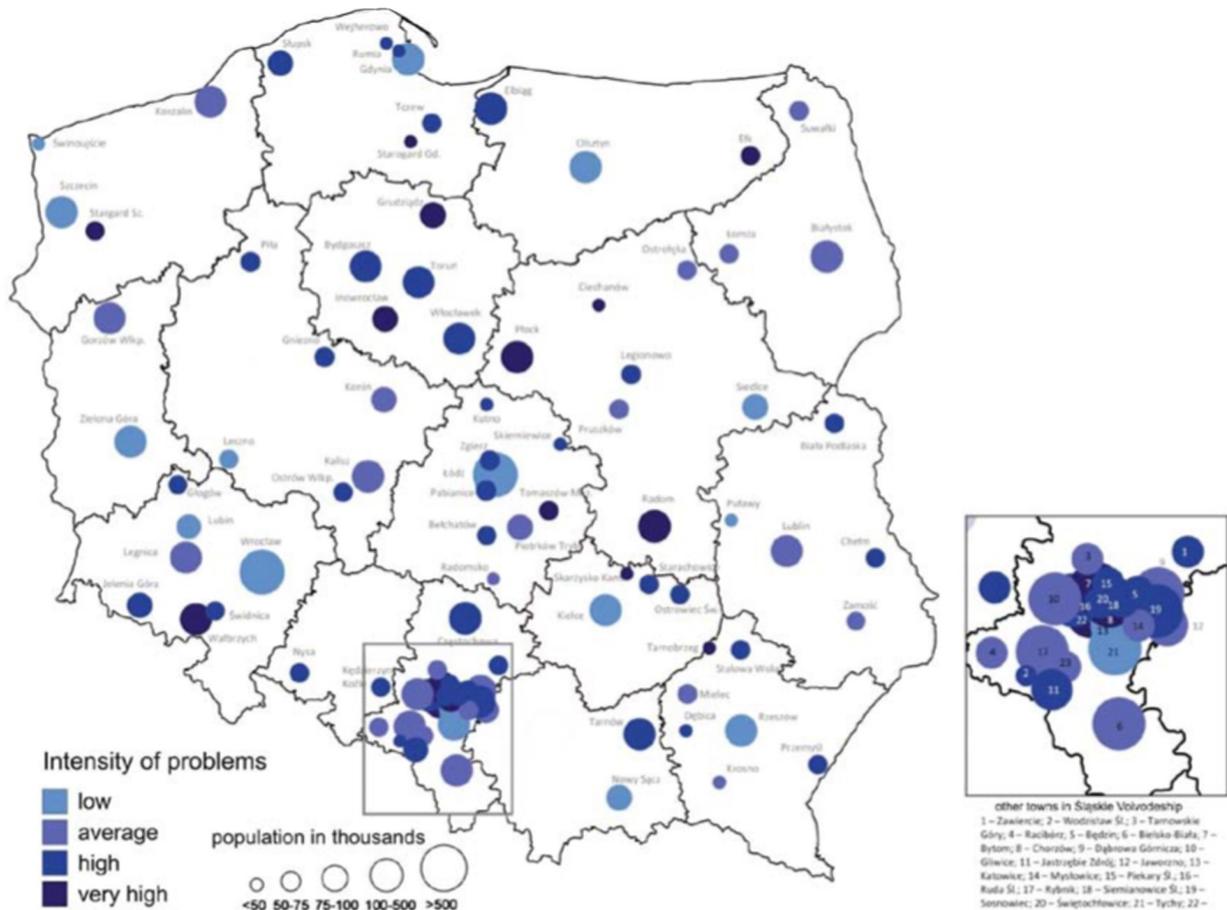


Fig. 2. Areas of strategic intervention for restructuring and regeneration of cities losing their socio-economic functions.

Source: National Regional Development Strategy 2010-2020, p. 130.

2 Building territorial cohesion and counteracting the marginalisation of problem areas, objective 2.3 was formulated: *Restructuring and regeneration of cities and other areas which lose their current socio-economic functions*. It has been determined at the same time that a regional policy supports complex actions for rebuilding the capabilities of certain territories to develop (cities – Fig. 2, districts of cities, industrial areas and other degraded places) through re-establishing or giving them new socio-economic functions and supporting the implementation of complex socio-economic regeneration programmes in a problematic city area. In addition, a regional policy helps to regenerate environmentally degraded areas, giving them new economic functions (Sudak, Baliński 2011).

In October 2015, the Council of Ministers adopted the *National Urban Policy* which determined the planned actions of the government concerning an urban policy. Thus, it has been indicated how particular policies implemented

by various departments and government institutions should be adjusted and directed to diversified needs of Polish cities. The document presented the vision of the development of Polish cities until 2023, indicating, e.g. that they will be socially, economically and spatially coherent, also thanks to the efforts concerning the regeneration of their most degraded parts. As a result, the regeneration was determined as one of the “theme threads” which constitute the most important functioning areas of a city. *Strengthening the ability of cities and urbanised areas to stimulate sustainable development, create jobs and improve the life quality of inhabitants* is a strategic aim of the National Urban Policy. The above strategic aim has five specific objectives, corresponding with those presented in Polish and EU strategic documents creating a competitive, powerful, coherent, compact, sustainable and efficient city. The idea of a coherent city is based on the implementation of the third specific objective, i.e.

*rebuilding the capacity of cities to develop through the regeneration of socially, economically and physically degraded urban areas.* The activities dealing with regeneration aim at a structural change in a given area, i.e., by the modernisation of urban fabric and the enhancement or restoration of economic and social activity, the improvement in the life quality of inhabitants. The aim can be more easily achieved thanks to a focused, well-planned and effective action. To this end, the renewal of degraded areas must be included in the entire development policy of a city. In terms of regeneration, an urban policy aims at the preparation and implementation of effective mechanisms for the coordination and integration of tasks and activities performed by various entities, including private ones, and the preparation and conducting complex regeneration projects" (National Urban Policy, pp. 13–14).

For the first time the assumptions of the *National Regeneration Plan* (NRP) were presented in June 2014 during the 3rd Urban Regeneration Congress in Cracow. This is a document consistent to a large extent with the National Urban Policy. The NRP was designed as a set of solutions for the creation of favourable conditions to perform effective regeneration in Poland and involves the years 2014–2022. This time horizon is related first of all to large EU means for the regeneration in the 2014–2020 programming period accessible to Poland. On the other hand, the RP authorities seek to build strong foundations for national regeneration instruments which will gain in significance as the EU means dwindle. The NRP is to serve as a core in the system of activities concerning the renewal of degraded areas. The NRP assumptions contain the diagnosis of the current state of regeneration processes in Poland, a strategic aim, directions of intervention, characteristics of particular tools and solutions for the regeneration as well as the planned and wanted directions of these changes or the need to introduce new instruments. The National Regeneration Plan is a widely understood interpretation for regeneration processes as complex and integrated measures and defines regeneration programmes as operational framework and the plane for the coordination of regeneration activities, formulating their creation and implementation principles.

The National Regeneration Plan consists of 4 modules which determine the directions of planned activities: 1) documents (guidelines for the documents directly related to the implementation of the National Regeneration Plan), 2) regulations (creating favourable conditions and incentives for regeneration activities, eliminating inconsistencies between legislation and interpretation available in the present jurisprudence), 3) support instruments (national and EU's, such distribution of means which are already at the disposal of various entities so that they can be concentrated on regeneration activities, e.g. by the appropriate criteria for the selection of projects or a better support for the projects implemented in the areas under regeneration programmes), 4) information and education (complex, stable information and education activity targeting at the entities realising regeneration activities and also at the all inhabitants of cities).

The *National Spatial Development Concept 2030*, adopted by the government in December 2011 is the most important strategic document concerning the spatial development of the country. It presents the vision of the spatial development of Poland to the year 2030, determining the aims and directions of the national spatial policy as well as the principles according to which the human activity should be performed in space. Among them the most important one was a systemic principle of sustainable development, i.e. such socio-economic development where the process of integrating political, economic and social activities occurs preserving the environmental balance and durability of basic environmental processes in order to ensure the possibility to cater for basic needs of particular communities and citizens of both contemporary and future generations. Then, other principles of public planning were derived from this one, e.g. the principle of the preference of regeneration (renewal) to building in new areas, which means the intensification of urbanisation processes in already developed areas so as to minimise the expansion into new areas. Practically, this principle counteracts the dispersion of investment projects and contributes to the effective use of an urban space, at the same time protecting the space inside a city from devastation. Moreover, the document specifies six strategic aims of the country's development. Objective 2 relates the most to the regeneration

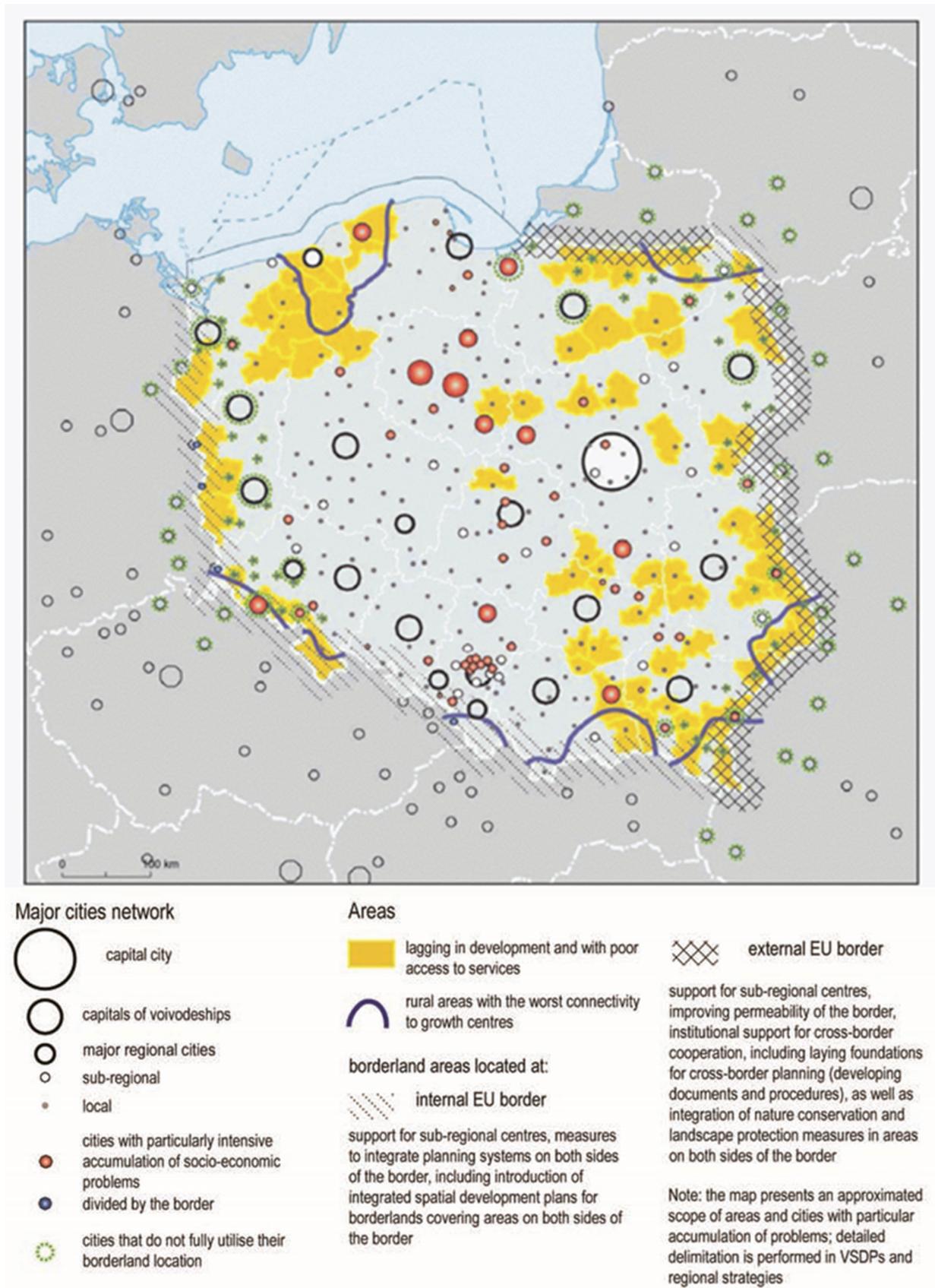


Fig. 3. Areas requiring restructuring and the development of new functions.  
 Source: National Spatial Development Concept 2030, p. 97.

activities: an improvement in internal cohesion and territorial stabilisation of the country's development through the promotion of functional integration, creation of conditions for the spread of development factors, multifunctional development of rural areas and the use of internal potential of all the territories. The document indicates that the activities of the spatial policy in relation to degraded urbanised areas (Fig. 3) should aim to restore their administrative, social and economic functions and to create favourable conditions for their second development thanks to correlated interventions in spatial planning, infrastructural investments and the support of human resources and entrepreneurship. As a result, a given area or city should regain its attractiveness, favourable living conditions should be restored, and economic and investment activity with the use of the existing cultural potential and preservation of its symbolic and environmental functions in the process of its adaptation to new functions should be undertaken. The NSDC 2030 emphasises also that it is necessary to introduce the obligatory compatibility of restructuring and regeneration programmes with regulations and planning documents, including local spatial development plans and studies of the conditions and directions of spatial development. It will ensure the coordination of planning and an integrated approach to the issues of regenerated areas at each planning level.

### **Financial support of regeneration as part of European funds**

One of the priorities of the EU measures over more than a decade has been an urban policy. A discussion on its shape was initiated in 1997 by the communication of the European Commission "Towards an EU urban agenda". As a result, much attention was paid to the development of cities in the Lisbon Strategy, and above all in the currently applicable Europe 2020 Strategy. These issues were comprehensively covered in the 2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. In the recent years the European Commission has prepared a series of other documents concerning the shape of contemporary European cities and challenges they meet. At the same time the works on an EU urban agenda are under way. These

documents indicate most often the need to adopt a sustainable and integrated model of urban development. Problem areas and the necessity for their regeneration are discussed at great length. This approach was reflected in operational programmes, which were drawn up after Poland's accession to the EU.

Poland has not joined the EU initiatives URBAN and URBAN II supporting the actions for the regeneration of urban areas. However, their elements were introduced to the 2004–2006 Integrated Regional Development Operational Programme (IRDOP). As part of Priority 3 Local Development, activity 3.3 degraded urban, industrial and post-military areas was planned. The fact of including regeneration in the activities connected to local development should be considered symbolic. It meant that the development does not have to involve only territorial expansion but can take place inside a city. Over 96m EUR were planned, which was about 3.3% of the total means available from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). As Heller observes (2005), the inclusion of regeneration to the main stream of the priorities of structural fund programmes was an innovative measure in the entire EU. Such modest means resulted from their pilot role and were indicative of a major increase in financing the renewal in subsequent programming period. It is also worth noting that these means were to be assigned only to some tasks and projects related to the renewal and their effectiveness was to be measured, first of all, with the capacity of integrating private investors to development tasks (Billert 2007).

The adaptation to the EU requirements in terms of receiving funds meant in fact the adoption of a systemic approach to the renewal of cities (Heczko-Hyłowa 2009). A precondition for applying for funds was first of all the preparation of Local Regeneration Programmes, i.e. multiyear activity programmes in the sphere of space, technical devices, society and the economy, intended to help an area break out of the crisis situation and to create conditions for further development of an area (Heller 2005). As part of the Integrated Regional Development Operational Programme (IRDOP) and its details, principles of financial management have been specified as well as those of audit and control, promotion, a data and information exchange system and evaluation. As

a result, apart from the EU means, the regeneration should also be supported by the budgets of territorial governments and other beneficiaries. A proposition of appropriate indicators for monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of the programme and the implemented actions turned out to be a significant element. Such an organisational regeneration scheme should be considered ground-breaking for the development of cities in Poland (Siemiński, Topoczewska 2009).

In the 2007–2013 programming period, 16 regional operational programmes (ROP) were established in the place of IRDOP. As Churski (2008) observes, it was indicative of a greater emphasis put on planning regional activities and clear devolution of the Polish regional policy. A better adaptation of activities to regional strategies was possible. A policy initiated in IRDOP in terms of regeneration was continued in most voivodeships. Only in Podlaskie Voivodeship a renewal was not included among the priorities of the development of a region. A total allocation of the European Regional Development Fund means for the regeneration was about 1,081m EUR; it was over ten times larger than in the first period of financing. It must be emphasised, however, that these means were possible to be used in a longer, seven-year period. In the voivodeships Mazowieckie, Pomorskie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie, Zachodniopomorskie, apart from traditional subsidies, it was decided to use also a repayable form of financing the regeneration which is the JESSICA initiative (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas). It made possible to finance projects which, due to their potential profitability, would not qualify for additional financing in a subsidy system. Means were usually granted based on low-interest loans. Projects, as in the case of subsidies, had to result from local regeneration programmes. The JESSICA initiative was an opportunity to modernise mechanisms for financing regeneration projects thanks to the possibility of a multiple use of the same means and to the fact that it attracted private investors. It was the promotion of a private-public partnership as well (Jadach-Sepiolo 2009, Ciesiółka 2009).

As Jarczewski and Dej (2016) observe, the available EU funds were allocated for various types of intervention, which resulted in a large demand for means and at the same time the poor

integration of activities. Among the projects, investments prevailed; at the same time the private investors were observed to be interested in measures taken in degraded areas. Of great importance was also the appearance and dynamic development of various associations and urban movements supporting regeneration processes of cities (Kołsut et al. 2017; Ciesiółka, Kudlak 2015).

The continuation of the EU policy oriented towards the regeneration of degraded areas has also been observed in the 2014–2020 financial perspective. Cities and their districts requiring regeneration are one of the five territorial strategic areas of intervention indicated in the Partnership Agreement of May 23, 2014. This document determines the intervention strategy of the European funds within three EU's policies: the Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy in the years 2014–2020. It shows, e.g. the need to ensure conditions for proper regeneration, i.e. integrated and comprehensive, and conducted taking into account real social participation. The challenge in this respect is counteracting the degradation processes connected with, e.g. the progressive degradation of urban tissue (including housing), the erosion of social relations, unfavourable demographic processes (migrations, depopulation), spatial (suburbanisation), infrastructural (transport, energetic efficiency) and environmental (pollution). As a result, within thematic objective 9 *Support for the social inclusion and combating poverty*, 9b investment priority *Support for physical, economic and social regeneration of poor communities as well as urban and rural areas* was determined. Moreover, several other investment priorities are indirectly related to the renewal of degraded areas. Regeneration activities in accordance with the Partnership Agreement focus on the inclusion of the communities inhabiting peripheral and degraded areas thanks to a complex regeneration of degraded urban and rural areas, perceived in a social, an economic and a spatial dimension. The measures taken as part of regeneration will aim for the improvement of the life quality of inhabitants as well as economic and social recovery of a given area. Thus, it will reduce the poverty risk and social exclusion in these areas.

A detailed requirements imposed on the regeneration activities financed by the EU were determined in the guidelines concerning the

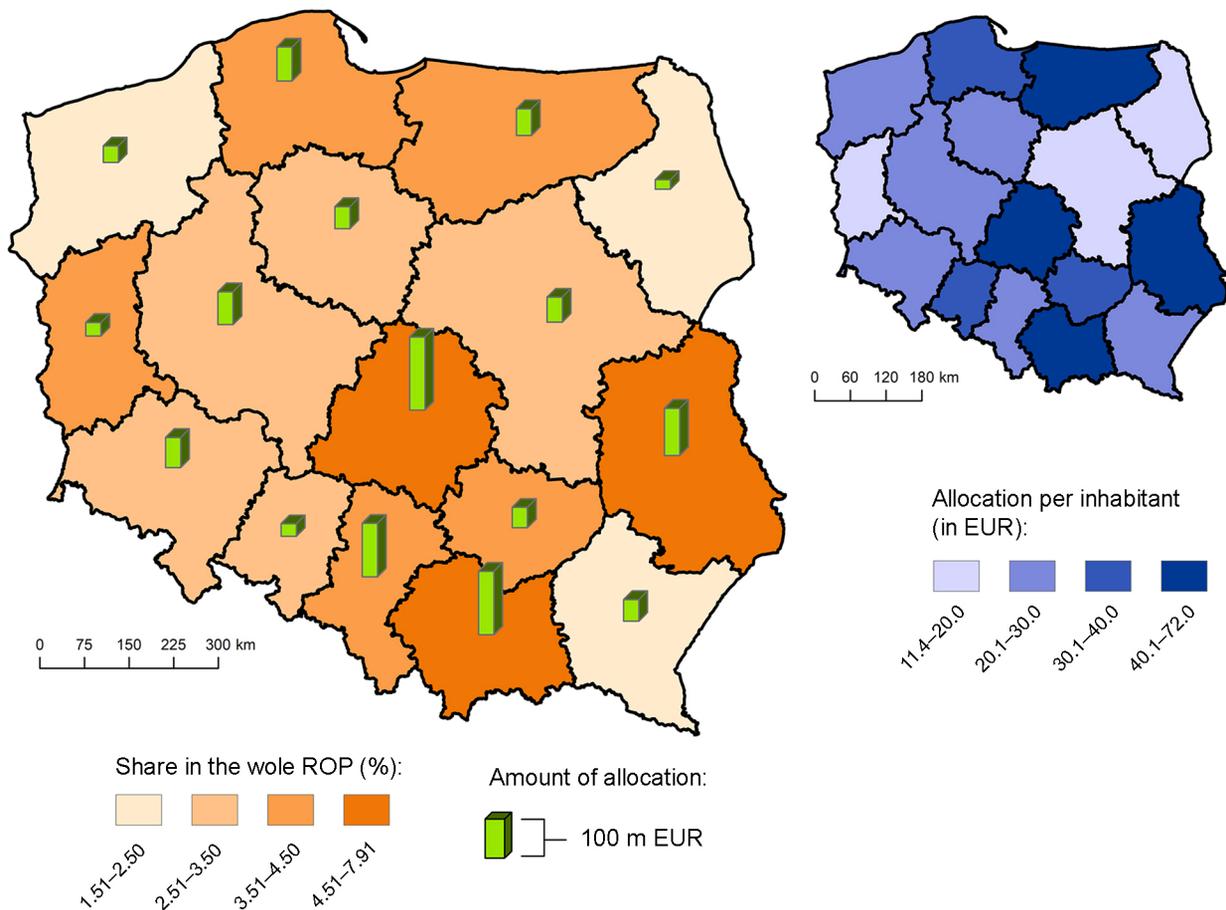


Fig. 4. Outlays on regeneration in the 2014–2020 regional operational programmes\*

\*the measures indicated are those closely related to regeneration for which it was necessary to prepare a regeneration programme to apply for additional funds.

Source: own study based on the Detailed Description of Priority Axes (July 2017).

regeneration in the 2014–2020 operational programmes, issued by the Ministry of Development in August 2016. The above guidelines aim for the standardisation of the conditions and implementation procedures of the 2014–2020 operational programmes concerning the projects realising objectives and regeneration processes, which is going to lead to greater effectiveness, integration, comprehensiveness and coordination. They also defined how such terms as regeneration, crisis, degraded areas, a regeneration area, a regeneration programme and a regeneration project should be understood.

Moreover, the guidelines also determined the principles of regeneration support in regional operational programmes (ROPs) and the preferences regarding the regeneration projects in national operational programmes (NOPs). The ROP means were stated to be the main source of the

co-financing of the regeneration projects from the EU funds and the NOP means were only supplementary. Other sources of co-financing regeneration projects were state budget means as well as those of territorial governments and others, e.g. private ones. Under ROPs, each of the Marshal Offices determined an indicative amount of the allocation of financial means in regeneration areas (Fig. 4).

Furthermore, the guidelines determine the principles of the selection of regeneration projects, also outside the competition, and the principle of monitoring the expenditure for regeneration projects from the EU funds. It should be stated at the same time that the requirements for the implementation of regeneration projects formulated in the guidelines and given within operational programmes are connected with the conditions of accepting a given project for additional

funding or receiving preferences for additional funding from the EU means.

### Support for the preparation of regeneration programmes

Since 2014 the Ministry of Development has been engaged in the educational activities for the development of model solutions concerning regeneration in Poland. Pilot projects have been implemented in the cities mentioned in the Partnership Agreement, i.e. in Łódź, Wałbrzych and Bytom. These activities should result in model documents, solutions, techniques and good practices in the renewal of degraded areas. They are to be made gradually available by the Regeneration Knowledge Centre coordinated by the Ministry to serve all the communes planning and conducting regeneration.

The continuation of these measures was the competition for grants entitled 'A model regeneration of cities' announced in April 2015 concerning the support of cities in the preparation of regeneration programmes and model activities. The competition aimed mainly to disseminate the proper understanding of regeneration and to create model access paths to the solutions of problems connected with regeneration activities. Also crucial was the promotion of good practices in this field among various stakeholders and other cities with similar conditions or problems regarding regeneration processes. Twenty cities from different parts of the country have been selected in the competition, i.e. Włocławek, Warsaw, Wrocław, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Milicz, Hrubieszów, Ełk, Grajewo, Starachowice, Szczecin, Rybnik, Żyrardów, Lublin, Dobiegniew, Leszno, Słupsk, Chorzów, Konin, Stalowa Wola and Opole Lubelskie. Until the end of 2018, regeneration activities will be implemented there, performed with a great support of experts from the Ministry of Development. At the same time, since the mid-2015 competitions for preparing or updating regeneration programmes have been organised. So far 1,180 Polish communes have received additional funding. These competitions aim to support offices in activating processes intended for the regeneration of degraded areas by helping to prepare regeneration programmes as basic documents for conducting these processes

and for solving regeneration problems in the areas requiring special intervention taking into account the specifics and conditions of particular communes. Additional aims of the competition are: the popularisation of regeneration as a process for complex, interdisciplinary changes directed to help degraded areas out of the crisis, strengthening communes' potential to create social participation mechanisms and engage inhabitants, public and private entities as well as other stakeholders in the preparation of regeneration programmes and at the same time making it possible for degraded areas to break out of the crisis.

### Summary

The study of the Supreme Audit Office of 2016 proved many breaches in regeneration activities performed in Polish cities in the years 2004–2015. Regeneration programmes were accused of not being perceived by communes as a tool for the integrated management of activities; they did not produce consistent spatial results in the areas designated for regeneration.

At the time, social projects were depreciated at the cost of investments. The need for monitoring the implementation of programmes as well as the necessity to prepare and pass reports were not respected although communes were obliged to do so. Thus, the studies carried out by researchers were confirmed (e.g. Skalski 2007; Sztando 2008; Siemiński 2009; Siemiński, Topczewska 2009; Świerczewska-Pietras 2009; Płoszaj 2011; *Rewitalizacja...* 2011; Nowak 2013; Palicki 2013; Jadach-Sepiolo, Czenczak 2014; Ciesiółka, Kudlak 2015; Jarczewski, Dej 2016; Kołsut et al. 2017). Due to that fact a change in the perception of conducting the regeneration policy in Poland was necessary. The current legislation and the guidelines determined in strategic programmes and the EU documents seem to make such a change possible. Therefore, the most important characteristics of the Polish current policy are:

1. Comprehensiveness of intervention. A complex approach to problems (social, spatial, technical, spatial-functional and environmental) at the diagnostic stage, and what follows the formulation of integrated projects solving

those problems as a whole is the condition imposed on regeneration programmes.

2. Concentration of activities. Regeneration programmes should concern the areas of cities and communes mostly affected by social problems which are accompanied by other ones, on the understanding that they can cover up to 20% of the commune area and 30% of its inhabitants. It gives hope to obtain accumulated benefits resulting from the concentration of activities of different nature in a small area.
3. Complementarity of activities. It is manifested by the implementation of activities which will supplement one another with regard to space and problems and at the same time they will refer to the activities undertaken in the past (inter-period complementarity).
4. An integrated approach to regeneration. It consists in the integrated regeneration projects mentioned above, but also in the integration of the strategic programmes implemented in different fields (development strategies, studies of the conditions and directions of spatial development, local spatial development plans, strategies for solving social problems, environmental and transport programmes) and what follows the systems for managing these programmes.
5. Co-financing of regeneration. Regeneration will be financed from the EU funds with the great support of the state means and also private ones, assisted by the JESSICA initiative. It is going to enable the continuation of activities as the EU support dwindle.
6. Social participation. Actors of the regeneration process (inhabitants, entrepreneurs, real property managers, representatives of non-governmental organisations) must have a real influence on the regeneration process at its every stage, from diagnosing problems, through establishing the objectives and projects of realisation, their implementation, to monitoring and assessing performed activities.
7. Monitoring of regeneration activities. It is an indispensable element of the regeneration process which allows obtaining the results of remedial activities and, if necessary, improving the adopted approach.
8. Education in regeneration. Development of model solutions in cities and communes, ex-

pert support for creating regeneration programmes, well-organised information campaign in media, television and the Internet are to disseminate the knowledge on regeneration which will raise the level of acceptance of the solutions proposed.

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