

The Holistic Concept of Sustainable Development in Strategies of Polish Voivodeships to the Year 2020

Holistyczna koncepcja zrównoważonego rozwoju w strategiach polskich województw do roku 2020

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Abstract

This paper presents the development strategies of the sixteen Polish voivodeships, taking into account the comprehensive concept of sustainable development, that integrates three dimensions: social, economic and ecological one. Depending on the results of this analysis, regional strategies have been divided into three categories: strategies beyond the paradigm of sustainable development, strategies beside the paradigm of sustainable development and strategies towards the sustainable development paradigm. The analysis of *Europe 2020* strategy has also been carried out in terms of its focus on sustainability and impact on the strategies of European Union Member States and their regions.

Key words: sustainable development, development strategy, European Union, Polish voivodeships

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule zaprezentowano strategie rozwojowe szesnastu polskich województw, w kontekście całościowej koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju integrującej trzy wymiary: społeczny, gospodarczy i ekologiczny. W zależności od wyników tej analizy, strategie wojewódzkie podzielone zostały na trzy kategorie: strategie poza paradygmatem zrównoważonego rozwoju, strategie obok paradygmatu zrównoważonego rozwoju oraz strategie w kierunku paradygmatu zrównoważonego rozwoju. Przeprowadzono także analizę strategii *Europa 2020* w zakresie jej ukierunkowania na rozwój zrównoważony oraz wpływu na strategie państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej i ich regionów.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, strategia rozwoju, Unia Europejska, województwa polskie

Introduction

In this paper, sixteen strategies of Polish voivodeships have been analysed, in the context of taking into account, in a holistic manner, the concept of sustainable development. In the holistic paradigm of sustainability only an integrated approach to three dimensions: social, economic and ecological, allows to achieve such development. The main research question of the paper is: whether in Poland we are dealing with a holistic approach to sustainable development or not?

Let's begin with the European context. The development of policies of the EU Member States means

interventionism, which is aimed at increasing the productive potential of economy in order to improve its competitiveness. Competitive economy is seen as a determinant of social welfare. The area of development policy is a region, while the direction of the policy is determined by a supranational organisation – the European Union. Therefore, Member States' strategies are modeled on *Lisbon Agenda* (European Council, 2000), and the strategy *Europe 2020* (European Commission, 2010). The national strategies imply the regional ones, in Poland it is the *National Development Strategy 2020* (2012).

The most important strategic document of the European Union is currently the *Europe 2020. Strategy*

for *Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth* (EC, 2010). The strategy is a long-term socio-economic program. The assumptions are, in fact, not conducive to sustainable development. The fundamental problem, which influences all defined goals and means of achieving them, is the separation of economic, environmental and social issues, as well as passing to the category of sustainable development only the first two.

The division was further strengthened by dividing the overarching priorities of the new EU strategy:

- smart growth – developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- sustainable growth – the promotion of sustainable management, resource efficient and competitive at the same time, capable of sustainable development;
- inclusive growth – strengthening the economy characterised by high employment, as well as, the economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Unacceptable is the fact, that in *Europe 2020* strategy the only measure of social development remains GDP, despite the fact, that GDP does not distinguish between the costs and benefits, sums up all the money spent on the final products and services included in economic activity. The measure does not also introduce a distinction between an increase in amount and improvement in quality, which is crucial for stable national economy.

The National Development Strategy 2020. Active society, competitive economy, efficient state approved by the Council of Ministers on 25 September 2012 is the basis of all medium term strategies until 2020. The Polish elements (determined by the EU guidelines) are institutional transformation fusing efficient state, exemplification of which will be a higher quality of public institutions and the active role of social capital. The strategy assumes an effective socio-economic development, economic, social cohesion and territorial cohesion, as well as creating the conditions for exploiting the potential of economy and society (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland, 2012).

The European Union is a supranational organisation uniting countries at different levels of socio-economic development. Standards, which has been established were tailored to the level of highly developed countries, so possible to implement in societies, that have already achieved prosperity and welfare and now strive for well-being. The analysis of the development strategy of Polish voivodeships in terms of interpretation and feasibility of the sustainable development concept, will also answer the question whether Poland is already a developed country or still a growing one, despite functioning under the aegis of the European Union.

The division of the article into subsection is not proportional, but adapted to the factual division established at work: strategies beyond the paradigm of

sustainable development, strategies beside the paradigm of sustainable development – taking into account one dimension of the phenomenon and strategies pursuing towards sustainable development. The analysis of each strategy was preceded by a brief characteristics of the region.

Social research methods applied in this paper include: descriptive method, analysis of official documents and comparative studies. The sources used for characterisation of the voivodeships were created at the same time as the analysed strategies: *Statistical Yearbook of Voivodships 2010*, *Statistical Demographic Yearbook 2011*, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2010* (Central Statistical Office 2010, 2011). It is worth noting however, that over the last few years, there have not been significant changes in the statistics.

1. Strategies beyond the paradigm of sustainable development

1.1. Lower Silesia Voivodeship Development Strategy 2020

Lower Silesia Voivodeship: area of 19 947 km², population of 2 877.8 MM; urbanised region, with a low share of employment in agriculture, high rate of economic growth and high incomes.

The strategy (Lower Silesia Marshal Office, 2013) is missing sustainable development among the principles and practices, the only *must have* principle is the preservation of cultural and natural heritage for future generations. But we should not forget, that social and economic policies, that have been conducted for years in the region, have led to environmental degradation. The irrefutable proof are the results of the analysis of particulate matter PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, made under the State Environmental Monitoring in Lower Silesia in 2011-2012, which showed a significant excess of the average concentration, which increases the risk of respiratory diseases and cardiovascular (Regional Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, 2013). Regional authorities' policy has also led to the dependence of human and social capital of circulating speculative capital (wrongly identified with investment) and to legitimising economic activities based on dirty technologies, expelled from the highly developed countries.

It is worth mentioning, that progress of strategic objectives in the field of sustainable development in the present strategy of Lower Silesia is not noticeable in comparison to the previous strategy, where sustainable development was identified with the pursuit and comprehensive integration of various strategic actions.

1.2 Lublin Voivodeship Development Strategy for 2014-2020, with a View to 2030

Lublin Voivodeship: area of 25 122 km², population of 2 151.9 MM; one of the three least urbanised re-

gions in Poland, with the highest ratio of employed in agriculture and one of the poorest in the country. The authors of Lublin voivodeship strategy (Lublin Marshal Office, 2013) posted an ideologically characterised, devoid of pro-social orientation, regional tactics of sustainable development, trying to define the phenomenon originally: *we often use very simplistic understanding of sustainable development as the one that eliminates the differences between the various socio-professional groups or areas. These differences cannot be eliminated though, they are natural feature of any social system of government, and identifying the existing differences as excessive is authorised only after identifying what kind of differences are acceptable, which is obviously difficult because of the lack of clear criteria in this regard. In addition, the state of sustainable development is basically unreachable, because of the tension and imbalances, that are inherent feature of development process, which involves making permanent changes in the structure of government social system. Therefore, this strategy is subordinated to the principle of development equilibration, that reflects the dynamic of development processes* (p. 7).

The attitude of the decision makers in Lublin voivodeship in terms of striving for sustainability through equilibration, can be characterised as follows: they declare their willingness to engage in a process of sustainable development, since these are the guidelines of the European Union, however they do not believe in effectiveness of the planned activities. The authors emphasise the adaptive activities rather, than the innovative ones. Among the thematic objectives CSF 2014-2020, there is *promotion of adaptation to climate change* (p. 8). This attitude was not reasoned enough in the strategy. Perhaps the authors pay homage to the theory, that a major factor in the climate change is nature itself, so we can only adjust to these changes, adapting the national economy, as well as, the social and political aspects of societies functioning (Lachenbruch & Marschall, 1986).

A significant drawback of the strategy, in the context of holistic sustainable development, is misunderstanding of contemporary social issues. The authors indicate that the Lublin Voivodeship has got the highest indicator of the risk of poverty in Poland (30%). Social exclusion is mentioned in the strategy as a separate problem as if it has been forgotten, that poverty was a key factor of exclusion. Then the authors pointed out the social and professional activity of marginalised people, improving access and quality of public services and development of social economy as a form of exclusion prevention. Thus, the social exclusion has been equated with marginalisation, and these are, after all, phenomena of different provenance. Moreover, in this concept of combating poverty, a growing phenomenon of employed people poverty due to low wages, has been overlooked. At the end, the authors mentioned the need

to increase social participation as a basic condition for development of civil society and reducing the size of negative social phenomena (p. 71).

The proposed direction of regional social policy does not fit in any development strategy, since it deals with the planned compensation activities and the compensation of negative social phenomena is transferred in this document mainly to civil society institutions.

The problem with understanding the complexity of the phenomenon of sustainable development has been already highlighted in the strategy of Lublin voivodeship 2000. In this strategy it has been noted that *one of the most important conditions for multilaterally sustainable voivodeship development is to improve the social and economic situation in the country, mainly in agriculture*. Since 2000, there has not been any evolution of the perception of the regional sustainable development.

1.3. Pomeranian Voivodeship Development Strategy 2020

Pomeranian Voivodeship: area of 18 310 km², population of 2 240.3 MM; region with one of the lowest percentages of people working in agriculture and one of the highest employment in the service sector; with an average growth rate, high wages and incomes.

In the Strategy of Pomeranian Voivodeship (Pomeranian Marshal Office, 2013) the support for the concept of sustainable development has been declared on the occasion of specifying the principles of strategy: *The achievement of living standards lasting improvement requires the sustainable development, implemented by providing social, environmental and spatial equilibrium* (p. 24).

Then, the authors emphasise, that the strategic interest of the voivodeship is to provide elementary conditions for a stable, long-term and sustainable development. However, the way in which the implementation of the sustainability idea is understood, leaves doubts. According to the authorities of the region, in order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to lay the foundation for a high mobility of the inhabitants, the smooth flow of goods and energy, based on effective functioning (smart) network and infrastructure systems (p. 52). These solutions will certainly contribute to economic growth, but do not determine its sustainability. Once again, overall, combining all the constitutive dimensions of sustainable development, was used in an opportunistic manner. The well-being-oriented idea, which consists of social justice, ecology and rational management, in this context, is legitimising any action (as evidenced by the above description) promoting the development of the region.

1.4. Silesian Voivodeship Development Strategy 'Silesian 2020+'

Silesian Voivodeship: area of 12 333 km², the population of 4 635.9 MM; most urbanised region in Po-

land, with the lowest percentage of people employed in agriculture and the highest employment in industry, with an average growth rate, high wages and incomes, as well as low unemployment rate.

In the strategy of Silesian voivodeship (Silesia Marshal Office, 2013) sustainable development appears in the context of multifunctional forest management (course of action B.2.7) and spatial planning. Forests are presented in the strategy as a key element of ecological security of the country, hence a policy and forest management were raised to the rank of strategic. It was also found, that *forest management must be done in a sustainable way from the economic, environmental, social and cultural point of view* (p. 69).

In the context of spatial planning, the authors refer to the *Leipzig Charter* – a document of the European Union, which provides a framework for cooperation in the field of urban development policy, defining common principles and strategies in this area, taking into account the historical, economic, social and environmental aspects of European cities (p. 180). The authors predict that *'Regional Spatial Development Plan of Silesian Voivodeship' will be playing for the next several years a crucial role in controlling the future of the region, so as to make an optimum use of existing resources and opportunities, providing long-term sustainable development of the region* (p. 183).

In the strategy of Silesian Voivodeship, as well as in other regional strategies beyond the paradigm of sustainable development, the authors mention social cohesion, prevention of social exclusion, poverty reduction, however they do not connect these issues with sustainable development, do not indicate the entities that should be responsible for different aspects of socially sustainable development. With this kind of development problems, focusing on forestry and spatial management is definitely not enough for the region to be called sustainable. While in the *Silesian Strategy of 2000* the aspect of sustainable development has been completely omitted, in the most recent one the term appears, however the definitional scope proposed by the authors is too narrow.

1.5. Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship Strategy 2020 – modernization plan 2020+

Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship: area of 17 972 km², population of 2 069.5 MM; region with a high percentage of people living in rural areas and working in agriculture, as well as with high proportion of people living in urban area with population over 100,000; with the growth rate below the national average.

A broad analysis of the socio-economic situation of the region included in the strategy (Kuyavian-Pomeranian Marshall Office, 2013) was deprived of the context of sustainable development. It contains only a reference to the fact that *any action at the stage of planning, programming and implementation of pro-*

jects (including the finances) must take into account, regardless of the fulfillment of the obligations required by the regulations, the impact and optimization of each task in terms of sustainability and space order. In planning activities in each program one should take into account the horizontal objectives and seek synergy of social, economic and environmental conditions (p. 55). The statement precedes a list of activities, mainly investments, during which attention should be paid to the issues of maintaining the development equilibrium. The authors do not write about it directly, but the way in which the socio-economic problems of the region has been presented shows, that developmentally delayed Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, cannot afford to implement the idea of sustainable development.

2. Strategies beside the paradigm of sustainable development

2.1. Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Development Strategy until 2020

Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship: area of 11 711 km², population 1 266.0 MM; one of the least urbanised regions in Poland, with a very high percentage of people employed in agriculture, high dynamics of economic growth, as well as with low wages and incomes.

The authors of Świętokrzyskie voivodeship development strategy (Świętokrzyskie Marshal Office, 2006) rely on the *'Lisbon Strategy'*, *Świętokrzyskie, belonging to the five poorest regions in Poland and European Union, sees the actual chances of development in the implementation of the EU cohesion policy and the objectives of the revised 'Lisbon Strategy'* (p. 4) and to the concept of sustainable development: *The document 'Świętokrzyskie Regional Strategy 2020' has been developed taking into account the principle of sustainable development, understood as a balance between the economic, social and environmental issues* (p. 5). However, this strategy definitely does not contribute to the increase of awareness and action for a coherent perception of these three areas.

In the area of social and economic life, it is more about the proportional development of the region, than the balanced one.

At the stage of creating the strategy the basic principles have been adopted to be used also at the stage of implementation. Principle 2: *Socio-economic development carried out in order to ensure the possibility of satisfying the basic needs of the local community (both contemporary and future generations), takes into account the sustainability of nature, balancing the opportunities of access to the environment and the sustainability of basic natural processes; it implies the need for preference and strengthen the development of such processes, which will contribute to reduction of the use of resources in general, and in particular the non-renewable ones,*

as well as waste and pollution minimization. Principle 3 refers to the creation of conditions for sustainable development, in order to ensure the proper functioning of ecological systems (p. 94).

Świętokrzyskie voivodeship strategy refers only to the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The only social element, borrowed from the *Lisbon Strategy* – present and future generations – has not been sufficiently exposed.

2.2. Opole Voivodeship Development Strategy until 2020

Opole Voivodeship: area of 9 412 km², population of 1 028.6 MM; region with a high percentage of people living in rural areas and with an average level of employment in agriculture, as well as with high economic growth, medium wages and incomes.

The strategy (Opole Marshal Office, 2012) includes numerous references to the priorities of *Europe 2020*, however, the term *sustainable* appears in the Opole voivodeship strategy mainly in the context of territorial sustainability and sustainable cities. The strategy shows, that the responsibility for the implementation of operational objective 7.3: *shaping the natural system, the protection of landscape and biodiversity* is transferred only to state institutions. Authors did not take into account the impact of economic operators and their responsibilities in terms of development and protection of the natural environment. It was limited to a general statement that *all activities connected with improving socio-economic conditions should take into account the environmental and spatial consequences, according to the concept of sustainable development* (p. 117). Moreover, this observation indicates a lack of understanding of the holistic concept of sustainability: can the actions aimed at improving socio-economic conditions be a subject of negative consequences for the environment?

The definition of sustainable development proposed by the Opole voivodeship, is presented in the section on the strategy principles and is narrowed to integrating the objectives and requirements of environmental protection into other policies, strategies and actions (p. 129). However it is not specified what kind of policies, strategies and action are concerned.

2.3 Development Strategy of Voivodeship – the Subcarpathian 2020

Subcarpathian Voivodeship: area of 17 845 km², population of 2 103.5 MM; Polish least urbanised region with a high proportion of people employed in agriculture, low economic growth, as well as low wages and incomes.

The strategic objectives of the Subcarpathian voivodeship (Subcarpathian Marshal Office, 2013) aimed at sustainable development is focusing mainly on protection of the environment and preservation of biodiversity (p. 75). The limitation to only one dimension of sustainable development is particularly

surprising in the context of the adopted definition of sustainable development, as the socio-economic development that meets the basic needs of all people and preserves, protects and restores health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem, without jeopardizing the ability to satisfy the needs of future generations and without exceeding the long-term capacity of the Earth's ecosystem boundaries (p. 114).

2.4 Podlachia Voivodeship Development Strategy by 2020

Podlachia Voivodeship: area of 20 187 km², population of 1 188.3 MM; region with an average share of the population living in rural areas, one of the highest shares of employment in agriculture, average level of economic growth and low level of wages and incomes.

The authors of Podlachia voivodeship strategy (Podlachia Marshal Office, 2013) undertook a mission to raise environmental awareness. This process, according to the decision makers, *starts with the early education of children and young people, but should cover all stages of human life, if the environment is to become one of the most important strengths used for socio-economic development*. Relying on nationwide study, the authors indicate, that one of the basic training needs of public administration is the training in municipal management and environmental protection. Larger competencies of the officials enabling professional service are believed to be helpful in obtaining new investments in protected areas (p. 18-19).

The second area of involvement is the protection and rational use of natural resources, so as to ensure their availability for future generations. It has been underlined that *the current unsustainable patterns of production have a negative impact on the environment (especially on the quality of air, water, soil and biodiversity) and thus on health and quality of life. It is therefore necessary to shift to a resource efficient development, rationalizing the use of environmental resources and well thought compensatory measures. A healthy natural environment is as important for the quality of life, as for the state of the economy or social factors* (p. 48).

After this very important declaration the main lines of intervention have been pointed out:

- environmental education and an increase of social pro-environment activity;
- protection of the air, soil, water and other resources;
- an efficient waste management system;
- low-carbon economy (including energy efficiency);
- protection of natural resources and landscape values, as well as the rehabilitation of the degraded ecosystems.

The declared emphasis on compensation, that should be enforced from those causing the damage, did not find its exemplification in the directions of interven-

tion. It is hard not to agree with the authors that the natural environment is as important to quality of life, as the economic and social factors, but only in the combination of these three dimensions it will be possible to ensure welfare within the framework of sustainable development.

2.5. Lodz Voivodeship Development Strategy for 2007-2020

Lodz Voivodeship: area of 18 219 km², population of 2 534.4 MM; agglomeration of Lodz highly urbanised and industrialised; a region with a high level of employment in agriculture and low in the service sector, with medium level of wages and incomes.

In Lodz voivodeship sustainable development has been described in the context of rural areas (Lodz Marshal Office, 2006). The authors have drawn attention to the following aspects, including them in the strategic objectives:

- protection and improvement of the environment, as well as the prevention of natural and anthropogenic risks;
- sustainable development of natural resources;
- raising the environmental awareness.

Planned activities in this area include:

- implementation of water and sewage system;
- use of renewable energy sources;
- selective collection, recovery and disposal of waste (especially municipal and hazardous waste);
- protection against flooding;
- non-ionizing radiation protection;
- reduction of emissions to the atmosphere;
- improving of the surface and groundwater water quality;
- increase in forest cover;
- protection of soils;
- rehabilitation of mining abandoned and degraded areas;
- increase in water resources of the region;
- promotion of environmental education (p. 41).

The sequence of cause and effect presented in the strategy is however unclear. The authors insist on obtaining a strong position in the regional structure, which will raise the broadly understood quality of life and ensure attractive conditions for investment and business: *the overall level of civilization of the region will be raised and the standard of living is going to reach a level similar to the European standard. This in turn will ensure a balanced and sustainable development based on modern and competitive economy* (p. 4).

It seems, that once again the concepts have been mistaken and that *sustainable development based on modern and competitive economy* means *de facto*

continuous economic growth. Therefore, the need to enhance the attractiveness of the business environment in order to attract investment has been pointed out.

2.6. Lesser Poland Voivodeship Development Strategy for 2011-2020

Lesser Poland Voivodeship: area of 15 183 km², population of 3 310.1 MM; region with a high percentage of people living in rural areas, coupled with the average level of employment in agriculture, and the average level of growth, as well as medium wages and incomes.

In the development strategy of Lesser Poland voivodeship (Lesser Poland Marshal Office, 2011) the most exposed was the environmental dimension. The improvement of the quality of the environment has been indicated as a co-factor of sustainable development of the region in the social and economic stratum and a contribution to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Treaty of the European Union:

- preserving, protecting and improving the environment;
- protection of human health;
- rational use of natural resources;
- promoting the measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, especially to combat the effects of climate change (p. 137).

The European Union's rules for the implementation of these objectives have been repeated:

1. The principle of a high level of protection: the obligation to have regard to a high level of environmental standards in all activities;
2. The precautionary principle: the probability of a risk to the environment is sufficient reason to take action to protect the environment;
3. The principle of prevention: the need to consider the potential consequences of a particular action and to take, on the basis of this analysis, preventive measures, the promotion of *cleaner* technologies, and establishing standards for emissions;
4. The *polluter pays* principle: the cost of compensation for environmental damage, restore the pre-contamination of the environment, as well as, in the case of causing the risk of contamination, the costs of preventing its occurrence rest on the perpetrator of danger.

The creative contribution to this strategy is the statement, that *the enforcement of these rules will be a formal requirement, mandatory in the selection process and the implementation of projects, with a particular focus on infrastructure projects*. These rules are designed to maintain ecological security of the citizens, social infrastructure and natural resources (p. 138).

2.7. Masovian Voivodeship Development Strategy until 2020

Masovian Voivodeship: area of 35 538 km², population of 5 242.9 MM; region with one of the highest shares of people living in urban area with population over 100,000 and the highest employment rate in the service sector. The capital city provides the region the highest level of wages and incomes, as well as low unemployment rate.

Among the strategic objectives (Masovian Marshal Office, 2006) building the information society, improving the quality of life, increasing the competitiveness of the region, *improving the social, economic and spatial cohesion of the region in terms of sustainable development* has been included (p. 10). Another reference to the principle of sustainable development has been made in the postulate of increasing the level of competitiveness of the region, which is to contribute to the development of many areas of social and economic life, and consequently to improve the residents living standard. The authors stressed, that this development-oriented competitiveness must be sustainable, recognising the complementarity of economic, social and environmental aspects (p. 23).

The authors repeatedly focused on protecting the environment, designed to preserve the favorable conditions for environmental, economic and social development for the future generations, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development (p. 42). After such declaration, followed a series of the state's obligations to care for the environment, its preservation, revitalization of degraded areas, as well as a questionable assertion concerning *the protection of biodiversity and preserving the unchanged habitats environment, through making the area of the Masovian voivodeship GMO-free zone* (p. 43).

The issue is questionable, because, so far, a coherent definition of GMO-free zone has not been developed. The implementation of such projects mostly comes down to administrative bans for the production of genetically modified organisms. However such aspects, like agricultural and industrial processing (including both food and feed), the import of seeds or semi-finished products, and finally consumption remain unexplained. The strategy of Masovian voivodeship does not bring these problems, hence, it can be presumed, that the Masovian *GMO freedom* de facto will be reduced to a ban of GMO production in a separate area.

Masovian voivodeship development strategy until 2030. did not bring substantive value nor new content. Only the term sustainable development appears more frequently, than in previous strategies of the region.

2.8. Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship 2025

Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship: area of 24 174 km², population of 1 427.2 MM; region close to the

national average of individual sectors in the employment structure, characterised by high unemployment, low wages and incomes.

The strategy (Warmian-Masurian Marshal Office, 2013) identified primarily the relationship of sustainable development and energy policy in the region. In one series it summarises the investment in gas and energetic networks and the use of renewable energy sources. The benefits of this investment are also supposed to be multi-faceted: they should contribute to the improvement of the natural environment conservation state, to increase the attractiveness of investing and standard of living, as well as to the region's energy self-sufficiency. Opportunity for the region is supposed to be a successful exploration of shale gas and oil (p. 57).

It seems that the inclusion of renewable energy sources among traditional, at least controversial ones, in this strategy is a strictly *must have* aspect. Renewable energy sources, in contrast to the traditional ones, are not a subject to further guidance in this document. The authors do not report also to the controversy of the results of the public consultation in the context of shale gas exploitation. The threats posed by technology in preparation for exploitation: fracturing technology (crushing shale), shale gas detection (vertical and horizontal test drilling), and the exploitation itself were not even mentioned.

So, planned development takes into account only the energy needs for economic growth. It will not protect natural resources and landscape, as the authors declare in the strategy (p. 58). More than this, sustainable development is meant to be present in the following operational purposes (though the impact of the idea has not been indicated): increase in competitiveness of the region through the development of smart specialization; increase in innovation of companies; increase in the number of jobs; improvement of the administration; intensification of inter-regional cooperation; increasing external transport accessibility and internal cohesion; adaption to the needs of the network of energy; improvement of the quality and protection of natural environment (p. 74).

Presented goals come from so many different areas, although undoubtedly strategic, that we are rather dealing with the regional authorities wishful thinking, than with real possibilities. What's more, with the majority of these postulates the idea of sustainable development is not directly related, and with a part of them, the idea is in contradiction. Sustainable development is not as universal concept, as it seems to the authors of the strategy.

2.9. West Pomeranian Voivodeship Development Strategy until 2020

West Pomeranian Voivodeship: area of 22 892 km², population of 1 693.1 MM; region with a high level of urbanisation, very low level of employment in agriculture and very high in the service sector; with

high unemployment rate, medium wages and incomes.

Sustainable development in the West Pomeranian voivodeship strategy (West Pomeranian Marshal Office, 2010) is considered only in relation to the *Nature 2000* areas (perceived mainly as tourist areas). The authors note, that the development of these areas should be done in a sustainable way and based on such activities, which do not affect environmental sustainability. It is difficult to classify this strategy, not only because it deals with sustainable development in relation to just one aspect, but also due to the fact, that it allows the execution of investments significantly negatively affecting the areas of *Nature 2000* – *when the investment is of paramount importance for the public interest and there is no alternatives for it*. In such cases, it is necessary to apply measures to offset the losses caused by the implementation of an investment in the natural habitats of plants and animals (p. 80). Compensatory measures fit in with the idea of restoring the balance of development, however, the consent to prejudicial, questions the intentions of policymakers.

The current strategy is regressive in relation to the one of 2000, in which sustainable development was understood as: economic activity respecting the principles of sustainable economic growth, taking into account environmental factors in the region; development of science and building structural links between science and practice; supporting the development of small and medium enterprises and implementation of regional labour market equalization policy.

3. Strategies towards a paradigm of sustainable development

3.1 Greater Poland 2020. The Updated Strategy for the Development of the Greater Poland Voivodeship by 2020

Greater Poland Voivodeship: area of 29 826 km², population of 3 419.4 MM; the region is characterised by a medium level of urbanisation and employment in agriculture, with the industry employment above the national average, high level of wages and incomes, low unemployment rate and relatively low economic growth.

The strategy of Greater Poland voivodeship (Greater Poland Marshal Office, 2012) is the only one, in which the term sustainable economic growth was used. However, the definition of it is totally different from the sustainable development perspective. The authors refer in fact to stimulating economic growth, rather than to limiting or controlling the growth process. Reference to the limited growth appears only in so-called *difficult development scenario*, which assumes a slow, but steady and sustainable development. This scenario can be described as *poor but happy* and means small, but thanks to responsible

leadership, more sustainable growth, based on a different than the current one hierarchy of values (p. 158).

Gaining control over yet unbridled economic growth, and when there is a need to limit this process, is dictated by the over-exploitation of natural resources and the diversification of income. Those aspects are definitely missing in the strategy of Greater Poland and it is a shame, since this strategy is best embedded voivodeship strategy into the sustainable development paradigm.

The widely understood sustainable development, is seen by the authors as giving the Greater Poland the ability to obtain the status of a *green leader* emerging research and environmental technologies, research and technology for renewable energy, developing energy production from unconventional sources. The strategy also highlights the principles which should be strictly respected in the development process:

- solidarity – whether at local, regional, national or global level, as well as between the present and future generations;
- responsibility – so that the choices made today would not restrict the freedom of all participants in social and economic life in the future;
- participation – involvement of all participants in social and economic life of the region (p. 65).

The authors declare, that sustainable development of Great Poland 2020 should be based on economic efficiency. However, after analysing the definition of what the authors called economic efficiency – taking into account the profit for community including social and environmental costs, it should be noted, that the strategy developers meant rather social than economic efficiency.

Another pillar of sustainable development according to the authors, is a social equilibrium, understood as the creation of conditions for the population development, leading to the creation of new job places and active measures to improve the quality of life (p. 65). Such multifaceted understanding of social balance is unique in the strategies of Polish voivodeships.

The other rules that integrate social, economic and environmental dimension, are as follows:

- an effective use of non-renewable resources and the desire for their replacement substitutes;
- gradual elimination of business processes and other applications of hazardous and toxic substances;
- permanent protection and restoration of biodiversity at four levels: landscape, ecosystem, species and gene;
- creating the conditions for economic operators of fair competition in access to scarce resources and capabilities of discharges;

- socialisation of the decision making process, particularly on local environment, seeking to ensure a sense of the ecological safety of individuals, understood as the creation of an environment conducive to physical and mental health, as well as, to social development (creating and nurturing local ties);
- promoting investments, which are characterised by high energy efficiency in both technology and buildings, eliminating sources of pollution (p. 155-156).

The Greater Poland strategy strongly evolved towards sustainable development since 2000, when the only reference that came down to the idea was, that *sustainable development is concretised by providing the residents lasting ecological security and contributing to the sustainable quality of life of present and future generations*. A policy for sustainable growth will, however, require from the regional authorities the change of perception (or even a paradigm) of the impact of economic growth on social development.

3.2 Lubusz Voivodeship Strategy of Development 2020. Attachments

Lubusz Voivodeship: area of 13 988 km², population of 1 011.0 MM; medium industrialised region, with a low rate of economic growth and medium incomes. The strategy of Lubusz voivodeship (Lubusz Marshal Office, 2012) is based on the criterion of sustainable development, which is provided by a harmonious formation of four capitals: physical, natural, human and social. Physical capital consists of: economic potential, assets – production, transport, communications, tourism, cultural infrastructure, etc. Natural capital consists of the environmental resources and efforts taken to improve the environment. Human capital is formed by the employees, their education and skills, as well as, their quality of life and state of health. The last of the capitals, social capital, is measured by the level of trust between people, their willing to cooperate and non-work activities (p. 3). The authors of the strategy did not specify how sustainable development forms the listed capitals. For the authors of this study, the most interesting would be the extent of the impact of sustainable development on the separated physical capital.

Then, sustainable development is analysed in the context of social participation: *Keeping active and democratic civil society and sustainable development of the country depend on the construction of the third sector, which in relation to social capital requires at least the existence of the citizens' trust and their social involvement* (p. 47).

The authors indicate third sector organisations as an important stakeholders of sustainable development. However, it seems that ceding the whole responsibility for sustainable development to the third sector is

too much, especially in countries, that are just starting to build a multi-sectoral social policy. Even in societies with the civic society mentality, civic institutions are purely consultative bodies. Sustainable development is a comprehensive decision-making system, hence also in this area the state authorities are the main entity. Nevertheless, the presented attachment provides a theoretical basis for the region's policy focused on sustainable development. Moreover, the evolution of the decision makers attitudes is evident – the strategy of 2000 did not contain any references to the idea or practice of sustainable development.

Conclusions

The analysis of the strategies of the sixteen Polish voivodeships showed, that only two of them can be described as leading towards the implementation of the concept of sustainable development, and even these contain serious deficiencies. The problem of decision makers of Lubusz voivodeship lies in wrong division of responsibility for development, and the policy of Greater Poland authorities is in line with the neo-liberal trend of permanent economic growth stimulation.

With reference to the general characteristics of the regions it can be seen, that the regions that follow towards sustainable development were characterised by relatively low (compared to most voivodeships) economic growth. This fact was certainly noted by the Greater Poland authorities, hence the demand for the growth acceleration in the strategy. Six of the thirteen voivodeships in the other two categories were characterised by high economic growth. The highest growth was reported in Świętokrzyskie and Lower Silesia. In Świętokrzyskie high growth was accompanied by low wages and incomes, which proves once again, that economic growth and its most important indicator – GDP, have little in common with the egalitarian, sustainable welfare. Another example of the socio-economic disequilibrium is Lodz Voivodeship – high growth resulted here in high incomes in conditions of low wages. Such growth, therefore, did not contribute to the community development of the region.

Most strategies (nine of them) focuses on one, environmental dimension of sustainable development – environmental protection issues, maintenance of biodiversity and monitoring the activities that can contribute to environmental degradation. Policies of five voivodeships still cannot be called sustainable, despite the fact that the term sustainability is present in those strategies. As it is one of the priority areas in *Europe 2020*, the concept of sustainable development should be included in the strategies of the Member States, and so it happens, although the authors write *de facto* about spatial development and accelerated economic growth, and not about sustainability.

The division into three distinct dimensions of sustainable development and their separate analysis have been transferred from a supranational organisation documents to national and regional strategies. Existential social needs have been mindlessly separated from each other, planning to satisfy them at different time, with different intensity. Holistic approach to social development, which not only takes into account, but also consolidates all dimensions of welfare and well-being, is definitely missing. In the presented strategies the creative ways to implement the idea of sustainable development are rare. Such state of affairs may indicate, that Poland is not ready to implement the concept of sustainable development, that the only phenomenon we know is a continuous stimulation of economic growth, even at the expense of development equilibrium.

T. Jackson, writing about the situation of highly developed countries giving as an example the European Union countries noted, that continued economic growth and policies to promote this process actually weaken welfare, defined by the researcher as freedom from adversity and misfortune, strong communities, hopes for the future, sense of meaning and purpose. The author admits, however, that economic growth is still essential for well-being of the poorest nations (Jackson, 2009). As shown in foregoing analysis, the fact of belonging to a supranational organisation uniting highly developed countries, does not make each member state a highly developed one. Nothing stands in the way of creating one's own vision of welfare and well-being, as well as, the process of balancing market and social forces, if we cannot afford for the strategy proposed by the wealthy fraction. However, Polish central and regional authorities have not provided such an original, indigenous vision yet.

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