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Mazovia's 2014-2020 Development Policy in its Strategic Documents

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ABSTRACT

The article presents priorities and plans for development in the period 20014-2020 prepared by the local government of the Mazovia region. It discusses the main development policies, financial conditions of their implementation and instruments available to stimulate development processes.

Regional policy is the essence of the *Europe 2020* strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive development. Investments undertaken as part of regional policy focus on the three priorities of the strategy:

- 1) smart development of a knowledge and innovation-based economy,
- 2) sustainable development, possible with the support of an increased environment-friendly and more competitive economy making effective use of its resources,
- 3) inclusive development through the support of an economy with a high employment level thus ensuring social and territorial cohesion.

The primary document identifying what European funds should be invested in in Poland is the Partnership Agreement. The goals listed in the Agreement are consistent with those of the Europe 2020 strategy and those of the Polish *National Development Strategy 2020: An active society, a competitive economy, an effective state*. The Partnership Agreement states that the 11 thematic goals of the common provisions are to be implemented in Poland.¹ The Agreement is to be performed through national and regional operational programs. The amount of funds allocated to individual regional operation programs varies and depends, inter alia, on the category in which a given region has been classified.

The 2014-2020 programming period is the first in which Polish cohesion policy is addressed to two regional categories: 15 less developed regions classed according to regulation No. 1303/2013 of the common provisions, and one, more developed region, Mazovia. From a statistical point of view, Mazovia stands out from among the remaining Polish regions,

¹ The goals (set out in art. 9 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council) are: (1) strengthening research, technological development and innovation; (2) enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT; (3) enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF); (4) supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors; (5) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; (6) preserving and protecting the environment and promoting efficiency of resources; (7) promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures; (8) promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; (9) promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination; (10) investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning; (11) enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

because of its high level of economic development, high innovation indicator and a high employment level.² The statistical depiction of the region, however, does not fully reflect its actual situation, in particular the significant disparities existing between its sub-regions in terms of socio-economic development. These intraregional differences require a specific development policy which must take into account the needs of both the poorer subregions and the potential of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area.

According to the Partnership Agreement, Mazovia is to receive 3.8 billion euros in the period 2014-2020.³ These funds provide the region with an opportunity for further development and to implement its two key strategic documents: the *Development strategy of the Mazowieckie Voivodship 2030. Mazovia as an Innovative Region* (adopted in 2013) and *The Spatial Development Plan of the Mazowieckie Voivodship* (adopted in 2014). The Strategy provides a coherent set of actions serving to stimulate economic activity and increase competitiveness in all the subregions. The main purpose of the document is to address the problem of territorial cohesion by indicating that the actions undertaken are to 'decrease disproportions in development in Mazovia and increase the role of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area in Europe'. The goal is to be achieved primarily through more rapid economic growth generated by the development of production and industry. The need to develop industry has also been identified at European level.⁴ The Mazovian strategy provides a vision of the region's development up to 2030, but the specific actions serving to achieve individual goals have been planned for the years 2014-2020. The regional spatial development plan, in turn, has an unspecified time limit. It is a significant element of the regional strategic planning system as it transposes the development strategy's goals onto a spatial plane. The Plan identifies the spatial policy rules, elements of spatial arrangement on a regional level and their inter-relations.

The main instrument for implementation of the goals and directions in the strategic documents is the *Regional Operational Program of the Mazovian Region 2014-2020* which identifies investment priorities and the division of European funds administered by the regional government. The operational program is to enable intelligent and sustainable development in order to increase social and territorial cohesion while making use of the potential of the Mazovian labor market. The regional government is to have at its disposal 2.1 billion euros. The remaining funds for Mazovia, i.e. 1.7 billion euros, have been earmarked in individual axes of national operational programs.

² Mazovia's GDP *per capita* at current prices was 64,790 PLN (approx. 15,700 EUR) in 2011, the annual average employment rate was 54.9% and the number of patents granted in 2013 was 458. According to each of these criteria, Mazovia was first among Polish regions.

³ The basic allocation for Mazovia was 2.24 billion euro according to a statement by the European Commission in December 2013 (Ares(2013)3779289). The Polish government decided to reduce the negative effects of Mazovia having been qualified as a more developed region and increased its allocation by 3% of the total on the basis of art. 93 of the common provisions. In effect, Mazovia's allocation was increased to 3.8 billion euros. (*Programowanie perspektywy finansowej 2014-2020. Umowa Partnerstwa*, Warszawa 2014, p.160)

⁴ Cf. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalization Era: Putting Competitiveness and Sustainability at Centre Stage, Brussels, 28.10.2010, COM(2010) 614 final.

An important element of the development policy for 2014-2020 is urban policy. According to article 7 of Regulation 1301/13,⁵ integrated actions for the sustainable development of urban areas are to receive at least 5% of the funds from the European Regional Development Fund assigned to the first goal of cohesion policy 'Investment for growth and jobs'. Sustainable urban development will, according to the Partnership Agreement, be financed through Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs). This instrument will allow for the implementation of territorial strategies and will be obligatory in regional cities and their functional areas. ITIs are to motivate local governments to cooperate in order to make full use of their common strengths and solve common problems in the functional area. The ITI formula is to enable the implementation of complex, integrated undertakings not limited to the administrative boundaries of a city. The ITI in Mazovia will be implemented in the Warsaw Functional Area consisting of the capital, Warsaw, and 37 surrounding municipalities which have signed a relevant agreement. The ITI is expected to strengthen cooperation between the local governments of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area and also to integrate the area and increase its competitiveness.

Just as with the Integrated Territorial Investments, Mazovia's regional operational program 2014-2020 includes RTIs – Regional Territorial Investments – for five subregions (NTS 3). This instrument, much more flexible than the ITIs, is addressed to the five Mazovian subregions outside the Warsaw Metropolitan Area: ciechanowski, płocki, ostrołęcki, siedlecki and radomski. The function of RTIs is to support the development of Areas of Strategic Intervention identified as problem areas in Mazovia's regional development strategy 2013-2030. The instrument, prepared by the Mazovian Regional Government, will allow for the realization of key investments stimulating Mazovia's socio-economic development. The instrument will also help to counter negative development trends and improve the quality of life in the peripheral areas of Mazovia. RTIs, like ITIs, will enable joint undertakings by local governments regardless of administrative boundaries. The basis for the implementation of RTIs will be a joint initiative and cooperation by local governments as some form of partnership will be a prerequisite. The other requirement will be preparation of an RTI action plan. Cooperation will focus on formulating a vision for development of the entire area and addressing common challenges which must be faced and development goals identified in each subregion. Projects to be implemented within RTIs should be of an integrated nature, a broad territorial impact and improve territorial cohesion, i.e. by strengthening functional links or improving an area's accessibility. Key RTI projects will receive a total of 130 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund with the possibility of this amount being increased. Additional funds will be provided from the European Social Fund and will be allocated to accompanying projects.

Development policy in the region will also be implemented through the performance of the territorial contract, an agreement between the regional and national government. The

⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repeal of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

agreement will identify the undertakings crucial from the point of view of development of the region and the country. The territorial contract will facilitate the coordination of territorially oriented development undertakings by the national and regional government in Mazovia. The territorial contract will be the basis for the main and often largest investments to be financed from the national level in the region. The contract is to regulate the spending of national funds through development of policy-oriented earmarking provisions regarding the funds at the disposal of individual ministries or subordinate institutions.

There are certain problems with the implementation of the 2014-2020 development policy formulated in Mazovia's strategic and operational documents. The provision of funds for Mazovia's own contribution to regional investments in 2014-2020 poses a considerable difficulty. This contribution will be 5 percent points higher than in other Polish regions (the EU financial contribution to a priority axis in Mazovia will be 80%; in the remaining 15 regions: 85%). There is a limited amount of funds available for Mazovia's own contribution because the region must contribute large sums to the national budget as part of a regional income redistribution mechanism calculated according to income from the two previous years. The disproportion between the region's actual income and the calculated contributions to the mechanism leave no option for Mazovia but to borrow funds in order to finance its contribution, thereby resulting in a growing debt. Despite the mechanism having been ruled as unconstitutional by the Constitutional Tribunal and the relevant regulations having to be changed within 18 months, Mazovia will have to repay its debts, thus limiting its development possibilities in coming years. Some of the local governments of Mazovia are facing a similar problem.

Another limitation on Mazovia's development policy is the EU-imposed thematic concentration of cohesion policy funds. Mazovia, as a more developed region, is under an obligation to allocate at least 80% of its ERDF funds to two or more of the first four priorities listed in article 9 of the common provisions regulation no. 1303/2013, i.e. (1) strengthening research, technological development and innovation; (2) enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT; (3) enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF); (4) supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors. Less developed regions have much lower thematic concentration requirements, having to earmark at least 50% of ERDF funds. The thematic concentration limits the possibilities of financing the investments necessary for Mazovia's development in the regional operational program.

Mazovia's development policy set out in its strategic documents indicates what the region intends to achieve and takes into account the directions of development of Poland and the European Union. For the 2014-2020 perspective the region is planning significant transport investments, various actions concerning the development of production and industry, stimulating entrepreneurship, solving labor market problems and promoting social inclusion. However, it may prove difficult to carry out these plans due to insufficient funds at the regional government's disposal.

References:

Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Programowanie perspektywy finansowej 2014-2020. Umowa Partnerstwa, Warszawa 2014, p. 160

Putting Competitiveness and Sustainability at Centre Stage, Brussels, 28.10.2010, COM(2010) 614 final.

Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Polityka rozwoju Mazowsza w latach 2014-2020 w dokumentach strategicznych

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł prezentuje priorytety i plany rozwoju w latach 2014-2020 przygotowane przez Samorząd Województwa Mazowsza. Omówiono w nim główne polityki rozwojowe, uwarunkowania finansowe oraz instrumenty realizacji przyjętych polityk.
