

**JACEK ZAUCHA
WIKTOR SZYDAROWSKI**

**DILEMMAS ON STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TRI-CITY AND
SZCZECIN AGGLOMERATION AREAS**

Introduction

Pomorze (Pomerania), encapsulating the area of Pomeranian and West-Pomeranian voivodships, constitutes rather a lagging-behind region, troubled with high unemployment rate, considerable extent of social disintegration, weak institutional tissue, and scarce know-how of local actors in managing problems related with socio-economic transformation. The main asset of Pomerania, which is satisfactory quality of natural environment, is not capable of triggering growth process.

While the situation evokes feeling of little development perspectives in the regional communities, agglomerations of Szczecin and Tri-City (Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia), which edge the region, aspire for being an element in the global economy circuit. As examined in the questionnaire research, an impact of the two urban centres on the Pomeranian environment is barely identifiable. Real-life relations of Szczecin and Tri-City with the surroundings are very shallow, confined merely to around 20-km wide circular zone, which is extended somewhat farther in case of regulatory associations. These associations are demonstrated only with joint actions of local governments imposed by legislature, and insignificant flows of people and ideas generated by higher education needs. The two agglomerations do not co-operate either on regional or the Baltic forum; conversely, they chase development opportunities through separate network patterns. Szczecin authorities collaborate with cities and regions in Germany and south-western Sweden, while Tri-City positions itself towards Kaliningrad, western Lithuania (Klaipeda) and south-eastern Sweden (Blekinge,

Kalmar, Kronoberg). This orientation stimulates evolution of two vertical development corridors embracing Pomerania from east and west.

Central authorities does not declare any clear concept on resolving the growth problems in the region. Having erased the Via Hanseatica transport corridor from the TINA Initiative priorities, the national government manifests no specific interest in development perspectives for Pomerania in much broader context than just social aspects (unemployment, social pathologies, social care), but with fisheries onboard.

Consequently, in the accession period, Poland will be subject to fierce competition on the EU common market, while dealing with cumbersome development problems of Pomerania, presenting itself as a no-action region, losing structural aid resources to other EU regions due to inability to enter network liaisons with allied partners, and posing little attraction to inward investors¹.

The paper endeavours to display possible mitigation actions to counteract the presented threats. The emphasis is placed upon actions which strengthen already operating mechanisms for generating and transferring development stimuli, and do not demand new investments from the central tier. The approach may bear an impression of irrelevancy of measures to the rank of the problem, yet through its pragmatism can be implemented in a few-years' time horizon, adjusted to the Poland's accession calendar.

1. Quality of the Space between Szczecin and Tri-City Agglomerations

Development potential of Pomerania is conceived 'dormant', lacking development stimuli and immaterial growth factors (know-how, education, aspiration). The space bridging the two urban centres (Szczecin and Tri-City), apart from a narrow coastal strip, is considered regressive and extensive, demanding vast capital outlays for socio-economic enlivening. Its deficiencies result from an interplay of social and economic problems, including:

¹ An interplay of these conditions displayed its magnitude in the German Eastern Länder, which experienced huge financial transfers without proper preparatory process applied. They hence play a role of a permanent patient living on donations and subsidies – suffering from economic inefficiencies against western part of Germany, significant unemployment, severe depopulation, fleeing of young and skilled workpower, and social pathologies. Simultaneously, dynamic growth rate in Western Länder is weakened due to East Germany's inheritance.

- low educational profile of the residents (half of the population in the Western Pomerania has only an elementary literacy),
- outward migration of skilled employees,
- a no-way-out professional approach rooted in the communities of turned down state-productive farms,
- domination of sectors producing low and fairly processed goods (furniture and construction carpentry, plastics, clothing and shoes, household goods)²;
- little investment pressure – market prices for immovable properties in convenient countryside location never exceed 20 zlotys per square meter,
- underdeveloped tourist service facilities and shortage of a sophisticated tourist product,
- poor quality of road/rail infrastructure and offer of public transport agents,
- depopulation of urban hinterlands outside the 20-km radius, noted also for lower-rank centres.

Undesirable development tendencies, underpinned with ineffective institutional capacity for running pro-active local policy hoist the unemployment rate in the majority of communes to the highest values throughout Poland.

This rather gloomy portrait of the inter-metropolitan space should, however, be lightened up with evident yet not fully utilised assets, like:

- high condensation of settlements – with almost 80% of the population in a dozen-or-so centres,
- relative strength of regional and subregional growth centres – Koszalin, Słupsk-Ustka bi-city and Lębork,
- favourable demographic structure, positive yet much varied birth-rate, high share of productive age population in the space between the agglomerations,
- suitable territorial access to public services, with primary education facilities dispersed less than 6 km from one another, secondary schools and dispensaries – 15 km, and high schools – 20 km,
- high employment in private sector and in small and medium size enterprises (roughly 70%), sizeable share of exporting companies,

² Paradoxically, food processing industry despite the agricultural landscape of the western stretch of the area plays a minor role in overall production. Present are technologically more advanced automobile and machine industries, generally lacking – high-tech branches.

- appropriate acreage for settlement and entrepreneurial activities, especially along the E28/6 road, and low deterioration in natural and cultural landscape (apart from former state farms, suburban parts of the agglomerations and large multi-storey residential grounds in the cities),
- convenient geographic location of the area – on the primary transport axis linking Kaliningrad through Tri-City and Szczecin with Berlin, what implies subsidising infrastructure investments from the European Union budgetary resources (initially – ISPA, then Cohesion Fund).

The space edged by the two agglomerations is diversified with regards to concentration of socio-economic activities, regarded as a transmission belt for development stimuli. Its intensification is evident in the environs of Koszalin (whose functional neighbourhood including Kołobrzeg, Białogard, Sławno, Darłowo and surrounding rural communes is dwelled by 326 thous. residents), bi-centre of Słupsk-Ustka, Lębork and coastal communes (Trzebiatów, Rewal, Postomino, Łeba, Władysławowo). The latter are found among the richest in Poland, having generated high incomes from tourism and cottage sale policy.

The city of Koszalin performs important exogenous functions for its vicinity. It is an administrative, industrial and cultural centre, and recently has been supplied with higher education facilities (Koszalin Technical University with branch school in Kołobrzeg and consultancy offices in Chojnice and Szczecinek, and Baltic College attended by students commuting even from Tri-City). Coastal towns adjacent to Koszalin are vibrant spa and summer resort centres, yet waiting for complete refurbishment of tourist base. Economic courses offered at the Koszalin Technical University support the entrepreneurial spirit in the whole area, reflected in the investment attractiveness standings. According to the research made in 2000 by the Gdańsk Institute for the Market Economy, Koszalin, among all Polish urban counties, is rated on the 11th spot with regards to investment attractiveness in the B class, while Kołobrzeg climbed to the most appreciated A class.

In the second largest transmission area of Słupsk and Ustka a local service and production sector exhibits some shortcomings due to domination of public enterprises in employment structure and slow increase in the number of jobs. Similarly to Koszalin, the city of Słupsk is well equipped in social and technical facilities for inward investors and residents, proves a favourable investment climate (8th rank in the class B standings) and is rated the second biggest inward investment venue in the Pomeranian Region, including high-tech companies (e.g. manufacturing of windmill power plant machinery in the Słupsk Special Eco-

conomic Zone). Słupsk maintains the second position in the region also with regards to the academic education offer, appealing students from the Tri-City agglomeration, leaving it behind by the number of NGOs.

An eastbound located town of Lębork reveals a significant demographic and economic potential, good technical and social infrastructure for businesses, as well as advantageous investment climate what transposes itself into a significant volume of foreign direct investments (3rd rank in the region). The local authorities display capability for getting a grip on aid funds from domestic and European sources through formulated projects and programmes, and turned out successful in opening a branch facility of the Gdańsk University.

Effective performance of the aforementioned growth centres is hampered by severe development constraints, associated with labour market deficiencies (unemployment rate exceeding 20%), stagnation of traditional industrial branches, low susceptibility for innovation flow, and inadequate transport accessibility. An evident communication weakness associated with substandard parameters of national road no. 6, rare train connections with regional centres and substantial distance to the operating airports contribute to spatial segmentation of the regional labour market, dissected into small and static local commuting areas. The growth centres, conceived as prospective stimuli transmitters, demonstrate a transitional stage of development between industrial maturity – with energy and capital intensive sectors based upon local resources and entrepreneurial culture – and added value economy, which applies research and technology innovations into business and consists in systemic co-operation of small, medium and large size enterprises to counteract fluctuations on the market. Here and there appear evidences of new economic era, fostered by qualified tourism, higher education brand products, resistant SME sector, programmed incentives for inward investment and publicly shared strategic priorities.

2. Szczecin and Tri-City as Growth Poles

At first glance, the two agglomerations seem competitive against other Polish urban centres of that size. Multidirectional evolution of socio-economic activity and the fastest pace of change in perception among foreign investors over the year 2000 allow for assuming that Szczecin and Tri-City will not forfeit an accumulated motive power, the more so as high-ranked coastal settlements seldom are subject to

chronic economic recession. From the global perspective, though, it is hard not to observe that Pomerania is burdened with traditional and obsolete economic heritage, which impedes taking up long-term challenges, already practised by well-developed regions.

2.1. Tri-City agglomeration

The Tri-City agglomeration is composed of seven linearly placed urban centres (with the core area of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia) surrounded by rural communities. The elongated built-up zone spread on 70 km and its direct vicinity summing up to roughly 1,400 sq km is a home for more or less 950 thousand people. By the index of population, the Tri-City agglomeration is among the leading Polish urban centres.

The most distinguished functions of the agglomeration reflect its seaside location and include:

- maritime economy, grounded with seaport services, ship-building industry, coastal and deep-sea fishery and sea tourism,
- multimodal transport and logistics, operated by commercial ports and ferry terminals in Gdańsk and Gdynia, international airport with a system of feeder connections, and land transport node (railways and roads of national status, and prospectively – initial section of A1 motorway),
- co-operative branches of industry, located in the port areas,
- land-side tourism, sustained with landscape amenities of the coastal area,
- business support infrastructure, provided by commercial chambers, lobbying organisations, development agencies and bank offices, international fairs in Gdańsk and Gdynia, and international organisations, like: Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), International Wool Chamber, Vision and Strategy around the Baltic 2010 Secretariat, Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Conference Secretariat),
- regional and supra-regional social facilities, encompassing research and college education (research institutes and universities), culture facilities (opera, music theatres, museums), retail trade (nine commercial centres) and health care services (clinic hospital of the Medical Academy, Institute for Tropical Diseases),
- coastal defence infrastructure, with naval base, naval academy and training and advisory centres.

In 1999 Gdańsk took 8th position in the row of the Polish regional capitals, staying behind all agglomerations, in terms of investing attrac-

tiveness³. Meanwhile, Gdynia was granted the first and Sopot the 10th spot among urban counties. Next year, the ranking for Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot was set at six, four and second place, respectively, owing to critical assessment of business running costs and business support infrastructure. Despite quite remarkable standings of the agglomeration core area, the portfolio of FDI – although estimated at 190% of the domestic average – was not satisfactory enough to generate incentives for innovation inflow. New investments were done mainly in retail trade and services (commercial centres, petrol stations), and the only eminent high-tech venture was an industrial park project by Swedish branch of Flextronic International, worth 150 million US dollars.

The ongoing restructuring of the local economy is underlined by influential operation of large, in some cases still state-owned enterprises (e.g. Gdańsk Oil Distillery joint stock company, responsible for one third of the Tri-City's sold production), and ownership changes in maritime economy. The first battle in the global game on the haulage market was lost, bringing collapse to the Polish Ocean Lines and diminishing of valuable container loads due to the competitive policy of Western ports operating in the Baltic Sea area (contracted rail transport of goods to and from Poland).

In 1998 35,3% of the manpower in industry, construction and energy production were employed in the public sector, while 55% of the production sold was generated by oil processing, food and beverages, and transport machinery branches. An 'innovation drive' is thus under-sized, with only 13% of the share in the production sold. Even though local human resources put quantitatively the Tri-City to the 4th place in the national standings, the crisis in financial position of the academic community in Tri-City may soon undermine this sector's quality for innovation transfer.

Quality of living in the Tri-City area was by the Gdańsk Institute for Market Economy evaluated as fair (class C for Gdańsk and Gdynia in the row of cities over 150 thousand inhabitants and honourable class A for Sopot in the ratings for towns below 75 thousand inhabitants). The marks evoke dropping down security figures and rise in motorization but on the other hand – improvement in environmental quality.

Although the research studies prove the juvenile stage of this area in the process of metropolisation, they all stress the Tri-City's opportunity for entering the European network of metropolises. One of the pre-

³ P. Swianiewicz, W. Dziemianowicz: *Atrakcyjność inwestycyjna miast 1998-1999*, IBnGR, Warszawa 1999.

requisites for achieving a metropolitan status will be inter-local co-operation, nowadays somewhat obscured by:

- uncoordinated strategic policies of individual governments, especially in the field of public transport, waste management and urban sprawl mitigation,
- undesirable competing for new development incentives between ports, exhibition centres and leisure industry agencies.

2.2. Szczecin agglomeration

The agglomeration is composed of two cities (Szczecin, Stargard Szczeciński), three urban-rural municipalities (Goleniów, Gryfino, Police) and surrounding rural communes. Counting in the adjacent municipality of Świnoujście and towns located alongside the seacoast, the total agglomeration area spreads on over 4 thousand sq km and is populated by roughly 750 thousand residents.

The Szczecin agglomeration plays a crucial role in the national settlement system, owing to its physical location close to the Polish/EU border. Being a transit area for east-west and north-south inland and coastal shipping, it has always been regarded an important transport node in the national economy. Its flag functions include: maritime economy, services for international transit flows of goods and passengers and – in a regional scale – cultural, research and administrative services for Western Pomerania. The coastal towns complement operation of the system with tourist and recreation facilities.

The Szczecin agglomeration hosts 50% of all businesses registered in the Western Pomerania voivodship, with 98% acting in the private sector. Clustering of the business activities in the agglomeration is even bigger with regards to companies with share of a foreign capital and peaks at 75%, heightening the regional index to the level by 10% over the national average. These achievements are not followed, however, by inflow of foreign direct investments.

Restructuring of the local economy proceeds respective of the sector considered. The Szczecin shipyard and commercial port adapt well to the global circumstances, while development obstacles are encountered by shipping and fishery companies. Local industrial sector is designed by maritime branches, production of energy, textiles and fertilisers, timber industry and food processing. Apart from the maritime economy, large enterprises operate on the market of chemicals and energy production, and their economic balance depends upon demand fluctuation.

Brighter commercial perspectives are experienced by blooming private service sector, all-year-round recreation and higher education. In a short time span, University of Szczecin has grown into a supraregional facility, whereas coastal communes transformed into vivid tourist centres, earning much of their income on holidaymakers. This process introduces changes to the functional structure of the agglomeration, with large industry at decline.

Advent of tourist services is sustained with natural assets of Szczecin, famous for its green areas's share in the total land use.

3. Co-operation between Szczecin and Tri-City

3.1. Appraisal on competitiveness and complementarity of economic structures

Economic structures of the two agglomerations do not reveal any specific complementary features. Theoretically, they might specialise in specific branches of the maritime economy and multimodal transport, having divided the supra-regional market for the services. So far, no evidence of such a co-operation has been identified.

3.2. Flows of goods and passengers

Szczecin and Tri-City have developed separate gravitation areas, in effect of a spatial hindrance⁴ and geopolitical circumstances. The two centres place their development opportunities in collaboration with different foreign partners what brings up a rivalry attitude towards large-scale national investments (A1 vs. A3 vertical motorways or Gdańsk-Warszawa-Katowice vs. Szczecin-Poznań railway lines).

The 2000 survey on road traffic identified rather modest daily flows between the two agglomerations:

- 800 trips by vehicles, of which – is not commenced in the agglomerations, and the remaining volume (260) generated by their residents,
- 450 passengers travel by train between the two centres, of which also – is not commenced there.

⁴ Szczecin and the Tri-City are more distant from each other (370 km) than Szczecin and Poznań (214 km) or Szczecin and Berlin (141 km). Rail link Szczecin-Poznań (3 hrs) is served by 10 daily connections, Szczecin-Berlin (2 hrs) – by 8 daily connections, while Szczecin-Gdańsk (5 hrs) – only by 5 daily connections.

3.3. Relations between businesses, universities and local administration of Szczecin and Tri-City

Relations between universities in the two agglomerations are not formalised with multi-annual agreements or collaboration covenants. On the daily basis, they are limited to single projects, inter-departmental co-operation and personal contacts of research and teaching staff. The latter are quite intensive and demonstrated by transverse commuting of students and professors between the academic facilities of Szczecin, Koszalin, Słupsk and Tri-City.

Co-operation of public management agencies is even more incidental. Formal ties are set forth only in maritime administration, while local and regional authorities search for prospective joint actions through a network of organisations (e.g. Convent of Regional Presidents, Union of Maritime Cities and Communes, Vasab/Interreg Polish Committee) or EU programming initiatives. However, out of 21 transnational spatial planning projects under the INTERREG IIC Community Initiative with active participation of Polish partners, authorities from Szczecin and Tri-City met only for 2 projects, turning their attention, in other cases, to different constellation of international collaborates.

This tendency of placing interest in selected set of geopolitical partners has been effective also with concern to establishing a sister cities network. While Szczecin fosters contacts with counterparts from Germany and western flank of the Baltic Sea, the Tri-City adheres to its eastern side. Alliances created by geographical proximity include Szczecin–Berlin ties and Gdańsk/Gdynia–Kaliningrad–Kalmar–Klaipeda agreements.

Collaboration between business entities from Szczecin and Tri-City agglomerations, if functional, consists in ad hoc actions rather than long-term development strategies. Entrepreneurial chambers are independent on each other, neither they compete, nor intensively co-operate.

3.4. Agglomerations and their functional hinterlands

In the field of real-life processes, agglomeration zone of influence is confined to the close vicinity of the built-up area. Commuting range gets to a sharp decline roughly 15-20 km away from the limits of the agglomeration, and investing localities are even more territorially bound (10-15 km, except for the coast-bound penetration). Spatial transition between functional hinterlands of the agglomerations and zones of influence of regional (Koszalin, Słupsk) and sub-regional centres

(Łębork) is smooth and blunt, changing upon seasonal and chaotic fluctuation on labour markets, transport accessibility, and decisions on business investing localities.

Interactions inside the zone of influence are also spatially restricted. Usually, they are driven by service activities of a high-ranked centre (city, town) towards its direct rural vicinity. In case of nearby located centres, manufacturing activity, public governance and secondary and higher education, which altogether exert much more powerful impact on the surroundings than regular services, generate transverse and overlapping interaction areas. Similar spatial transformation is triggered when a large-scale manufacturing facility is launched in a rural locality adjacent to the urban centre.

4. Reasons for Bipolar Co-operation

4.1. Co-operation will strengthen competitiveness of the two agglomerations

Community of interests for the two partners reflects their endogenous potential and structural shift the local economies are subject to, hence includes:

- joint efforts in restructuring the maritime branches, further privatisation of large-scale economic sectors, gaining support from r&d activities in introducing SME sector to the traditional branches of industry, encouraging sunrise industries to diversify the local economies;
- acting as complementary gateway centres in relation to different (western and eastern) parts of the Baltic Sea area;
- promoting a Baltic policy in economic and social aspects on domestic forum, especially in terms of lobbying for fiscal and legal measures to enhance competitive position of the Polish maritime economy;
- joint applying for aid funds to resolve similar development problems (pre-accession and structural funds).

The core areas for strengthening competitiveness of Szczecin and Tri-City are: maritime economy, SME sector in innovation branches and tourism. Either they hasten spatial and functional transformation of the agglomerations and the space between, or their contribution to the local economies is crucial enough to radiate over the whole region concerned.

Shipbuilding industry and port services are undeniably local motive powers and are expected to introduce some technical, financial

and organisational novelties. Their comparative advantage, utilised in the era of passenger and container cargo shipping in the Baltic Sea, may in a long term melt down, owing to rising labour costs and protection policy cultivated in the neighbouring countries. Matching external competition and assuming better complexity in production and transshipping challenges can only be met with a coherent national policy. Its system solutions should contain fiscal measures in incubating and bringing innovations to the maritime branches; support for joint shipyard projects and collaboration between port authorities and forwarders; and promotion of multimodal chains to and from the Polish ports. Ownership transformations in the port structures should facilitate their active playing role in capturing cargo, by means of strategic alliances.

The world of innovation downscaled to the local economies ought to implant new relations between education facilities, which would manifest themselves in:

- joint project agreements (e.g. faculties of Baltic issues in colleges of Szczecin, Koszalin, Słupsk and Tri-City; establishing of a Baltic Observatory or Swedish-moulded Baltic Institute and research co-ordination);
- upgrading of research and educational potential (new inter-departmental, semi-autonomous agencies, parks of technology or research parks).

The research potential of academic centres should be applied to day-to-day operation of business companies, thus helping them turn into a significant agent of regional development policy. A modified performance of higher education facilities will substantially affect an innovation susceptibility of Szczecin and Tri-City. An additional support for innovation should descend from inward investment incentives through: formulation of innovation support policy, founding conference centres, facilitating capital access for venture branches, and mitigating deficiencies of local transport and telecommunication systems.

.A considerable obstacle for strengthening competitiveness of both agglomerations a bipolar system is their administrative structure and legal competencies, especially in the case of Tri-City. None of the binding regulations yield reason for managing the agglomeration area as an entity, what effectuates in lacking co-ordination of development policies for individual agglomeration centres (e.g. in the field of road projects, common public transport policy, inward investment strategy etc.). Strategic documents in the two areas do not take into account an internal structure and functional relations. One of desirable solutions is to set up an agglomeration board, with delegated competencies and separate budget. The target stage may be achieved through:

- establishing of a voluntary metropolitan council acting on behalf of urban communes, so far not feasible due to different interests of the local actors, or:
- constituting by law a county-level unit encircling the core area of the agglomeration, which would be responsible for local development issues.

4.2. Co-operation will strengthen status of Pomerania on international forum

Urban agglomerations in neighbouring Northern and Western European countries are plunged in a networking co-operation, allowing them for better fulfilling of culture- and innovation-creative role in aspiring for being global metropolises. Neglecting by Szczecin and Tri-City agglomerations a gateway function opportunity between the Baltic Europe and its hinterland may result in diminishing of attractiveness for partner co-operation with better developed agglomeration areas from Germany and Scandinavia.

A common challenge for Pomerania is shaping external transport connections. Physical location of the area determines positioning and effective operation of complex maritime, road, rail and air transport nodes.

Joint actions of Szczecin and Tri-City are advisable for upgrading standings of Poland in pan-Baltic co-operation, conducted with an aid of Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Conference (BSSSC) and VASAB 2010. Contribution of the two centres in drafting and implementing operational programmes for regional development evokes financial implications, by means of pre-accession funds and their linkage to Community Initiatives and programmes (Phare ESC and CBC vs. INTERREG III B and VASAB 2010 Plus).

4.3. Co-operation will amplify development impulses in the space between the two agglomerations, upon the condition of having established transmission channels from the agglomeration areas

Infrastructure

In the inter-agglomeration zone an impact from the core areas will presumably be transmitted along three horizontal axes, namely: Via Hanseatica corridor, coastal belt, and southern Pomerania transport corridor (Szczecin–Olsztyn).

Transmission of development impulses is conditioned upon amelioration of road/rail infrastructure parameters and setting up connection networks between the two agglomerations and all major settlements in the space between.

Real sector linkages

The inquiry research revealed that local authorities of Pomerania purposefully pay attention to unsatisfactory support form the regional capitals in nourishing a SME sector and combating unemployment. A necessary set of instruments to be applied by the regional tier authorities includes:

- optimal SME support programme in identified priority areas (e.g. technology transfer in the maritime economy, incubating small and medium size companies in health care, clustering of small commercial firms for withstanding a harsh competition from large retail centres, green tourism etc.);
- intermediary services in linking start-up businesses to prosperous companies accommodated in Szczecin and Tri-City agglomerations as their future strategic partners; the research confirmed sporadic perception of this entrepreneurial asset by local authorities who do not promote a system collaboration of various-scale companies, embedded in a better access of large enterprises to capital and information, and more flexible tuning of small and medium size enterprises to changeable market situation;
- creation and dissemination of a minimum package of standard services for local SMEs, in shape of service centres for entrepreneurs in every major settlement, similar standards if information on land offers, compatible training and assistance programmes);
- Pomerania investing conference highlighted in the media and other sorts of information and experience exchange for SMEs.

Another issue on the capital attraction agenda is setting up of Pomerania business centres, placed in several localities to reconcile interests of various actors. The decision should enhance a joint marketing offer of the whole region and, if backed by investments in the quality of living, complementarily magnify inflow of skilled manpower.

A tourism sector retains vast capacity for improving competitiveness of the two agglomerations and territories between, especially in the field of service quality and facility standards. New, updated tourism products may contain: network of small yacht harbours (marinas), the-

matic trails, bicycle routes, short sojourns in most attractive venues, agrotourism, or river kayaking. Capital expenditures should hence focus on road, information and nature protection infrastructure, carving common distribution channels and networking co-operation of so far atomised tourist offers. Apart from the domestic budget, skilful tailoring of external funds (Phare, INTERREG) for joint tourist projects could safeguard realisation of these postulates.

*Co-operation in managing fragile development factors
(human resources, natural environment)*

One of the crucial obstacles for upgrading the status of the inter-agglomeration space is low activity of local governments, businesses and communities, except for some 'pearls' of sub-regional towns and coastal communes. A consequent Pomerania rural activation programme should embrace:

- support for communes in implementing coherent investment policy, consisting in: furnishing the land for sale and lease with technical infrastructure, affecting local labour markets through fiscal regulations, and creating development alliances internally and externally;
- providing each communal authority in Pomerania with an access to Internet facilities;
- enlivening and cultivating community aspirations, promoting local entrepreneurship and new economic challenges – along the way to transform the communes into local milieux;
- devolving high-ranked functions from Szczecin and Tri-City to Koszalin, Słupsk and Lębork through moving administrative offices and opening higher education facilities as branches or consulting offices of some acclaimed academic faculties from the academic centres, as well as founding profiled colleges and encouraging distant learning opportunities;
- fostering local and regional Agenda 21 processes to promote sustainable development measures.

Assuming natural and cultural environment a regional asset in a game for attracting a capital, ecologically respectful policy has to be conducted both at the regional and local tiers. Common strategy for eliminating air and water pollution sources should be reflected in joint projects on sewage infrastructure, waste management systems and fuel-saving heating plants.

Joint co-operation actions of communes, emanated from strategic documents, has not been a case for the local decision-makers, especially in the rural communes, the more so as local strategies have not been conceived a suitable instrument for running consistent development policy.

By the new Polish regulation (Parliamentary act on principles for supporting the regional development), voivodship democratic authorities (the Council and the Board) have taken over responsibility for intra-regional development. Regional strategies, followed by operational programmes, can hence serve as a platform for publicly consulted and approved action, co-implemented by local authorities (counties and communes).

Currently distinct operational programmes for West Pomeranian (Szczecin) and Pomeranian (Tri-City) voivodships can come into dialogue on the upper level of consultancy, set forth by the Polish VASAB/Interreg Committee. Its mission is addressed in translating development priorities of northern Polish voivodships into concrete spatial planning projects. A concept on strengthening the bipolar urban system in Pomerania may thus be introduced to the Committee and defended against other Baltic system of metropolises.

5. Programme of Proposed Actions

Need for enlivening of inter-relations between influence areas of Szczecin and Tri-City agglomerations calls for applying a combination of institutional and human resource actions, followed by regulatory solutions, and consequently – infrastructure investments as pre-requisite for development. A sequential, down-scaled red line of actions will then present itself as follows:

1. Formulation of a joint framework development strategy for Pomerania, taking into consideration and adjusting the two existent voivodship strategies, in order to identify shared interests.
2. Formulation of a programming document to show involvement of public authorities and businesses from the two agglomerations in implementing agreed measures.
3. Consultation of the document with central authorities responsible for regional policy and provision of concerted instruments for

financing envisaged actions and calibrating sectoral policies (e.g. transport).

4. Establishing or appointing of an institutionalised forum for generation, appraisal and monitoring of pan-Pomeranian development projects.
5. Facilitation of attendance of growth generating and transmitting urban centres in international undertakings.
6. Launching of integrated actions towards different economic and social actors, including: joint training packages for public officials and NGO representatives in managing vocational offers, obtaining external aid resources, conducting investment policies, programming the development, providing local and regional marketing activities etc. Stimulated contacts would contribute to smoothing of regional decision-making and easier generation of pan-Pomeranian projects.
7. Taking up of legislative actions with an emphasis on:
 - constituting agglomeration boards, mandated for harmonisation of local spatial development, mediating in turning research and academic potential into a valuable regional asset, and taking care of innovation support policies;
 - breaking monopoly positions in aviation and telecommunication;
 - enforcing policy of the State in Baltic matters, deriving essence from the Pomeranian programming document;
 - ensuring equal competitive opportunities for the national maritime economy through adoption – at a central tier – of a transport policy, investment support policy and effective privatisation.