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REGIONAL PLANNING IN POLAND



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Work on regional planning started in Poland in 1930, when also the Bureau of Regional Planning, the first of its kind in Poland, was set up in Warsaw. By 1937 ten more regions were brought within the planning scheme. Regional Planning Committees and technical departments under them performed the work, covering some 40 per cent of Poland's territory in its pre-war frontiers.

Throughout the years 1930-39, town planners, on whose initiative the scheme was set afoot, devoted much thought and efforts to shifting planning from towns and settlements onto vaster areas. The basic object was a most rational land utilization. This then was spatial planning in the full meaning of the word.

Coordination methods and regional undertakings were agreed upon at congresses of Regional Chairmen's Committees.

The Congress held in 1938 thus formulated the object of regional planning:

"A regional plan covering one of the country's districts is a programme of dispositions seeking to determine the most economical use of the district's land in conformity with national and regional interests, creating the best possible conditions for the district's development in a given period of time".

The Congress came out in favour of starting work on a country plan as an indispensable superstructure of regional planning.

In 1945, at the time of the restoration of Poland's statehood, the country espoused the socialist system of a planned economy, with the subsequent social ownership of the means of production. A new chapter had been opened when nearly all the realms of economic life and investment activity were brought within the planning scheme.

Two planning organs were called into being: The Central Office of Planning, entrusted with the task of economic planning, and the Central Office of Spatial Planning, whose task it was to draw up spatial plans on a national, regional and local scale /the latter covering towns and settlements/.

In 1946, with the promulgation of the Decree "On the Planned Poland's Space-economy" /effective April 2, 1946/, spatial

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planning was provided with a legal status. The Decree defined the organizational methods of spatial planning, its object and rank within the planned economy. It also included legal regulations. The Central Office of Spatial Planning was entrusted with the task of drawing up a spatial plan covering the whole country and to supervise planning work. Regional Departments under the Office were to elaborate plans for the regions within their radius of operation, while Local Planning Offices were in charge of town and settlement planning.

The establishment of uniform organizational methods, along with the existing legal basis for activity, provided a framework within which the estimates of the national and regional plans could be coordinated and local plans could follow regional directives.

The Decree envisaged the following stages in regional planning:

1. Elaboration of draft-plan;
2. Endorsement of draft-plan by State organs and institutions concerned;
3. Getting the approval of the opinion-issuing organ;
4. Endorsement of the draft-plan by the Central Office of Spatial Planning;
5. Endorsement of the plan by the Regional People's Council /local government/.

The fulfillment of the plan was secured through two measures: control over investments to find out their correspondence with the plan's objectives, and suspension of investment activity not envisaged in the plan, which the planning organs were duly authorized to carry out.

As the system and methods of planning made headway, it became apparent that the division of tasks between the two principal planning organs was too rigid that it failed to provide a tie-up between spatial and economic planning, investment planning in particular.

In 1949, a radical reorganization was carried out in the system and management of planning. The two organs of planning were abolished and substituted by a central planning authority: the State Commission for Economic Planning. The latter took

into its hands also the task of national and regional spatial planning. Local spatial planning was brought under the Administration /the Ministry of Building, to be later transferred to the Town-planning and Architecture Committee/.

The opinion was at that time prevalent that in view of the absence of long-term economic directives, the construction of spatial plans was a premature task. Subsequently, spatial planning on a national scale was suspended during the years 1950-57, while regional planning was limited to a few selected districts, where investment activity was the largest.

Working groups of specialists, set up from time to time as need arose, mapped out the plans. And though the plans contained valuable conclusions drawn from a thorough survey of the region, its physical and socio-economic features, they exerted but a negligible influence on investment activity. This should be ascribed, on the one hand, to the absence of long-term directives governing the development of the national economy, and to the frequent changes in the investment policy, on the other hand.

Thus, underestimation of spatial planning was a characteristic feature of the years 1950-57, when it was not regarded as an apt instrument coordinating in a most rational way economic and investment activity.

Meanwhile, specialists in spatial planning had launched a campaign for the full restoration of spatial planning. Their efforts ultimately led to the recognition of the view that if the space economy of the country is to be based on sound premises, the investment policy must be harmonized with the spatial correlation of investments. And spatial plans, whether national or regional, are an indispensable instrument for a correct determination of these relations.

In 1961, the Sejm /Parliament/ passed a Law on Spatial Planning. The provisions of the Law maintain the division of competence: spatial planning on a country-wide and regional scale comes under the authority of economic planning /Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers/, while local planning is subordinated to the building authorities /Committee for Building, Town Planning and Architecture/.

Despite the division of competence, the Law regulates in a uniform way the manifold problems involved in spatial planning. It provides for a spread of regional planning to cover the entire country, defining the object of, and mutual relations between, the plans, laying down the mode of their endorsement and the procedure to be followed for the plans to become operative.

The Law on spatial planning is supplemented by a Directive issued in May 1962 by the Chairman of the Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers.

In the light of legal regulations enacted in the years 1960 and 1962, the situation of regional planning today is as follows:

I. Coordination between Regional Planning and the Plan for the Development of the National Economy

Regional plans should in principle be constructed on the basis of the directives laid down in the Perspective Plan of the National Economy^x. Here it should be added that regions are the equivalent of Poland's administration division units, called in this country Voivodships^{xx}. Regional plans cover at present the whole of Poland's territory.

The next successive version of the Perspective Plan will take into account the conclusion drawn by regional plans. In this way regional initiative and interests will be secured in the plan for the development of the national economy.

It should be underscored that in the first phase of the new era in regional planning, which set in along with the enactment of the 1960 Law, work concentrates on determining the basis of economic and social development. Hence in the present stage first and foremost comes the method of statistical analysis and of calculation of indices. Though the conclusions contained in regional plans do take into account the geographic location of proposed economic activity,

x/ present plan for the years 1961-1980.

xx/ Poland is divided into 17 voivodships and 322 counties /districts/

the subject-matter of spatial planning i.e. the division of regions according to destination, has neither been fully developed nor applied in practice, which perhaps is not surprising bearing in mind the short period of time since work on regional planning has been resumed. It still is in its initial phase.

Coordination between regional plans and the national economic policy is secured through the application of the principle that regional plans are mapped out on the basis of:

- 1/ current /five-year/ plans for the development of the national economy;
- 2/ provisions and directives contained in the materials collected in the course of the elaboration of long-term plans /up to 1980/ for the development of the national economy;
- 3/ directives contained in the Decisions taken by the Council of Ministers;
- 4/ relevant directives enacted by regional authorities /Voivodship and district/.

II. Organization of planning Cooperation of authorities and institutions concerned and also of the population in the construction of regional plans

The Law on Spatial Planning provides for two kinds of regional plans: the general and detailed plan.

The general plan covers administration units /Voivodships/, including cities within the region which have the status of a Voivodship. The general plan can integrate several Voivodships if they constitute a social, economic and natural entity.

Detailed plans supplement and elaborate the problems envisaged in the general plan, and they cover in particular such regions where an especially intensive rate of economic development is envisaged.

Regional plans cover in principle the same number of years as are covered by long-term plans /up to 1980 at the present stage of planning/. But regional planning may extend over a longer period of time when the hypothesis is justified that a branch of activity requires more time where its perspective

development is concerned. This may be the case when the plan deals with demographic estimates, prospecting of minerals, and the development of the water and forest economies and long-range economic activity, which may in a specific way determine the region's development.

Preliminary work on regional planning is in the hands of Regional Planning Offices of the Voivodship People's Councils. Regional Planning Advisory Commissions composed of distinguished specialists and representatives of the Administration take an active part in the elaboration of regional plans. Specialized institutes and research centres lend a helping hand when it comes to solving particularly complex problems, while the advice and endorsement is sought from administrative organs where problems of special importance are involved.

The draft regional plans are construed in two stages. During the first stage, the general premises of the region's development are laid down and a preliminary outline of the plan's objective is drawn up. The second stage witnesses the elaboration of the draft-plan proper. It takes into account the suggestions and conclusions drawn after consultation with, and endorsement by, the institutions concerned.

The cooperation of authorities and the population in the construction of the plan is secured through the following procedure:

- 1/ Draft plans are agreed upon with the Voivodship and District organs of the Administration, and also with the State and central economic authorities concerned;
- 2/ Draft plans are subject to endorsement by the Praesidia of the Voivodship People's Councils /Local Government Boards/ which represent the interests of the population;
- 3/ After endorsement by the Local Government Board, the draft plan is reviewed by the authorities responsible for town and settlement planning, which issue their opinion about the draft;
- 4/ The fundamental provisions of the draft plan are subject to approval by the Council of Ministers.

III. Elaboration Technique

The construction of regional plans is based on:

- 1/ The directives pertaining to the elaboration of five-year plans for the development of the national and voivodship economies;
- 2/ Directives included in the materials pertaining to long-term plans /up to 1980/ for the development of the national economy;
- 3/ Pertinent directives included in the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers and the Praesidia of Voivodship People's Councils;
- 4/ Basic studies and analyses of natural-geographic and socio-economic relations;
- 5/ Conclusions drawn in the course of work on local spatial plans.

A thorough and detailed research precedes the embodiment of the concept envisaged in a regional plan. The research comprises:

- 1/ an all-round evaluation of the natural-geographic peculiarities of the area covered by the plan;
- 2/ an analysis of industrial and agricultural output in the region;
- 3/ an analysis of the cultural facilities existing on the spot and the work of cultural and economic organisations;
- 4/ a survey of demographic developments and structure of employment;
- 5/ an analysis of the living conditions and the structure of consumer goods.

Regional plans seek to solve the following problems:

- 1/ Accurate prognosticating of demographic development and estimation of latent reserves in the workforce. Proposals as to the distribution of the population with due regard to migration movements;
- 2/ Determination of conditions for the expansion of industry on the basis of local raw materials, the potential possibilities

of expanding existing work establishments, including technical progress, reserves of the workforce and an improvement in labour productivity; proposals pertaining to location of industry. Material and power balance sheets;

3/ Regional distribution of agricultural production accompanied by an appraisal of the volume of output. An evaluation of the existing conditions for the realization of the production programme. An outline of the anticipated structure of farms. Balance sheets of fertilizers' economy. Directives pertaining to mechanization and technical equipment. Organisation of auxiliary services;

4/ Concept and programme of the forest economy and of afforestation. Estimated output of timber industry. Basic conditions for realization of programme;

5/ Estimates envisaging the volume and trends in commodity movements and passengers' traffic. Programme for the expansion and reconstruction of the existing transportation network, including railway, water and air transportation facilities;

6/ Laying down the principles governing the expansion of settlements, envisaging the density of the population, along with a definition of the function to be performed by towns and settlements, and a selection of regions destined for development, including an outline of basic elements of space structure;

7/ Programme for the development of cultural facilities and social services, including schools, theatres, houses of culture, health service centres, social welfare, care over children, and recreational, rest and tourist facilities;

8/ Appraisal of housing needs and programmes of house building; communal services /water supply, disposal of impure water, electric and gas/. Urban communication;

9/ Programme for the development of the distribution system. Conditions for the realization of the programme;

10/ Evaluation of water supply reserves /surface and underground/, and suggestions as to how they should be utilized for consumer purposes, industrial, agricultural and shipping purposes, for hydropower stations and for recreational water

stations. Protection of water against pollution. Recommendations pertaining to investment in hydro-technical installations.

In its ultimate form a regional plan should constitute a synthesis of all the problems here enumerated. The plan is supplemented by an investment plan, a building programme, along with a description of conditions determining realization.

Regional plans are composed of two parts: a descriptive and cartographic one.

Cartographic elaborations are based on the following scales:
General regional plans: 1:300 000; 1:200 000, and 1:100 000.
Detailed regional plans: 1:100 000; 1:50 000, and 1:25 000.

R e m a r k: In the present stage, regional planning concentrates on defining the basic premises of economic development. The methods are predominantly based on an analysis of a statistical type. The findings and conclusions of this stage will serve as a basis of the forthcoming spatial regional plan stricto sensu. Under these circumstances, parallel to the work conducted by regional planning organs, town planners have set out with the elaboration of their plans covering large areas of related groups of settlements. Work is proceeding primarily in densely populated regions or, in other words, in big cities. Local plans covering groups of related settlements, lay down the principles which mould space structure and govern territorial division according to purpose of destination. In relation to regional plans proper, local plans covering groups of settlements, contain conclusions stemming from the analysis showing the utilization of the natural and geographic features of the region and the degree of its development.

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