

The spatial planning system in Poland. Focus on tourist destinations


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Country profile

Poland, officially named the Republic of Poland, is a country located in Central-Eastern Europe. The surface area of the country is about 312,705 km² (Table 1). With a population of 38 million people in 2021, Poland is the 5th most populated member of the European Union (EU). The capital and largest city is Warsaw, with a population of about 1.8 million people. Poland borders Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) to the northeast, Belarus and Ukraine to the east, Slovakia and the Czechia to the south, and Germany to the west. Poland also has access to the Baltic Sea to the north.

Table 1. General country information

Name of country	Poland
Capital, population of the capital	Warsaw 1,863,056 (2020 – municipality) 3,095,025 (2021 – metro area)
Surface area	312,705 km ²
Total population	38,036,118 (2021 census)
Population density	121.64 inhabitants/km ²

Table 1 (cont.)

Population growth rate	-0.3% (2021); -0.2% (2020); 0% (2019)
Unemployment rate	5.8% (2021); 6.3% (2020); 5.2% (2019); 5.8% (2018)
Degree of urbanisation	60% (2021)
Human development index	0.876 (2021)
GDP	mln USD 674,048.27 (2021)
GDP per capita	USD 17,840.9 (2021)
GDP growth	5.7% (2021); -2.5% (2020); 4.7% (2019); 5.4% (2018)
Travel and tourism contribution to GDP	4.8% (2021); 2.6% (2020); 2.8% (2019)

Source: own elaboration based on: Statistics Poland, Eurostat, World Bank Data, World Travel & Tourism Council.

The three-tier administrative (territorial) division of Poland was introduced on 1 January 1999 and divided the territory of Poland into regions – voivodeships (*pol. województwo*), then into counties including communes that are cities with county status (*pol. powiat*) and communes (*pol. gmina*). In 2021, the administrative division of Poland included 16 voivodeships, 314 counties, 66 cities with county status, and 2477 communes (including 302 urban, 652 urban-rural and 1523 rural communes).

When trying to characterise and interpret the contemporary spatial dimension of some social and economic phenomena in Poland, it is necessary to emphasise the political changes that took place after 1989. That period has brought a radical transformation of many elements of Polish social and economic life (Bański, 2007). Since 1989, we may talk about the political transformation and transition from centrally-planned economy to market economy, which relates to an entirely new approach to land development. The most important changes after 1989 directly affecting land development in Poland included: a) the decentralisation of political authority and the rebirth of self-governance, b) the privatisation and decentralisation of the economy, c) the adjustment of legal regulations for spatial planning to the EU standards, d) obtaining access to structural funds and agricultural subsidies from the EU (Węclawowicz et al., 2006). The second half of the 1990s also marks the beginning of activities aimed at decentralising public administration. Consequently, at the beginning of 1999, the 49 existing voivodeships were replaced by 16 bigger ones divided into counties and communes. The reform was meant to introduce a transparent division of tasks of public and self-governance administration (Wendt, 2001, 2007).

The decentralisation process in Poland has made local government responsible for providing the inhabitants of each commune with services and goods that are directly related to their daily needs (Górecki & Kukołowicz, 2018). Communes became responsible for many tasks, including: a) spatial order, land use and

environmental protection, b) local organisation of traffic and local transport, c) water supply, sewage, waste removal, supply of electricity and heating, d) health care, e) public welfare, f) municipal housing, g) primary schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions, h) culture, i) recreational areas and sports facilities, j) open-air and indoor markets, k) green spaces and wooded areas, l) municipal cemeteries, and m) public order and fire departments (Regulski, 2003; Nam & Parsche, 2001).

Poland is a part of the EU tourism market with a constantly increasing number of visitors. In 2019, there were 19.2 thousand accommodation facilities in Poland, 41% of them with less than 10 beds. In 2019, 88.5 million foreigners came to Poland, including 21.2 million tourists and 67.4 million so-called one-day visitors. In total, 19 million overnight stays were provided to foreign tourists in 2019 (Statistical analysis: Tourism..., 2020).

The indicators most useful in assessing the actual interest of tourists in Polish regions are Defert and Charvat (Napierała et al., 2021). The highest density of tourist traffic in 2019 was recorded in the largest Polish metropolises: Kraków (9.1 thous.), Warsaw (9 thous.), Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot – 6 thous.) and Wrocław (5.3 thous.). The most intensive tourist traffic was recorded in the most popular regions for leisure tourism – the western part of the Baltic coast (Figure 1).

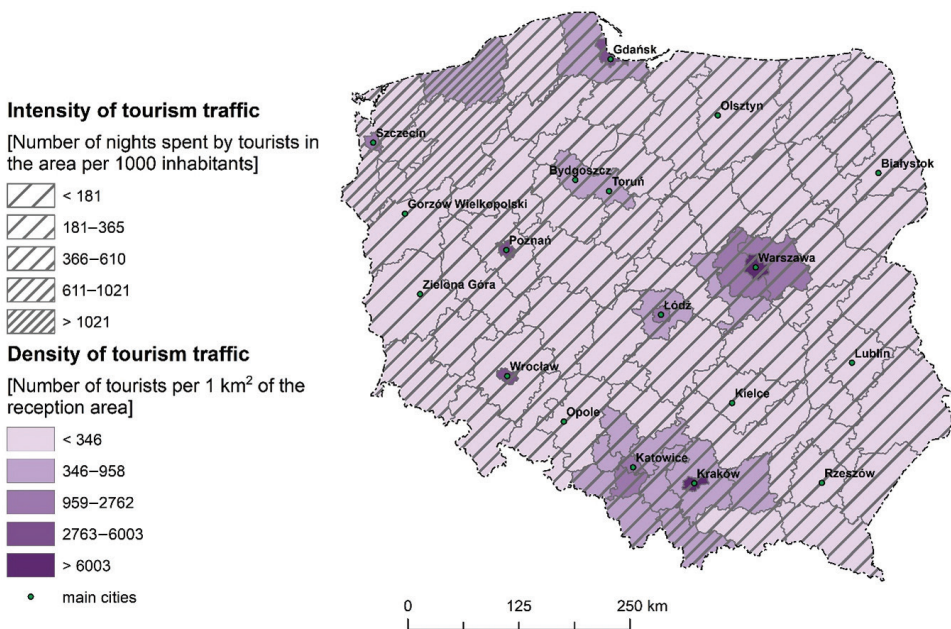


Figure 1. Tourism intensity and density in Poland in 2019
Source: own elaboration based on Statistics Poland data.

From the perspective of tourist service providers, especially accommodation facilities, longer stays of tourists are highly desirable. The interest in this type of tourism in Poland in 2019 was extremely varied in terms of space. Longer stays are favoured primarily by such forms of tourism as leisure or health tourism. Thus, some of the regions with the highest intensity of tourist traffic are also those with the longest stays (Napierała et al., 2021).

Legal regulations of spatial planning

The structure and condition of land development, and consequently, its value for tourism, depend on possibilities and limitations that a spatial planning system imposes on entities that have the power to create, use and transform natural and cultural resources. Now, Polish spatial planning system is undergoing a transformation, however, it is still legally framed by the *Act on spatial planning and development* (Dz.U. 2003, nr 80, poz. 717) that was passed in 2003. Although most of the original document remains in force, it was amended a few times, including the change in 2020, due to which it lost some of its crucial provisions. A new act on spatial development is to be introduced. Activities to establish such a document are underway at the ministerial level. Not much is known about the content of the act, with only occasional “leaks” making their way to the public.

To make this intricate situation of the planning system clearer, let us start with an outline of what happened from the 1990s to the moment of passing the act of 2003, and present some later pivotal changes against this backdrop. Along with a transformation of the country’s socialist political and economic systems which began in the 1990s, there appeared a need to adapt the spatial planning system to the new reality. On the one hand, this new reality meant switching to political pluralism, empowerment of local communities and the restoration of democratic principles, while on the other, introducing market economy (Kolipiński, 2014), altered patterns of land use and increasing investment pressures. The first attempt to adjust planning took a form of a legal act passed in 1994 (Dz.U. 1994, nr 89, poz. 414 & 415). It was supposed to break with hierarchical planning and introduce new solutions and instruments, which among others, would strengthen the rights of property owners. However, there was another important issue, which was later considered disastrous for the whole land management. The act of 1994 invalidated communal general plans which had been drawn up before 1995, leaving local authorities with a 5-year period to create new local plans of spatial development. Initially intended as an impulse to update plans and adjust them to new circumstances, this proved to be a mistake in a long-term perspective.

Five years wasn't nearly enough to prepare new planning documents for the whole country. So, finally, 2003 saw a huge reform of spatial planning, which ultimately made the "old" plans expire, leaving spaces for development with insufficient planning control (Kolipiński, 2014).

The act of 2003 introduced a three-tier spatial planning system in Poland that consisted of national, regional, and local levels. They were supposed to complement one another, forming a compatible land management system (Table 2). The first two tiers were aimed at establishing the guidelines for land development patterns, as well as to secure implementation of national and regional sectoral policies. Communes, which remain the basic units in Polish territorial-administrative division, were tasked with shaping and conducting detailed spatial policies at the local level.

The major objective of spatial planning is to achieve a state of "spatial order", which the legislator defines as 'such an arrangement of space that creates a harmonious whole and takes into account all functional, socio-economic, environmental, cultural and aesthetic conditions, as well as requirements in orderly relations' (Dz.U. 2003, nr 80, poz. 717, 2nd article, 1st point).

The act of 2003 specified a few basic elements that had to be considered in the planning process. According to the 1st article and 2nd point of this document, those were the requirements of: (1) spatial order, including town planning and architecture; (2) architectural and landscape values; (3) environmental protection, including water, forest and agricultural land; (4) protection of cultural heritage, monuments and contemporary cultural goods; (5) protection of people's health and safety, as well as the safety of their properties, also the needs of people with disabilities; (6) economic values of space and (7) ownership; (8) the needs of state defence and security; and, finally, (9) the needs of public interest.

Later amendments to the act also added to this list such issues as: (10) the needs for the development of technical infrastructure (broadband networks in particular); (11) ensuring public participation in a planning processes regarding key documents mentioned in table 2, this requirement addressed electronic forms of communication in particular; (12) maintaining the receptiveness and transparency of planning procedures; and (13) the need to ensure adequate quantity and quality of water for the population. Moreover, there was a change in naming regarding point 5 – instead of 'people with disabilities, 'people with special needs' were addressed.

According to the Act of 2003, it was the Centre for Strategic Studies that was obliged to prepare the outline for spatial development of the state, called the concept of spatial development of the country (CSDC). Before it was closed (in 2006), the Centre had been a state organisational unit that assisted the Council of Ministers in such fields as: forecasting, strategic programming, socio-economic and spatial development at the national level. The document which used to frame spatial planning at lower levels of territorial governance is more widely discussed in the following section of this document (Long-term strategy for spatial planning).

Table 2. Spatial planning system in Poland and its evolution between March 2003 and May 2021

Feature	Level		
	national	regional	local
Administrative unit	country	Voivodeship	commune
1	2	3	4
Key planning and analytic documents and their short description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concept of spatial development of the country (CSDC): defines conditions, aims and directions of sustainable development of the country, as well as actions which are necessary to achieve them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regional (voivodeship) spatial development plan: translates the arrangements adopted in regional development strategy and specifies crucial natural resources and elements of land development in the region; <u>regional landscape audit: identifies landscapes within the voivodeship, determines their distinctive features, evaluates them and recommends actions</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the study of determinants and directions of land development: defines principles of communal spatial policy, including specification of local zoning rules; local spatial development plan: determines land use structure and possibilities for land development, including detailed parameters for buildings; <u>landscape resolution: establishes the rules and conditions for location of small architecture objects, billboards and other advertising devices, and fences; clarifies their parameters, quality standards and types of building materials from which they can be made</u>

Table 2 (cont.)

1	2	3	4
Responsible legislative bodies and their main tasks regarding planning	Parliament (Sejm and Senat): enacts legal acts; controls and appoints constitutional organs of the state and influences EU legislation; minister responsible for construction, spatial and housing management: coordinates compliance of regional plans with the CSDC; prepares periodic reports on the state spatial development; conducts cooperation on spatial development regarding cross-border areas; Government Centre for Strategic Studies: prepares CSDC	regional assembly (sejmik województwa): initiates and adopts regional spatial development plan and <u>landscape audit for the voivodeship</u> ; acknowledges annual reports on changes in regional land development as well as on the assessment of the implementation of public purpose investments of supralocal importance	communal council: initiates and adopts the study of determinants and directions of land development, local spatial development plans, as well as <u>landscape resolutions</u>
Responsible executive body and its main tasks for planning	minister responsible for construction, spatial and housing management: coordinates the compliance of regional land development plans with the concept of spatial development of the country; conducts cross-border cooperation in the field of spatial development (in cooperation with the President of government Centre for Strategic Studies); prepares periodic reports on the state of spatial development in the country	voivodeship marshal: prepares regional spatial development plan <u>and landscape audit</u> ; conducts studies and analyses, as well as develops concepts and programmes which relate to areas and problems of spatial development	commune head, mayor or president (according to the population of a commune): announces the initiation of above-mentioned resolution processes; informs the relevant authorities (institutions); prepares drafts, obtains opinions and makes other necessary arrangements in this respect; makes the documents available for public inspection; consults the compliance of the documents with other regulations with the regional administrative authority

Key: elements added by amendments between 2003 and 2020; elements removed by the amendment of 2020
Source: elaboration based on *Ustawa z dnia 27 marca...* and its further amendments (Dz.U. 2003, nr 80, poz. 717).

At the regional level, spatial planning is based on *spatial development plans* – one for each of 16 Polish voivodeships. Plans are approved by self-governing regional assembly, but it is the marshal's responsibility to initiate and organise the drafting of such a document. The marshal is the head executive body of the regional government and the chairman of the voivodeship board. On the other hand, there is also a voivode (*pol. wojewoda*) who represents the central government in the region and performs various control functions, including the one referring to spatial planning.

In its original form (valid before the amendment of 2020), the *regional spatial development plan* took into account both *regional development strategies* and *the concept of spatial development of the country*. It consisted of a descriptive and graphic parts. In its main core, basic elements of regional land development are specified (settlement system, metropolitan areas and key infrastructural networks, environmental protection areas, as well as crucial cultural heritage objects, public purpose investments and those of supra-local importance, in particular prohibited areas, areas requiring support and experiencing problems, and exposed to flooding). The preparation of *the plan* is accompanied by the development of an environmental impact forecast, as well as wide-ranging consultations with a variety of administrative bodies and the public.

An important extension of the scope of spatial planning at the regional level of territorial administration was introduced in 2015. Long-awaited instruments allowing for more effective protection (on a voluntary basis) of the quality of Polish landscape were legally sanctioned then. The Parliament approved a new document, which altered provisions of other legal acts. Customarily called 'the landscape act', it was aimed at taming the progressing visual disorder, and outdoor advertising in particular (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 774). Local governments were offered more effective ways for setting the rules and technical parameters for locating advertising media, fences and other small architectural objects. Furthermore, new financial burdens remain now at the disposition of the authorities, which may support preventing public space from being "flooded" by uncontrolled advertising. So far, few local governments have fully succeeded in creating local advertising codes, as their resolutions were often appealed against and, finally, repealed due to restricting the freedom of economic activity, including retrospective or ambiguous provisions that enabled free interpretation, violating the competences of other administrative entities, etc. (Masieriek & Pielesiak, 2018).

In the landscape act, another set of crucial provisions was incorporated to reinforce protective actions, this time focussing on regional landscape. At least once every twenty years, regional self-governing authorities are to prepare *a landscape audit*. On the one hand, such an audit is supposed to identify distinctively attractive areas, for which particular attention should be paid. On the other, it concerns threats to their authenticity and integrity, along with offering recommendations on indispensable protective actions. According to the Council of Ministers' regulation of 2019 (Dz.U. 2019, poz. 394), the landscape audit consists of three parts (paragraph 4, point 1):

1. descriptive and tabular section, including general information about the region, identification and classification of landscapes, their characteristics and evaluation; a list of priority landscapes (supplemented by a catalogue of local architectural forms of buildings), key protected areas, threats and recommendations;
2. a graphic part with maps illustrating the spatial distribution of landscapes mentioned above;
3. additional documentation concerning methodology, source materials, report on public consultations and survey results (if applicable), as well as digitised spatial data.

The legislator urged regional authorities to prepare audits within 3 years after the implementation of the landscape act. However, this deadline was impossible to meet due to longer than expected waiting period for executive regulations. At the moment, substantial work is carried all around the country in order to evaluate landscapes and prepare audits.

The change that occurred in 2015 also applied to metropolitan planning. Before, in *The act on spatial planning and development*, there was only a vague mention that metropolitan areas (defined as areas with their functional hinterlands, specified in the concept of spatial development of the country) should adopt spatial development plans, that would remain parts of *The regional spatial development plan*. That issue, however, wasn't sufficiently specified by provisions in other documents, which made such a planning dimension insignificant in practice. For a few years of waiting for *The Concept of Spatial Development of the Country*, it has been discussed how metropolitan cores ought to be identified and their hinterland delimited, what their scope of tasks should be, including those related to spatial planning etc. According to the Act of 2014 which amended the rules for development policy (Dz.U. 2014, poz. 379) more attention was paid to urban functional areas, which were defined as the areas 'of a special phenomenon in the field of spatial management or the occurrence of spatial conflicts, constituting a compact spatial arrangement consisting of functionally related areas. Characterised by common conditions and planned uniform development goals' (2nd article, point 6a). Furthermore, from that time on, instead of 'metropolitan areas', the term 'urban functional areas of voivodeship centres' was to be used. It was *The act of 2015 on metropolitan unions* (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 1777) that was perceived as 'a breakthrough', at least temporarily, because it introduced a new planning tool – a *Framework study of conditions for the directions of spatial development of a metropolitan union* (Mikuła, 2019). Metropolitan unions were completely new organisational forms in spatial division of the country. In fact, it was not a true breakthrough, as there was only one 'metropolitan union' formally established (in Upper Silesia) instead of several that should have been created. Finally, provisions on metropolitan planning were altered by the amendment of the *Act on the principles of development policy* of 2020. The framework document (metropolitan study) no longer exists in the legal system and planning practice.

In a four-year perspective, supra-local planning will be transformed even more, according to what the government has recently announced. Regional spatial planning is supposed to be utterly combined with socio-economic programming, which on the other hand will be adjusted to the distribution of EU funds. *Regional spatial development plans* will expire, being replaced by regional development strategies in which spatial aspect are to be developed substantially, at least at the declarative level.

Nonetheless, extremely important documents for the contemporary spatial planning system in Poland are elaborated at the local level. Those are: *the study of determinants and directions of land development* and *the local spatial development plan*. Both are prepared by communal executive authorities and approved by the communal council. First, however, draft documents are consulted with administrative organs and other crucial entities (neighbouring communes, environmental and heritage protection, military, mining, healthcare organs etc.), as well as local communities. There is an obligation to make such a document publicly available, enabling submitting concerns and motions for change before the final resolution is made.

The study is an obligatory document, which regards the whole area of each commune. The act on spatial planning clearly states that it is not an act of law, which means that administrative decisions, such as building permissions may not be issued directly based on its provisions. However, those provisions are binding for developing *local spatial development plans*, which, on the other hand, are acts of local law. Both kinds of mentioned documents, after their approval, are obligatorily made accessible to the public. Both consist of descriptive and cartographic parts, too.

In the diagnostic part, which must be included in *the study*, there are conditions and possibilities for the development of each commune, resulting from current state and the need to protect its underground water, mineral resources, and other resources of the natural environment; cultural heritage and landscape; agricultural and forestry space, and spatial order in general. As far as social issues are concerned, the law obliges planners to analyse demographic trends, the quality of life, as well as safety of people and their properties. That point regards in particular threats of flooding, those of geologic origin and related to the extraction of raw materials (areas of mining damage). Furthermore, communal financial capabilities, land use and land development (including infrastructural networks and possibilities for their development, as well as estimated absorbency of the area for development) are taken into consideration. All this is supplemented with the examination of land ownership structure. In the part which delineates new directions of development, particular attention is paid to widely understood protected areas, as well as to the areas intended to become building lands. For the latter category, defining precise indicators for land use and building objects is indispensable. Notably, this refers to areas where commercial facilities with sales area exceeding 2,000 square meters are to be located. Apart from the issues already mentioned, identification and delimitation of degraded areas, and those

in need of ‘transformation, rehabilitation, reclamation or remediation’ are no less important elements of *the study*.

The second key planning tool for the communal level is the *local spatial development plan*. Contrary to the *study*, this document is made on voluntary basis. It may, but doesn't have to cover the whole area of a territorial unit. There are some obligations, e.g. such a plan must be prepared for a cultural park (which is a form of protecting cultural heritage), however, in other cases local authorities may pass a resolution regarding single plots only.

The plan is the most detailed document, as the scale for its cartographic elaboration is 1:1000 (1:500 or 1:2000 in exceptional cases). It contains information on intended land use with lines delimiting different use and precise development principles for each area, including land development indicators, and other characteristics (min-max development intensity; share of biologically active areas; max building height, wall and roofing colours; location of construction objects in relation to roads and boundaries of adjacent real estate; min vehicle parking space, etc.). Furthermore, there are rules for consolidation and division of real estate, minimum area of newly separated building plots, as well as restrictions on land use, such as prohibitions for buildings. For areas in temporary use, the extent and end-date of such use are clarified. The document also specifies all kinds of protected areas, as well as the rules of their use. Another important element regards the principles for constructing or modernising technical infrastructure. As for other obligations worth emphasising, *the local spatial development plan* indicates areas for rehabilitation/reclamation, and areas requiring amalgamations or divisions of real estate, as well as locations of big commercial facilities and public purpose investments.

Even though *the local spatial development plan* is a crucial tool for taming the implementation of investments and land use forms that are inconsistent with contemporary planning principles and misuse local conditions, only 1/3 of the country is covered by such documents. In 2019, the most advanced planning outcomes in this respect were observed in the South-Western part of the country (regions of Dolny and Górny Śląsk, as well as Małopolska). On the other hand, in kujawsko-pomorskie, lubuskie and podkarpackie voivodeships, the share of areas covered by plans didn't exceed 10% (Table 3).

Table 3. Shares of the area [%] covered by the valid local spatial development plans in the total voivodeship area between 2010 and 2019

Voivodeship	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Dolnośląskie	53.5	55.4	56.9	58.9	59.2	60.3	62.1	63.3	64.5	64.8
Kujawsko-pomorskie	3.8	4.6	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.9	6.3	6.6	7.1	7.3
Lubelskie	56.2	57.0	58.0	57.9	57.6	57.7	57.1	56.4	56.5	56.7

Table 3 (cont.)

Voivodeship	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Lubuskie	6.3	7.0	7,4	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.9	9.3	9.3	9.5
Łódzkie	29.0	28.8	29.0	30.9	31.7	32.0	32.4	32.7	32.8	33.0
Małopolskie	61.8	64.5	65.5	66.1	66.3	66.4	66.4	66.9	67.7	68.0
Mazowieckie	28.9	29.2	29.5	29.9	31.0	31.3	31.6	32.2	32.5	33.4
Opolskie	36.3	35.5	37.4	39.0	40.0	39.9	40.5	41.3	40.5	41.4
Podkarpackie	7.0	7.8	7.9	8.1	8.5	8.7	8.7	8.9	9.1	9.1
Podlaskie	14.3	14.5	14.9	16.5	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.8	16.2	16.3
Pomorskie	14.7	15.6	16,9	17.8	19.0	19.9	20.2	20.5	20.7	21.0
Śląskie	61.7	63.5	63.4	65.3	65.7	66.4	68.5	69.4	71.2	71.5
Świętokrzyskie	21.1	21.7	24.8	27.1	28.2	29.8	30.7	30.8	31.1	31.1
Warmińsko-mazurskie	11.5	11.8	12.2	11.9	12.1	12.5	12.9	13.1	13.4	14.6
Wielkopolskie	16.1	16.8	17.3	17.8	18.3	19.1	20.0	20.4	20.8	21.1
Zachodniopomorskie	15.6	16.4	17.6	18.1	18.4	19.0	19.1	19.3	20.2	20.7

Source: Statistics Poland, Local Data Bank.

If there is no valid *local spatial development plan*, Polish planning system provides that conditions for and forms of land development are determined by: (1) *a decision on the location of a public purpose investment*, or (2) *a decision on development conditions*. The latter of those procedures is often discussed within the planning community, as it gives considerable freedom in developing land.

According to the ministerial orders (Dz.U. 2003, nr 164, poz. 1588, paragraphs 3–4), when valid *spatial development plan* isn't available, to establish the requirements for any new development, a locally competent authority (commune head, mayor or city president) must designate the area surrounding the plot, within which functions and features of land development must be analysed. This area should be delimited in a distance of at least 3 times the width of the plot, but no less than 50 metres. Except for what such an analysis of the surrounding development may alter, new buildings are generally allowed to be located in accordance with the longitudinal line of development of adjacent plots. Analogously, the building intensity index, roof geometry, height of the upper edge and width of front elevation are determined, however a tolerance for the latter parameter of 20% is acceptable. Finally, an investor receives an official document which, again, consists of descriptive and graphic parts. If its provisions are in accordance with the construction project, one may apply for a building permit to a competent authority, which in this case is a county governor. County (powiat) is an administrative unit consolidating a few communities. At the moment, except for issuing building permits, it has no relevance for the Polish planning system.

Some spatial planning activities in communes are realised by strategic documents at a local level. The commune development strategy is one of the key documents that every local government unit should have. It defines the directions of the commune's development for the next few years. The document should indicate the directions of social, economic and spatial development. It also plays the role of involving the local community in the commune's affairs, for example through the consultation process or evaluation of the activities of local government officials (Kłodziński, 2009).

Apart from generally applicable law on spatial planning, which was outlined above, there is another crucial legislative document that has a potential to introduce spatial order in society, economy and land development, namely the *Act on revitalisation* (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 1890). Since approving this document in 2015, the rules, as well as the mode, implementation and evaluation of revitalisation activities have been somewhat standardised and attributed to communal authorities. The legislator states that 'revitalisation is a process of recovering degraded areas from a state of crisis, and it's carried out in a comprehensive manner, through integrated activities for the local community, space and economy'. Those activities are 'territorially concentrated' and 'carried out by revitalisation stakeholders based on the communal revitalisation programme' (article 2, point 1). The delimitation of degraded areas and preparation of the revitalisation programme are voluntary, as first they require the adoption of relevant resolutions by the communal council (on its own initiative or at the request of commune head, mayor or city president). The communal revitalisation programme is prepared by executive authorities and, once it has been passed, becomes the act of local law. Among the requirements for the content of this document, there are: a detailed diagnosis of the area to be regenerated and its crisis state; description of links to planning and strategic documents; post-regeneration 'vision'; as well as revitalisation aims and scope, along with a list of projects to be implemented. Furthermore, management, financing, monitoring and evaluation are listed as obligatory components. And, finally, a requirement for linking implementation of the plan with changes in local spatial planning was expressed.

To make communal regeneration efforts more fruitful and 'in line' with contemporarily preferred renewal approach, in 2015–2019 the Ministry of Investment and Development launched a grant support system. Almost 130 million PLN (29 million EUR at the current rate) were spent on subsidising preparation of regeneration programmes, pilot projects and model implementation. Those funds were to a large extent co-financed by the EU Cohesion Fund. Communal budgets are not capable enough for such capital-intensive processes and rely heavily on EU funding (Masierak, 2021). This factor, along with a great demand for revitalisation activities due to many years of investment failures, result in insufficient regeneration pace and effects.

Revitalisation as a process of recovering an area from a crisis state can be implemented by all communes in Poland. In 2017, the interest in revitalisation programmes was strongly diversified between voivodeships (Figure 2). The largest percentage of communes was involved in revitalisation processes in Świętokrzyskie voivodeship, where as many as 81% of communes had an independent revitalisation program. Over 70% of communes had such a document in the Małopolskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Dolnośląskie voivodeships. In 2017, the smallest share of communes (24%) participated in the revitalisation processes in the Pomorskie voivodeship (Statistical data..., 2018).

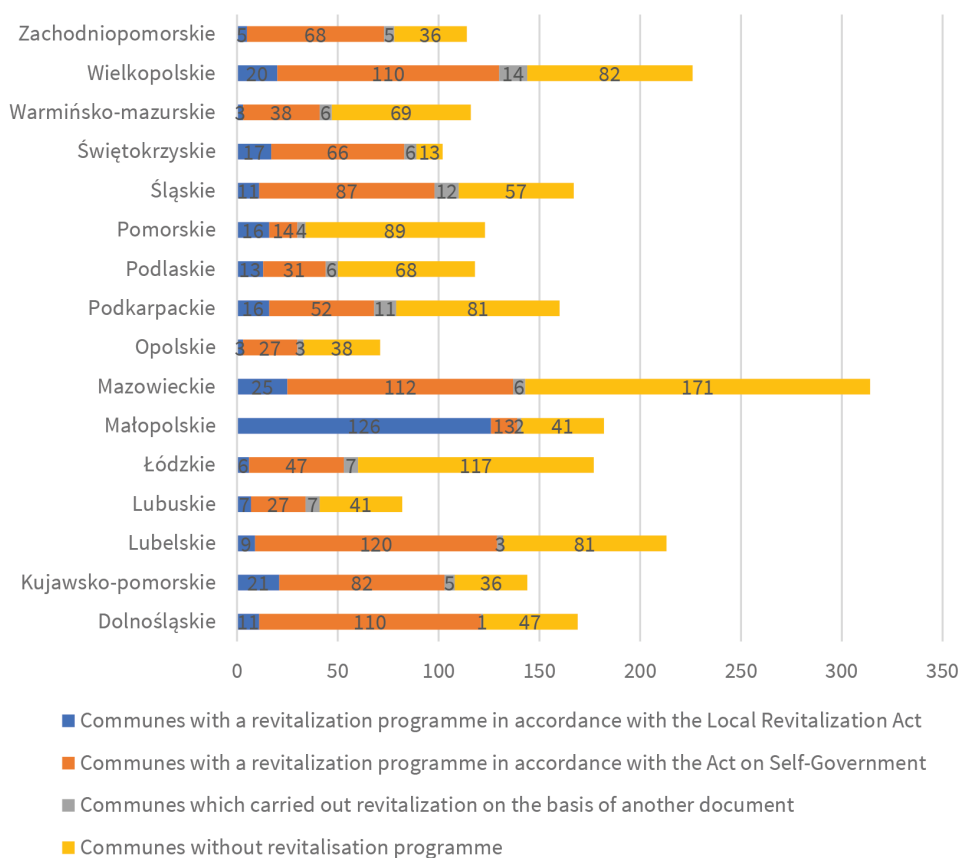


Figure 2. Number of communes implementing the revitalisation programme by voivodeship in Poland in 2017

Source: own elaboration based on Statistics Poland, Local Data Bank.

Long-term strategy for spatial planning

Until the amendment of 2020, *the concept of spatial development of the country* was the major strategic document in the field of planning. The last document of this type (*Koncepcja Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania...*, 2011) was passed in 2011. It was supposed to set the framework for spatial development in a twenty-year perspective – until 2030. Its major premise was to implement more cohesive integrated planning to bind both spatial and socio-economic planning objectives. The novelty of this approach was more evident focus on territorial integration, not only within the country, but also external cohesion on basis of cross-border areas. Polish spatial policy was meant to gain substantial coordinating power against sectoral policies across the country, as well as become more ‘European’ in terms of planning. Another crucial feature was the inclusion in *The Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030* of investment priorities, and designating entities responsible for their implementation.

As for the objectives formulated in the document, there were six of them:

1. increasing the competitiveness of major cities (urban centres), which meant maintaining the contemporary polycentric structure of Polish settlement system while strengthening its functional integration;
2. improving internal cohesion of the country and balancing its development; that was to be achieved by supporting the aforementioned functional integration, creating opportunities for spreading development factors, multifunctional rural development, as well as effective use of the potential hidden within each territory across the country;
3. providing higher accessibility within the country due to new infrastructural investments in transport and telecommunications; it was stated in the document that increased accessibility applied to different territorial scales;
4. shaping spatial structures in a way that allows for maintaining high-quality natural environment, which also applied to landscape values;
5. increasing the durability of spatial structures within the country; this objective applied to the preparedness for natural hazards, providing energy security, and supporting state defence capabilities;
6. restoration and consolidation of the spatial order.

The last objective mentioned above requires particular attention, as achieving spatial order has so far remained the main objective for all levels and dimensions of planning in Poland. Among the major negative phenomena to be tackled in this field, the document mentioned segregation-related social problems, dispersion of land development (suburban development, and development along the roads in particular, resulting in increasing economic costs of infrastructural maintenance and inadequate provision of services), as well as high security risk within floodplains. There were also other issues mentioned, such as the

fragmentation of ecological systems, low quality of public space and architectural objects, and the overall landscape degradation.

As for the reasons for those unfavourable phenomena and processes manifested across Poland, CSDC identified (pp. 160–165):

1. a failure of the management system, which was attributed to: insufficient control; defective division of power in creating local acts of law; incoherent spatial and socio-economic planning, as well as regional authorities' insufficient competences regarding protection of public interest of supra-local importance;
2. institutional disintegration of the spatial planning system – institutions were dispersed, staff flows hindered stable planning; there was no effective multi-faceted coordination and monitoring; law execution was weak, and on the top of that, public entities and private investors usually couldn't find solutions that would suit all partners;
3. gaps in the system of planning acts, which mainly meant the lack of coordination between planning documents and development strategies; furthermore, deficiencies in planning hierarchisation, as well as in the coverage with planning documents, were criticised.

Polish planning system was constructed in a way that ensured compatibility of provisions in planning acts established at regional and local levels with provisions in key documents of the higher level of administration. Therefore, for a few years, *The Concept of Spatial Planning of the Country 2030* set the rules and directions for both, regional and local planning. However, it had lost this over in 2020, as the amendment of the *Act on the principles of development policy* (Dz.U. 2020, poz. 1378) came into force. A rationale for this change was a need to move from long-term to medium-term planning and introduce a new system of strategic documents. According to the announcement of the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy that was aimed at preparing the Polish legal system for the forthcoming distribution of EU funds. The official narrative perceived this act also as a way to strengthen the position of local self-governments, as well as more effectively linking spatial planning with socio-economic planning and integrative planning in general. The amendment introduced *The Concept of Country Development* to the planning system (but it has yet to be elaborated on) to replace former key strategic documents. Those were *The Long-Term National Development Strategy* (focused on society and economy, and spatial development of the country), and *The Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030*. In fact, this change in the policy has temporarily (it's not obvious for how long) created a gap at a national level of spatial planning.

In 2020 another alteration was announced. The authorities that issue planning documents were tasked with creating digital planning data according to further specifications. Not only does this responsibility apply to new plans, but also to those already existing.

Responsibility for tourism at governmental level has been changing since 1989 when the economic transition processes formally started. Tourism has never been a responsibility of a separate ministry of Polish Government. The Department of Tourism was affiliated with ministries related to national economy, development or sport. Since October 7, 2020, the Department of Tourism has operated within the structure of Ministry of Economic Development, Labour and Technology. Decisions and initiatives of this ministry are consulted with the Tourism Experts Council, established on January 28, 2021. The main responsibility of the Council is to consult governmental systemic solutions and strategic decisions or initiatives related to tourism, including sustainable development, achieving competitive advantage by Poland as a tourism destination on the international market, and creating innovative tourism products. Moreover, the council indirectly supports the Polish Parliament by issuing opinions and presenting proposals of legislative initiatives in the field of tourism.

Promoting Poland as a tourism destination is the main responsibility of one of governmental agencies, the Polish Tourism Organisation, established on June 25, 1999. This governmental agency has foreign branches in 14 countries all over the world, namely Austria, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and United States of America. The agency cooperates with independent, regional and local destination management organisations in Poland. The Polish Tourism Organisation operates the following departments: Poland Convention Bureau, Department of Strategy and Marketing, Department of National Tourism Promotion, Department of Internet Communication.

It should be emphasised, that the authorities of every Polish administrative region (voivodeship) have their own regional tourism organisations. At the local level, communes are involved in tourism in various ways. The most common form of such involvement in tourism development is the operation and support for local tourism organisations, usually within the Polish Tourist Information System, supported by the Polish Tourism Organisation at the national level. Apart from these, there are also positions or departments responsible for tourism and promotion in the structures of Polish communal offices. Moreover, many rural tourism development goals are in the field of interest of Local Action Groups created and supported by LEADER, and LEADER+ programme.

It must be emphasised that there is no binding tourism development strategy at the national level. However, tourism planning currently appears in 2 types of documents: strategic – established at the national level (Strategy for Responsible Development 2020 (with a perspective until 2030), and The Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030), operational – established at the regional level, consulted at the national level, and negotiated at the European level (so-called Regional Operational Programmes). However, some operational goals were defined in 2015 in the Programme for Tourism Development until

2020. The main goal of this programme was to identify, build and market leading offers from outstanding Polish tourism brands. Additionally, four operational objectives have been formulated, 1) development of innovation, attractiveness and quality of tourist services and products as a factor of competitive economy; 2) strengthening social activity and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, and increasing the competences of human resources; 3) promotion of priority areas of tourism products of the country and regions, as well as economic specialisations based on tourism; 4) development and modernisation of space for the development of tourism and tourist infrastructure, while maintaining the principles of sustainable development and environmental protection regulations.

Polish government launched the Strategy for Responsible Development 2020 (with a perspective until 2030) in 2017. The strategy is targeting Poland as an attractive, safe, accessible and open tourism destination utilising both its cultural and natural resources sustainably. One of the strategic projects proposed in the document is the House of Polish Tourism Territorial Brands. The project is implemented to coordinate tourism policies and actions: creating systematic and comprehensive solutions related to tourism, and providing organisational, financial and legal tools for the integration, coordination, commercialisation and internationalisation of Polish tourism products. The goals of the project are integrated with the general concepts of development of the country, including non-verbalised spatial justice and focusing on rural areas, where tourism is identified as a pro-development, non-agricultural function. In particular, the development of links between tourism and health care systems is suggested in the Strategy for Responsible Development 2020. Thus, medical, SPA and wellness tourism is considered a competitive tourism product of Polish economy.

It must be emphasised that the Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030 is a core strategy for spatial planning policy in Poland at the national level, and for regulating the regional ones. The strategy addresses tourism as one of the metropolitan functions (meetings, incentives, congresses and events). Tourism has also been identified as a pro-development, non-agricultural function in rural areas. Interestingly, tourism is targeted by the Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030 as a social phenomenon focussed on local and regional culture and tradition, stimulating national and regional identity of both inhabitants and migrants. On the other hand, potential conflicts between tourism development and cultural and environmental protection are considered in the Concept of Spatial Development of the Country 2030, which mentions, among others, the inequalities in access to tourism services and attractions, or the progressive fragmentation of natural space.

Regional Operational Programmes are the main tool addressing regional development (including tourism) in Poland, similar to other member countries in the European Union. Regional Operational Programmes are granted mainly by

the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD), the European Social Fund (ESF), and state funds. It must be emphasised that approximately one fourth of European financial support for Poland was allocated to ROPs.

Tourism development is the object of European Union policy and financial support. It should be emphasised that a total of 4,128 projects related to tourism, lodging and F&B services were supported by European grants in Poland in the years 2014–2020. The total value of these projects equals EUR 2,799,569,493.06 and includes EUR 1,611,616,427.59 of European financial support.

Public participation in spatial planning

Social participation in spatial planning means a process in which both the authorities and the inhabitants cooperate in the preparation of plans, the implementation of specific policies, as well as in decision-making. In the case of spatial planning, the applicable legal provisions (including the Act on spatial planning and development) ensure public participation in the process of drawing up individual planning documents, mainly by imposing the obligation to open them for public consultation on the authorities drawing up these documents. The legally established obligation to organise consultations, as well as their statutory forms and scope, however, will not serve their purpose if they are not carried out in an appropriate manner. In the broadly understood investment process, social participation at the stage of preparing a local study/plan is a significant opportunity for direct contact between local government authorities and the public (Dobosz-Mucha et al., 2018).

In Polish law, provisions relating to social participation are included in the Act on spatial development planning (Dz.U. 2003, nr 80, poz. 717). Although this term does not appear in the act itself, it defines activities related to social participation in the field of planning procedures. These procedures concern the preparation of a draft study of the conditions and directions for the development of the commune and the local spatial development plan (Table 4). Unfortunately, the regulations were not precisely defined, so they may be easily circumvented. Critical assessment should be made of the lack of clear regulations as to the manner of settling applications, especially comments, notifying interested parties about it. Moreover, the opportunity to learn about the assumptions of draft planning acts and to submit one's own proposals for spatial solutions increases the effectiveness of the spatial management method chosen by public administration bodies. The lack of information on the content of the study and the local plan fosters distrust for planning plans.

Table 4. Main public participation tools used in spatial planning in Poland

Type of spatial planning document	Law procedures	Public participation tools
Study of the conditions and directions of spatial development	The planning procedure begins with the acceptance by the communal council resolution to start the preparation of a study. Then, the mayor announces that the communal council has adopted such a resolution, at the same time informing about the form, place and deadline for submitting requests for study. After obtaining the agreements and opinions, the second obligatory stage of involving the public in the preparation of the study follows. The commune administrator announces that the study project has been presented for public inspection. The study is adopted by the communal council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting comments in paper or electronic form (obligatory), • public discussion as a form of consultation (obligatory),
Local spatial development plan	The head of the commune announces that the council has adopted a resolution to start the preparation of a plan, informing at the same time about the form, place and date of submitting applications regarding the local plan in question. The commune administrator examines the submitted applications and prepares a draft local plan, along with a forecast of environmental impact and financial effects. The next stage of the procedure is the introduction of changes to the project arising from the opinion or coordination and announcement about making the draft local plan available to the public, along with the environmental impact assessment. During this time, a public discussion on the project should be organised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting comments in paper or electronic form (obligatory), • public discussion as a form of consultation (obligatory),
Revitalisation programme	The procedure for drawing up a revitalisation plan is the same as the procedure for drawing up a local spatial development plan. Any activities undertaken by local government units should result in statements from all stakeholders. The opinion of the inhabitants and business entities operating in the area covered by a revitalisation programme is particularly important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting comments in paper or electronic form (obligatory), • meetings, debates, workshops, study walks, questionnaires, interviews, the use of representative groups or collecting oral comments (obligatory min. 2 different forms)

Source: own elaboration based on: Act on spatial development planning (Dz.U. 2003, nr 80, poz. 717), Act on revitalisation (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 1777).

According to the Act on revitalisation of 2015 (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 1777), the revitalisation process should be conducted with regard in particular to the residents and businesses of the area, as well as non-governmental organisations and informal groups. Within the meaning of the Act, social participation includes the involvement of revitalisation stakeholders in the process of its preparation, implementation and evaluation. This participation should be ensured through social consultations and involvement in the Revitalisation Committee.

The process of participation (both in the form of consultation and co-decision) can be carried out using different techniques and forms. A study walk is an outdoor meeting with stakeholders conducted according to a prepared scenario, allowing for mapping specific places and elements requiring intervention, exploring the feelings and needs of respondents regarding various aspects of space. The main purpose of using this technique is for the users and stakeholders of a potential project to assess the space or collect ideas for new solutions in the way of space development. A walk allows users to be included and allows various spatial solutions to be assessed in the actual situation of their use. Recommendations from such consultations may, for example, be used by communal institutions in designing new or improving existing solutions for the development of city space.

Another tool used in spatial planning in Poland is a participatory budget (PB), also called a civic budget, which became an innovative policymaking mechanism through the involvement of inhabitants directly in the spatial decision-making process. The PB is a process in which residents decide to allocate specific funds from the unit's general budget. Citizens can help by submitting creative solutions to the local government (Kębłowski, 2013; Wampler, 2000). Contemporary politics should be based on transparency, accessibility and consultation approaches, therefore the PB became a tool for enhancing the quality of democracy (Bernaciak et al., 2017). In Poland, the PB tool has been used since 2011, when Sopot introduced it for the first time. PB allowed city residents to indicate the most socially needed investments in the commune (Bernaciak et al., 2017; Kozak, 2016). As part of this initiative in Poland, projects that fall within the range of the commune's own tasks can be financed, such as public education, health care, social assistance, public roads, culture, physical culture and environmental protection. Since 2019, the civic budget has been mandatory in communes, which are cities with county rights (Leśniewska-Napierała & Napierała, 2020).

Main challenges of spatial planning of tourism destinations

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” (5.6;TL-P)

The final part of the considerations on the national level is to discuss the main challenges of spatial planning, which are important for tourism areas. In research studies, one of the key requirements should include the scope of the study being prepared, followed by the concepts and methods used. Therefore, the language used has a significant impact on the cognitive effects achieved. First, the meaning of the word *challenge* should be defined. Usually, the concept of a challenge is a categorical message addressed to someone, by a person, institution, organization. In this popular linguistic term, we can see the static and one-off nature of the challenge. However, in determining the word challenge, the research perspective should be changed. A challenge requires a dynamic approach. Therefore, it is proposed to treat the challenge as a process, i.e. as variable, purposeful, step-by-step activities. The variety of the word challenge allows to consider the different substantive meanings of the spatial planning challenge process for tourism areas. If we treat challenges as a process, then one can distinguish its following phases: 1) invitation to a game, 2) facts to be checked, 3) doubts for consideration, 4) problems to be solved, 5) tasks to be performed, 6) stimulation to action (Figure 3).

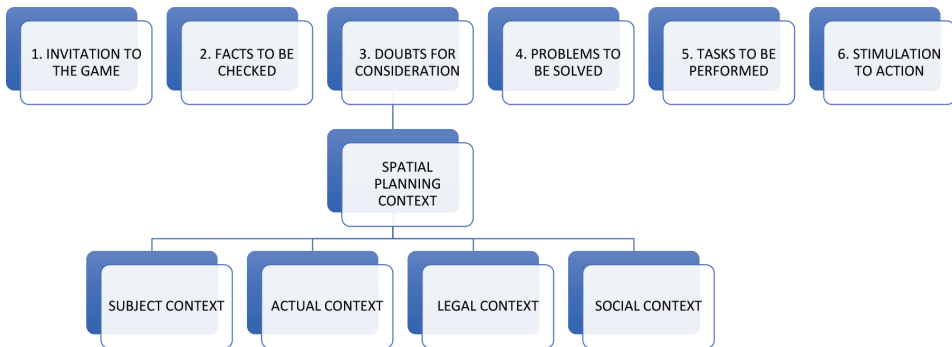


Figure 3. The phases of prediction thinking process

Source: own elaboration.

Due to the adopted assumptions of the presented stage of the SPOT development, the most important issue seems to be the 3rd stage, i.e. DOUBTS FOR CONSIDERATION. The first phase of the presented theoretical scheme of the study “Main challenges of spatial planning of tourism destinations”, i.e. INVITATION TO

THE GAME, raises no doubts. One should actively participate in the global game for the conscious, thoughtful and valuable development of tourism. Leaving the modern world to extreme, greedy neoliberalism will lead to a catastrophe. Pandemic experiences are a good example of the ecological nonchalance of modern man. An invitation to the game of creating “meaningful tourism” should be treated as a challenge and a responsibility for researchers. In turn, FACTS TO CHECK are discussed in the following parts: Legal regulations of spatial planning, Long-term strategy for spatial planning, Public Participation in spatial planning. Therefore, we are faced with the need to rethink the basic legal and organisational principles of spatial planning.

Since the task of researchers is to challenge existing arguments, the course of thinking will take the form of doubts discussed in turn, exposed in the following spatial planning contexts: A. SUBJECT B. ACTUAL C. LEGAL D. SOCIAL. Further considerations will follow the contexts above. The most important doubts will be indicated, which are the result of the analysis of observations of the applicable legal acts.

A. SUBJECT CONTEXT, meaning the contents of the plan. Doubts concern the Act on spatial planning and development discussed earlier. All planning intentions should describe the purpose they are to serve. It is obvious that the basic assumption is to improve the quality of life in the area in question. The development of standard of life should be achieved by shaping the spatial order. The act defines spatial order as: “such an arrangement of space that creates a harmonious whole and takes into account all functional, socio-economic, environmental, cultural and aesthetic conditions, as well as requirements in orderly relations.” The indicated process of achieving a harmonious spatial arrangement in a given area may be called a synergistic approach or a compromise of selfishness in favour of common harmony. This process is nothing more than composing a harmonious whole from different elements. It is because an agreement on compositional rules and planning parameters is one of the canons of spatial planning. Without establishing procedures for organising space, chaos may occur rather than the suggested order. In a research doubt, it is worth to consider whether the statutory content of the plan allows for an effect of synergy in spatial planning. If we assume that the purpose of spatial planning is to shape a person’s home and ennoble their life, will we obtain information in legal provisions about the values influencing this process? There are several doubts on this point. Let us refer to the statements of specialists in the field of spatial composition: “*The space creating conditions that sustain the life of a citizen is the key value for them, because it makes their life possible, and life is priceless for each of us. Rhythms, cycles, repetitions, continuums are the basis for the existence of processes that create and sustain life. Accidents are disturbances that modify stable cycles. They can mark the beginning of both a new and better organisation, and of entropy. The opposites of organisation and entropy from the human perspective are the same as the opposites of good and evil. Both nature and culture sustain human life*” (Budzyński, 2010, p. 416). Therefore, human life and the values that define it

should occupy a central place in spatial planning. After all, human development has axiological dimensions. Without hope, faith, love, justice, spatial planning will be an empty, pointless activity. In spatial planning, the need to use the moral aspects of space increases: *“moral geographies need to be regarded as a turning point in the story of the development of geographical thought. Socioeconomic geography makes the possession, gaining or loss of material goods in a defined geographical environment as the leading subject of analyses. In contrast, in the moral geographies, the research perspective is designated by goodness. It is relational in nature and at the same time has spatial implications”* (Kaczmarek & Kaczmarek, 2011, p. 148). These moral categories are ignored in spatial planning. There is also a lack of appropriate measures relating to the valuation of the world of human life. The lack of adequate measurement may cause an incorrect assessment of the analysed situations (Kaczmarek & Dąbrowski, 2021). In the face of the pandemic experience of the past months, questions about values should become key in spatial planning. Yet there is no value in terms of spatial planning. This condition should be considered a disadvantage.

B. ACTUAL CONTEXT, meaning objects and their relations. In spatial planning, we deal first with single objects. These include land properties, buildings and structures and their complexes. Landscape is the overarching and synergistic category. Single objects should be considered in two ways. On the one hand, they are a space of life within defined boundaries. They are geodetic contours or walls defining functional separateness. Their exterior is the other side of the material context under consideration. Due to the location of the building materials used in the geographical environment, the architectural form is connected with the surroundings. Considering external relations in spatial planning allows to work out a way to shape the aforementioned spatial order. Unfortunately, landscape analyses of designed areas are exceptional. Rather, we encounter chance and arbitrariness in the emerging external relations between individual objects. The functions of landscape architects and artists come down to a game of appearances. Despite the legislation in the field of landscape aesthetics, we are constantly moving towards the entropy of beauty. There are also many doubts in this material context. The weakness of relational compositions in spatial planning is manifested, inter alia, in the scourge of covering the public spaces with concrete. Most likely, due to the current legal regulations of spatial planning and the principles of investment performance, the use of concrete to cover public spaces will become a standard in the development of tourist areas.

C. LEGAL CONTEXT, meaning the regulations of forms of ownership. Sorting out the property ownership issues significantly influences the plan and morphology of the studied areas. Thus, we are dealing with a horizontal arrangement, which determines the future vertical shape of spatial wholes. It is impossible to plan a good life, it will not be possible to achieve spatial order without consistent regulations of property ownership. The preparation of good spatial regulations requires understanding the meaning of property and

individual freedom within the framework of social agreement. This is where the dysfunctions of efficient spatial planning lie.

Let us again refer to the statements of practicing architects: *“In the last twenty years, property has not acquired the status of a cultural and civilisational concept in Poland, we have not established by legislation that the market begins with property, because where there is no property – there is no market, where there is no property – no money, of course. Property has not acquired this status, it has not been (as psychologists say) externalised, internationalised in social life, like money or other categories of civilisation in which we live. Individuals and groups have not acquired the understanding that even a public entity (such as a University or a Ministry) has private or corporate property, that it is property with all its consequences. (...) The restoration of property after communism seems extremely complex. It is no coincidence that Poland is the only country where re-privatisation has not been carried out. Thus, property as a certain cultural concept – something for which one is responsible, which also has its own aesthetic, human identity – has disappeared in Poland”* (Bielecki, 2010, p. 258). Legal problems with real estate ownership continue. The promised transformation of perpetual usufruct of land has not been implemented efficiently. Without absolute property regulation, we will not have a rational and effective approach to spatial planning. I have the impression that lawmakers do not understand the mechanisms and sense of achieving spatial order.

D. SOCIAL CONTEXT, meaning the achievement of a compliance of needs. In 1990, local government was restored in Poland. Pursuant to the Act on commune self-government (Journal of Laws of 1990, No. 16, item 95): *“The inhabitants of a commune form a self-governing community by law”* (Art. 1). After the period of centralised economy, hopes for autonomous decisions about the process of shaping the spatial arrangements have returned. The inhabitants of a commune became free and responsible for the local affairs entrusted to them. Social consultations are among the instruments used by local government economy. The participation of residents in managing the commune’s area has become a promise of shaping and creating the environment in which one lives. The role of citizens and social organisations was taken into account in spatial planning. The position of local self-governments was also appreciated. The development of space should express the needs and creativity of citizens. Accurate and convincing legislative provisions collided with political reality. The problem of Polish self-government is the term of office, connected with the domination of political parties. The exercise of power by choice often falls short of the expectations of the inhabitants. The professionalism of the clerical cadres has replaced party interest and nepotism. Public consultations resemble façade activities. The effects of consultation meetings are of very little importance in making planning decisions. Housing communities, an important actor in spatial planning, are marginalised in the process of making spatial decisions. Ignoring public opinions shows the lack of understanding for spatial order. Greedy

financial selfishness dominates aesthetic and ethical values. Without a return to real social participation, tourist space cannot be reasonably managed.

The remaining phases of the “challenges as a process in tourism area planning”, i.e. PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED, TASKS TO BE DONE, ACTIVATION FOR ACTION, will be presented later in the project. The remarks made so far allow us to assume that spatial planning of tourist areas can be defined as the art of managing the future of tourist places. The shortcomings of spatial planning presented above do not lead to the rejection of planning procedures. From the time when humans ceased to be guided solely by instinct, since they no longer act only affectively, planning has become a rational way of thinking about the surrounding world. Logic has replaced fear and the mythical perception of reality. In spatial planning, a value-based approach that considers the subjectivity of the inhabitants is most desired. Otherwise, noble legislative intentions will serve political anarchy and the greedy selfishness of local government institutions. Tourist areas will fall into chaos rather than achieve spatial order.

To sum up, the challenges for spatial planning in Poland in a context of tourism destinations include:

- the instability of legal regulations at the national level;
- the investment downtime related to EU funding;
- missing tourism development strategy, and lack of leaders or organisations understanding the need for long-term planned tourism development in Poland;
- transferring responsibilities related to tourism development between different ministries;
- low awareness of the benefits of sustainable tourism.

Summary

This report offers insight into contemporary problems that space planning and sustainable tourism development are faced with in case of Poland, a CEE country with a turbulent history of socio-economic and political changes that have taken place over the last few decades. Key challenges that are being observed range from legal and organisational issues to those related to social change and economic efficiency. Furthermore, transport accessibility has increased to an unprecedented degree, and new technologies have been adopted in daily life on a massive scale. Therefore, the need for innovative approach ought to be recognised and properly addressed.

One of the main problems is the lack of planning integration relating to the different aspects of development, namely socioeconomic planning, spatial planning, tourism planning, and planning for natural environment and cultural landscape. Moreover, institutional obstacles have further restricted the effectiveness of modern spatial

planning in Poland. That is, among others, rigid (inflexible) administrative division of the country. It is highly unlikely that this one will be reformed, at least in a medium-term perspective. Hence, its impact should be considered a permanent challenge. When it comes to issues of social and economic nature, it is worth emphasising that those are often common in countries other as Poland. That includes the tendency to seek new spaces for exploration, as tourism often becomes the primary source of income for people inhabiting places that traditionally were considered unattractive. The same refers to increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, which remain the basis for the functioning of the tourism sector. Among other factors changing the conditions for tourism, while remaining key phenomena for spatial planning, there are new consumer habits and the shortening of the geographic distance. Both require strong focus on developing innovation and digitisation.

The last challenge to be mentioned, however, and an extremely important one from the point of view of the objectives of the SPOT project, is the diversification of the tourist offer as opposed to the development of mass tourism observed so far. The impact of the latter is completely divergent from the principles of sustainable development, while in case of diversification, new opportunities appear that may become a solution for at least some of contemporary ethical dilemmas.

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