

LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF METROPOLISES AND METROPOLITAN AREAS IN POLAND

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Abstract: The issues of metropolises and metropolitan areas remain one of the major Polish challenges in long-term national development policy. Ten metropolitan centers were identified based on the metropolitan functions in the national settlement system: Warsaw, Silesia conurbation, Cracow, Łódź, Tri-city, Poznań, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz-Toruń duopolis, Szczecin and Lublin. In 2012, Ministry of Administration and Digitization of Poland released information about public consultations concerning metropolitan areas. The main goal of this article is to review Polish legislative acts concerning metropolises, metropolitan areas and their delineation along with contemporary legal and administrative solutions.

Keywords: metropolis, metropolitan area, legislation, public administration.

1 Introduction

As an offshoot of urbanization, metropolization is believed to be among the most characteristic spatial processes of 20th and 21st centuries. B. Domański (2008) considers metropolitan areas as main drivers of economic development in Poland after 1991. These areas are most privileged as compared to other regions on account of their ability to develop innovations and support their spread. Besides, numerous institutions crucial for economic development such as firms, banks and scientific bodies are also clustered in metropolitan areas. Above all, these institutions include high-tech companies and business-related services all making the knowledge-based economy thrive.

The issues of metropolitan areas have aroused considerable interest and provoked debates among both scientists and policy-makers during recent years. This interest has been invigorated since the introduction of works on legal act concerning the role of municipal governments located in close proximity to the Polish major cities. Unfortunately, the number, physical range, demarcation criteria and management of metropolitan areas have all aroused controversy and most of these issues still remain a bone of contention. Accordingly, although every large city wishes to be included to the elite circle of metropolises, not all desires can be fully justified. Depending on the concept, the recommended number of metropolises ranges from one (Warsaw) to seven-eight, and sixteen at the very most. Although the appropriate legislation has not been enacted, the decisions to reinstate legislative works are still being discussed by the politicians.

The main goal of this article is to review Polish legislative acts concerning metropolises, metropolitan areas and their delineation along with contemporary legal and administrative solutions. Numerous typologies of metropolises and metropolitan areas made by the socio-economic geographers and sociologists are quoted in order to compare scientific and political standpoints.

2 Major definitions of metropolis and metropolitan area

Late 19th and early 20th century can be perceived as a period of thriving large urban centers. As a result of industrial and infrastructural development cities experienced a great population influx giving a rise to first big-city landscapes in a form of urbanized area called urban agglomeration (from Latin *agglomerare* - to mass together). This term was first used in 1856 in France (Gontarski 1980) while in Poland the notion of urban agglomeration appeared in 1960s defined as an area where population cluster in space (Dziewoński and Kosiński 1964; cited by Czyż 2009). Accordingly, the agglomeration consists of inner city along with adjoining, strongly urbanized area of total population reaching over 100,000 of which most live off non-agricultural activities (Parysek 2003). E. Iwanicka - Lyra (1969) defines agglomeration as *densely built-up area comprising urban core, housing estates and surrounding administrative units all characterized by higher than average values of*

indicators accepted as urbanization measures; the more advanced urbanization processes the stronger linkages between city core and surrounding areas.

Structural changes within agglomeration emerged in consequence of suburbanization and counter urbanization processes both responsible for strengthening its internal integration and increase of spatial range (Czyż 2009). Settlement systems became more functionally complex thus agglomeration was identified with metropolitan area, and its center with metropolis (Parysek 2003). More recently, Markowski and Marszał (2006) defined agglomeration as densely built-up area of mutually related settlement units developed by concentration processes. In unison, these authors do not advice to identify agglomeration with metropolitan areas. Agglomerations can become metropolitan areas by quantitative transformations such as advanced urbanization and processes of functional and spatial integration (Markowski and Marszał 2006). Contrary to metropolises and metropolitan areas, the term agglomeration takes account of morphological aspect and refers to advanced stage of settlement system (Czyż 2009).

2.1 Metropolises

The term metropolis is derived from Greek (*metrópolis*) and denotes mother city or capital city (Pirveli 2003). Although metropolis has multiple meanings, only a few are actually utilized in geographical sciences. One of them refers to city-states of ancient Greece which performed political and economic functions in a relation to superiority to the Greek colony. In Polish language the term metropolis means relatively large city dominating at least one domain on an international scale (Zborowski 2005). Only in the late 1980s did this term emerge in relation to urban development in a way replacing the term urban agglomeration.

According to Zborowski (2005) contemporary metropolis embraces large city of 1) concentrated political and cultural power as well as 2) control and decision-making functions in global economy. Besides that, each metropolis must develop strong and mutual bonds with other large urban centers. Parysek (2003) defines metropolis as a city with political, administrative, social, economic and cultural institutions of superior role over the whole nation and apparent significance on an international scale. Nowak (2010) identifies metropolis with final stage of urban development (development of urban agglomeration) and dubs it "mother city" i.e. local center of sub-regional, regional and country-wide significance with clear-cut range of influence.

In order to distinguish metropolises a criterion of total population is most utilized. Following this train of thought, the total population of a city must be equal to at least 1,000,000 (Jałowicki 1999), and at least 500,000 in case of regional center (Jałowicki 2005, Zborowski 2005). Presently however, the sole demographic criterion is far insufficient. Instead, a complexity of functions and their role as nodes in global socio-economic network come to the fore (Maik 2003; Zborowski 2005; Markowski and Marszał 2006). Alongside the above principles, metropolises should be distinguished by morphological criterion i.e. including three complementary areas within urbanized area: city core, city outskirts and suburban area ranging up to twenty kilometers (Smętkowski et. al. 2008).

Metropolitan city must be also recognized by the excellence of services, institutions and infrastructure; it ought to hold potential to expand innovative capability in technical, economic, social, political and cultural terms (Bassand 1997; cited by: Jałowicki 2005). The urban brand is equally important as the image serves city promotion (Markowski and Marszał 2006). According to Korcelli (1998) metropolises are these cities which meet demographic criterion and possess modern services of at least regional significance. Meetings, congresses, exhibitions, festivals as well as sport and art events are all organized in

metropolises. Therefore, metropolitan center must provide excellent links with other large cities by road, railroad and air transportation all operating regionally and internationally. The presence of international media headquarters (radio, TV and press offices) also attest to metropolitan character of a city (Lendzion 2004).

P. Soldatos (cited by: B. Jałowicki 1999) distinguishes as many as 10 hallmarks of a full-fledged metropolis of global significance (P. Soldatos, cited by Jałowicki 2000). Such a metropolis:

- absorbs foreign factors of production, investments, workforce, services and supplies,
- hosts foreign firms, seats and branches of international companies, banks, NGOs, institutions of science and education (schools), universities with a considerable proportion of foreign students, diplomatic outposts,
- exports factors of production, companies, banks and other socio-economic, cultural and scientific institutions,
- is directly connected with foreign countries by transportation links owing that to well-developed freeway system, rapid railroad and international air transportation,
- has well-developed "info structure" evidenced by communication with foreign countries by mail and telecommunication services; generates and absorbs sizeable touristic traffic,
- possesses developed service sector focused on foreign customers, congress and exhibition centers, luxury hotels, international schools, high-quality office space, international law offices and scientific institutions,
- hosts mass media institutions of international range (newspapers, magazines, radio, television),
- regularly organizes various international meetings: congresses, exhibitions, festivals, sport and art events visited by foreign drama groups,
- has internationally-recognized institutions operating on a national and regional level and dealing with foreign affairs e.g. associations, sport teams etc.,
- conducts para-diplomatic activities in foreign cities by means of own representatives (urban or private public institutions); this activity is manifested by the participation in international organizations such as twin cities, sister cities etc.)

Stronger cooperation with other metropolises than with municipalities located in the suburban area is a key characteristic of a metropolis (Jałowicki 1999, Jałowicki 2005, Markowski and Marszał 2006). Total population, human services and spatial range of influence are among the criteria for a city to be recognized as a metropolis (Zborowski 2005). This city must also possess sizeable economic and innovative potential (evidenced by the presence of scientific and research institutions) and strong development of human services of at least national range.

Metropolises should play a vital role in the transportation network, develop contacts between organizations, facilitate information flows and stimulate network model of development in the field of urban economy and management. Moreover, the aforementioned criteria include the existence of extensive and highly-urbanized suburban zone and specificity or uniqueness of local history and culture as well as certain lifestyle patterns (Markowski and Marszał 2006). Markowski and Marszał (2006) classify metropolises by metropolitan functions and spatial range of influence to: global, international (continental) and national (regional).

In turn, Parysek (2003) using slightly different approach classifies cities into four types by the development of their functions:

1. world cities (global cities),
2. continental cities (world cities),
3. sub-continental cities (international cities),
4. national cities.

In addition, there is also a view that metropolises are only these cities which perform significant functions on an international scale and, simultaneously, they have well-developed functions on a national scale (Jałowicki 1999, Korcelli-Olejniczak 2004).

2.2 Metropolitan area

The notion of metropolitan area was first used in the United States in 1910. At the time, this term denoted an urban center of total population no fewer than 50,000 along with adjoining suburban areas and smaller settlement units (Szymańska 2009) and was used only for statistical purposes in relation to administrative division. Markowski and Marszał (2006) define metropolitan area as large urban mono- or polycentric settlement system embracing a zone of considerable and direct daily influence, which consist of multiple settlement units and urbanized area.

Czyż (2009) identifies metropolitan area with territorial arrangement of settlement that demonstrates clear-cut system characteristics. These characteristics include:

- socio-economic relationships within internal system of metropolitan area,
- full-fledged sub-system of daily links between residential areas and work etc.,
- limited range of exogenous bonds within the urban network system,
- development of external connections (Czyż 2009).

Metropolitan area comprises central city (metropolitan center) and metropolis along with functionally and spatially integrated settlement units. Dissemination of social and economic phenomena takes place within the entire metropolitan area (Czyż 2009). According to ESPON publications metropolitan area consists of its center - urban agglomeration - and surroundings from which urban residents commute to the city center (Lendzion 2004). Thereupon, transportation network within metropolitan area should be very well-developed (Markowski and Marszał 2006).

Contrary to the terms: agglomeration, urban complex and urbanized area, metropolitan area is perceived qualitatively. It is a functional unit formed by large, compound and functionally coherent urban complex characterized by metropolitan functions and a number of functional links (Markowski and Marszał 2006). Therefore, demarcation measures do not draw from physical characteristics, but they are based upon social and economic indicators (Marszał 2005).

Zborowski (2005) points out to the separate term of metropolitan region often erroneously identified with metropolitan area. The former denotes the space metropolitan area exerts impact upon. This space often encompasses sizeable parts of the country and sometimes exceeds national borders. The latter, though, can be compared with functional urban region as delineated by daily travels to work in the city center (Lendzion 2004).

The topic of metropolitan areas is always associated with an issue of their demarcation. Similarly to the classification criteria applied to metropolises, there are also numerous criteria utilized to delineate boundaries of metropolitan areas. Markowski and Marszał (2006) contend that functional criteria are paramount in any demarcation attempts. In addition, they suggest using demographic, economic, technical, social criteria as well as these connected with management, spatial coherence along with these utilized in demarcation of so-called daily urban system.

2.3 Metropolization

Metropolises are being formed during metropolization - one of the most prominent processes of 19th and 20th centuries. This process transforms urban space inducing changes in the relation between central city and its outskirts by *abating or breaking economic relations and simultaneously replacing them by relations with other metropolises on a continental or global*

scale (Jałowiecki 1999). According to Markowski and Marszał (2006) metropolization of urban space is a process connected with formation of new spatial structure, which helps large cities become the centers of economic development and acquire advantage over other areas.

Large cities concentrate world economic, financial and scientific potential. Apart from that, they take over superior functions in international economy management and dominate in terms innovativeness and quality of services. Lenzion (2004) describes metropolization as a process based upon accelerated development of cities and subsequent formation of more or less complex urban system around them. Metropolization is characterized by transition from quantitative to qualitative indicators of urbanization. This is, among other things, connected with the development of knowledge-based economy. Jałowiecki (1999) views metropolization as a process of taking over managerial and executive functions by large cities within economic and political international environment. This process is accompanied by far-reaching transformations of social, spatial and functional urban structure (Parysek 2003, Jałowiecki 2000).

Presently, multifunctional city centers are turning into uniform office space, business districts are being located in the peripheries, usually in the vicinity of airports, and shopping centers are being found further from the city core and closer to the main arteries. The profile of shopping centers is also under considerable changes - aside from shopping, they offer a range of "mass culture" services such as cinemas, bowling alleys, restaurants etc.

As a result of rising sense of danger, "gated communities" equipped with video surveillance are being erected in the peripheral parts of many cities. Furthermore, a strong demand on ludic spaces is observable in the society, which is evidenced by burgeoning buildings of mass culture and entertainment like cinemas, theaters, restaurants etc. (Smętkowski et al. 2008).

The process of metropolization entails numerous positive and negative consequences. One adverse effect include spatial polarization as the role of central city increases at the expense of its outskirts (Smętkowski i in. 2008). For this reason, large cities somehow detach from the rest of the country and develop faster than non-metropolitan areas. Consequently, a continuous growth of socio-economic inequalities causes marginalization of more distant regional hinterlands (Lenzion 2004; Jałowiecki 2005).

Smaller cities and towns find it very hard to compete with large metropolises. As large cities cooperate with one another more closely and more effectively, their relations with own hinterlands turns into decline (Marszał 2005). Hence, a role of social and economic "neighbor" is taken by other, more distant metropolis instead of surrounding area - this leads to "spacial discontinuity" (Jałowiecki 1999).

As a result, territorial differences in most countries continue to spread since metropolises concentrate sectors of rapid economic growth and develop faster than peripheral areas. These areas start to resemble a reservoir of poorly-qualified workforce or a place of residence and entertainment for affluent urban dwellers (Smętkowski et al. 2008).

Another issue concerns polarization within metropolitan center, where job market changes radically in effect of metropolization. Local job market is under intense segmentation as highly-qualified, high-earner workforce of young professionals, managers and culture- and media makers form so-called "metropolitan class" (Jałowiecki 2005) alongside a number of the unemployed living in the same area.

Metropolises are not inhabited by poor citizens, however in comparison to rich "metropolitan class" there is a colossal gap between "affluent" and "very affluent" frictions of population (Smętkowski et al. 2008).

2.4. Metropolitan functions

Metropolitan functions can be defined as exogenous functions of at least interregional importance and range (Markowski and Marszał 2006). The formation and development of metropolitan functions occurs along with acquiring by a city "critical mass" in demographic, economic, political, administrative and cultural domains (Maik 2003; Zborowski 2005). In consequence of some threshold level of socio-economic development numerous urban functions start to accumulate and interact with one another which results in formation of human services - metropolitan functions. Markowski and Marszał (2006) include the following highest-rank human services to metropolitan functions: political, religious, administrative, cultural, scientific, educational, touristic, economic, financial, communication and information. Spatial range and scope of these functions remain off the essence as the main role play these functions of decision-making character on an international scale. Czyż (2009) defines metropolitan functions as socio-economic functions of the entire metropolitan area (not only central city) exerting influence internationally, nationally and regionally. Metropolitan (big-city) functions determine the specificity and uniqueness of a city as compared to the whole settlement system (Szkurlat 2003).

Maik (2003) distinguishes three aspects of metropolitan functions. First include prevailing functions formed thanks to the absence of rival city in the vicinity and, inter alia, rapid economic development. Second aspect refers to control functions in economic, political, social, cultural and technical domains. Third encompasses functions that form international character of interrelations between cities. According to Parysek (2003) metropolitan functions are generated by clustering in a metropolitan center managerial and executive head offices of international economic corporations as well as financial (banks, stock exchanges), scientific (universities, scientific institutes), technological (technological parks) and cultural (museums, operas, theatres) institutions. Furthermore, metropolitan functions are shaped by introductions of fast and frequent transportation links (railroad and air transportation) with major economic centers in a continent or in the world. Nowak (2010) in his publication entitled *Polityka przestrzenna w polskich obszarach metropolitalnych (Spatial policy in the Polish metropolitan areas)* distinguishes five the most important metropolitan functions. Within Polish metropolitan areas these functions include: economic, transportation, touristic, cultural and scientific.

3 Metropolises and metropolitan areas in the world

World-first research on metropolises and metropolitan areas was conducted in the United States in the mid-20th century. Presently, three major metropolitan administrative units operate in this country: Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA - federally designated geographical unit consisting of an urbanized area with a central city of at least 50,000 residents and a regional population of 100,000), Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA - a central city of at least 50,000 residents along with surrounding counties of substantial commuting interchange), and Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA that consists of one or more counties that have substantial commuting interchange).

In Canada, a separate governmental unit of Montreal Metropolitan Community deals with spatial planning, economic development and public transportation in most of the Greater Montreal area. Equivalent body operates in Stuttgart, Germany - Verband Region Stuttgart, which governs waste management system and touristic development. Present in the city since 1990 - Great London Authority - manages, among other things, transportation, spatial planning, public security, culture and health (Nowak 2010). Apart from aforementioned examples, a selection of rankings and classification of metropolises and metropolitan areas exists in the literature.

After reviewing the literature Inicki (2003) reports that the authors distinguish as many as 80 world cities. The most

frequently-cited include London, Paris, Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Hong Kong, Sydney and Amsterdam. London, Tokyo and New York can be found in almost all classifications, thus these are accepted as global cities (Sassen 1991; cited by Parysek 2003).

The research carried out by Beaverstock et.al. in 1999 identifies metropolises by four types of activities: accounting firms, advertising agencies, financial and banking institutions and legal offices (Beaverstock et.al. 1999; cited by Ilnicki 2003). Using the above criteria as many as 55 cities are referred as world cities. Ten of them are identified as alpha (London, Paris, New York, Tokyo, Chicago, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Milan, Singapore), another ten beta (San Francisco, Sydney, Toronto, Zurich, Brussels, Madrid, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Moscow, Seoul) and 35 gamma with Warsaw included in the last group.

According to the ranking published in 1999, the following European metropolises: London, Paris, Frankfurt and Milan are placed at the top and classified as alpha. Beta metropolises include Zurich, Brussels, Madrid and Moscow, and gamma metropolises embrace Warsaw after such metropolises as Amsterdam, Düsseldorf, Geneva, Prague, Rome and Stockholm. The Polish capital is classified higher than Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Munich (J.V Beaverstock et. al 1999; cited by: Smętkowski et. al. 2008).

4 Metropolises and metropolitan areas in Poland – legal foundations

First delimitation of metropolitan areas and metropolises in Poland dates back to 1968 Central Statistical Office (GUS) identification of 17 cities-metropolises (Ilnicki 2003). In the publication entitled *Miasta polskie jako potencjalne metropolie o znaczeniu kontynentalnym (Polish cities as potential metropolises of continental significance, 2003)* Ilnicki distinguished Warsaw as world metropolis and Poznań, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Cracow as potential metropolises of continental significance. Markowski and Marszał (2006) identified a few groups of metropolises in Poland by the development of metropolitan functions criterion. Warsaw took top position in this ranking placed in A group as the only city of best-developed metropolitan functions. Cracow and Tri-city (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot) were included into B, and Wrocław along with Poznań to C group. Group D consisted of Łódź and group E of Silesia conurbation. Szczecin and Lublin (F group) along with Białystok, Rzeszów, Toruń and Bydgoszcz (G group) were all classified as potential metropolises.

In 2008, Smętkowski et al. attempted to identify Polish metropolises based on demographic criterion and metropolitan characteristics describing control and managerial functions, academic and cultural potential, external market attractiveness, and transportation accessibility. As a result of this analysis, Warsaw, Silesian conurbation, Cracow, Poznań, Tri-city, Wrocław and Łódź were classified as metropolises. The remaining large cities were divided into regional (type A and B), sub-regional and supra-local centers.

Currently, the notions of agglomeration, metropolis and metropolitan area are not present in the Polish legal system. However, there is an option to legally appoint municipal associations. This obligation is entrusted to municipal council which can enact cooperation resolution on a local level and allocate appropriate financial resources to achieve this goal (*An Act of March 8, 1990 on municipal government; Dz.U.2001.142.1591; article 18, paragraph 2, subparagraph 12*). In order to perform public obligations, municipalities can found associations (*article 64 paragraph 1*) and covenants between one another (*chapter 7*). Importantly, the main benefits of municipal associations include: joint fundraising and mutual aid in performing public obligations (transportation, communication, waste management etc.).

In 1990 the Polish Metropolises Union was founded, which consists of 12 member cities presently (Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Wrocław and Warsaw). Naturally, the sole participation in this union does not settle the matter of metropolitan character of a city.

In the Act of 23 March 2003 on spatial planning and development (*Ustawa z 23 marca 2003 r. o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym*) metropolitan area is defined as an area of large city and functionally related adjacent area as determined in National Spatial Development Concept (article 2, subparagraph 9). The same legislation notifies that metropolitan areas are to be outlined in provincial spatial development plans (article 39, paragraph 3, and subparagraph 4). Provincial authorities are obligated to include spatial development plans for metropolitan areas as a section of provincial spatial development plans (article 39, paragraph 6.).

National Spatial Development Concept is a main document describing strategy of national development. This document distinguishes metropolitan areas as a part of national settlement system alongside such elements as requirements concerning environmental and national monument protection, distribution of social infrastructure etc. First such concept was prepared in 1994 (before the reforms administrative division). In 2005 a new document - Actualized National Development Concept - was enacted by the Polish Cabinet on September 6th 2005.

In this document metropolitan area was defined as *an area of high quality of services, institutions and material resources; high innovative potential in technical, economic, social, political and cultural terms; high competitiveness of production and advanced specialty of services (including science and research, culture) on a national and international scales; strong internal relations evidenced by economic, social and institutional cooperation; intense connections with other national and foreign metropolises due to good transportation links; uniqueness and specificity of place as well as its attractiveness not only on a national, but also international level.*

Metropolitan area includes a core city and adjacent, spatially compact area comprising municipalities of high level and pace of development. Hinterlands of metropolitan area form a zone of intensified economic and social activity with municipalities of high level and dynamics of development. In the aforementioned document structural criteria are utilized in order to distinguish metropolitan areas. In the spirit of *Concept...*, the total population residing in a core city should not be lower than 300,000, and this limit in case of the city along with the entire metropolitan area equals 500,000.

As many as 10 core cities (Warsaw, Łódź, Cracow, Wrocław, Poznań, Gdańsk, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Lublin and Katowice), 9 metropolitan areas (warszawski, wrocławski, krakowski, łódzki, poznański, śląski, bydgosko-toruński, szczeciński, trójmiejski) and three potential metropolitan areas (Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów) are distinguished using the above criterion. Regrettably, National Development Concept of 2005 did not sufficiently utilized integrated approach to the policy of development; hence this document was withdrawn from the lower chamber of the Polish parliament in 2006.

The most recent National Concept of Spatial Development 2030 distinguishes metropolises and metropolitan areas drawing on the experiences of other countries and analyses made by ESPON. The new criteria applied to qualify a city to metropolises include its role in economic management on at least national scale, high economic potential, multitude and diversity of human services, symbolic functions, high external touristic attractiveness, high educational opportunities and innovative capacity, ability to maintain trade, scientific, educational, and cultural relations with international metropolises and high internal and external transportation accessibility.

Ten metropolitan centers were identified based on the metropolitan functions in the national settlement system: Warsaw, Silesia conurbation, Cracow, Łódź, Tri-city, Poznań, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz-Toruń duopolis, Szczecin and Lublin (Fig. 1). The criteria included total population, employment in non-public service sector, the number of university and college students, cooperation with scientific and research institutions, airport location, the number of 4- and 5-star hotels, the number of international exhibitions.

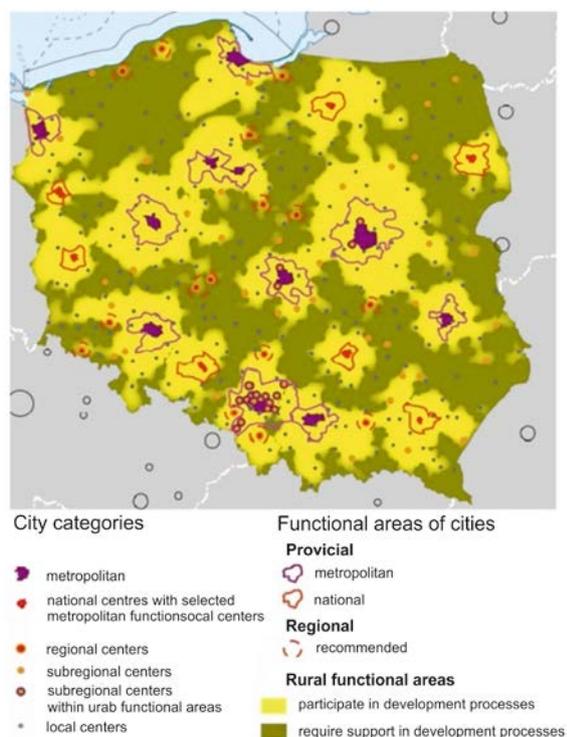


Figure 1. Metropolitan and functional areas of cities
Source: *Koncepcja Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju 2030*

Pursuant to National Development Concept 2030 all provincial seats are obligated to demarcate urban functional areas as well as to prepare strategies and development plans for the whole functional urban area. Furthermore, Ministry of Regional Development along with the municipalities and government departments must prepare a full list of basic criteria of the above-mentioned demarcation. Threshold criteria are to objectively underpin spatial policy conducted on a regional scale including national urban policy with regard to metropolises and provincial seats. In 2012, Ministry of Administration and Digitization of Poland released information about public consultations concerning metropolitan areas. A dedicated document - the Green Book - summarizes metropolitan experiences to date with regard to European experiences. The main goal of these consultations is to organize and systematize the current knowledge about the reforms and conduct a debate on the urgent issues and dilemmas. On this account, the government intends to prepare the White Book - a document with concrete proposals of legal solutions. The main topics of discussion include:

- significance of metropolitan areas
- public obligations regarding the whole metropolitan areas
- organization structure and political system of metropolitan areas
- relations of metropolitan areas with other administrative units
- financing of metropolitan areas,
- demarcation of metropolitan areas.

The most active discussants in the debate are municipal bodies of Silesia and Zagłębie, which by the metropolitan act would like to sort out several issues connected with e.g. urban transportation in the area where only road signs divides one city

from another. The latest information about the progress in the works on the act on metropolitan areas regards the results public consultations and debates in 2012. The following actions taken by the Ministry of Administration and Digitization are not fully specified.

5 Conclusions

The issues of metropolises and metropolitan areas remain one of the major Polish challenges in long-term national development policy. They are being discussed by scientists, municipal officials and ordinary people.

The decision on cooperation between cities still has not been made, nor did the ongoing debate bring the expected results. All documents prepared to date have been challenged by the local municipal officials and regional representatives.

The works on the new legislation consist of constant consultations and opinions about different solutions with sharp exchanges between discussion participants. It is difficult to predict the final outcome of these debates. Some cities take various initiatives on their own account and attempt to delineate the boundaries of metropolitan areas, yet with a lack of legislative power these areas have no more importance than contractual urban units. These units are often included into provincial spatial development plans (Korecki 2004).

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