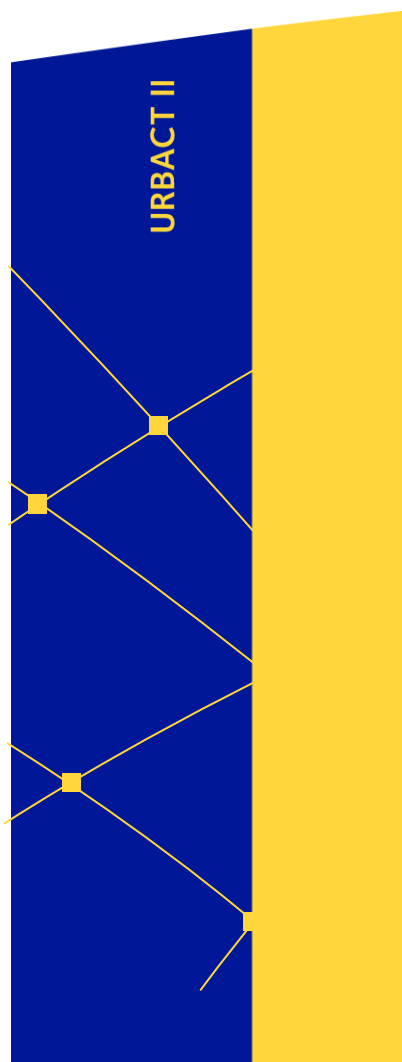




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# Country URBACT National Dissemination Point Bi-Annual Report



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## 20 years of self- government in Poland

By Joanna Proniewicz, Association of Polish Cities

In 2010 we are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of setting by the Parliament the law on self-government (March 8<sup>th</sup> 1990). This is also the **anniversary of the first, free local elections after World War II** (May 27<sup>th</sup> 1990) and restitution of self-governments after 51 years of “central planning”.

On this occasion six self-government corporations (Association of Polish Cities, Association of Polish Counties, Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland, Union of the Voivodeships of the Republic of Poland, Union of Polish Small Cities and Union of Polish Metropolises) have organized the Congress of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Self-Government in Poland in March 2010 in Poznań. This event gathered over 1200 mayors from cities and towns, heads of counties and presidents of the regions.

Today all politicians, historians, lawyers and economists unanimously agree – the reform, which has been begun 20 years ago, is a success. It has also had a crucial influence over the shape of democracy in our country. The most important element of the reform was handing key competencies and significant finances over to the real local hosts. It gave a major qualitative change into a life of local communities and into public administration’ functions. The country has gained much more effective system of management, and citizens have more trust to public authorities.

The goal of the self-government reform at the beginning of the '90 was dissolving the communist National Councils, establishing instead the new base of self-government: **municipalities as the communities of citizens**. They were given a legislative protection in the form of self-government law. They have electoral law, own the municipal real estates, have their

own budgets, decide in major issues concerning the citizens. Creation of the municipalities was the first step of the administrative reform in Poland. Next ones were establishing self-governmental counties and regions in 1999.

Today, Polish self-government is **the strongest in central Europe**. Together they create over 12% of Gross Domestic Product, manage ca. million hectares of the communal real estates, which were before owned by the state. According to OECD, nowadays self-government account for 32% of public expenditures in Poland, including schools, roads, hospitals. The sum of self-government budgets is lower than the state’s budget, yet significant in the public expenditures’ balance. In 2009 the incomes of the self-governments were at the level of 155 bln PLN, while expenditures – 167 bln PLN. In the last years self-governments became a serious investor. Last year municipalities, counties and regions have invested 42 bln PLN, building - among others - roads, water and sewage systems. To accelerate the county’s development, they implement numerous projects co-financed by the European Union (billions of euro have already got to Polish self-governments).

The cities’ budgets are strongly hit by the effects of global crisis. It has also been so due to the **urban sprawl**, which becomes serious problem in big cities. The leaving are the most educated, young and wealthy people. And in the situation where ca. 35% of Personal Income Tax comes back to cities, this share is very important. More and more cities have started campaigns to pay taxes locally, targeting their real citizens. In the same time, big cities implement projects to attract young and creative people to live and invest.

In the times of financial downturn self-governments need to find optional sources of funding. One of them, strongly investigated nowadays, is the **public-private partnership**. May it be on the basis of the civil law as the bilateral agreement or on the basis of the special bill on the PPP, the goal is always the same:

implementation of public services using the sources of private funding. It allows both sides to benefit – cities serve the citizens, private investors have a reliable source of revenue in the long-term perspective.

## Culture as the factor for cities' development

*Summary from the article by Joanna Proniewicz, speaker of the Association of Polish Cities*

Culture has recently become a significant factor, deciding on the success. Success of the brands, while cities more and more focus on their brands nowadays, including culture into their offer. Brand means products, service, symbols and identity, which should guarantee quality and shine among others.

### With Chopin in the background

Chopin is a world-recognized brand, used by the local authorities to engage citizens in joint actions. Poland, as the homeland of this composer, has many traces of his life. In 2010, the jubilee Year of Chopin, this factor is particularly important in local and regional activities.

Many cities build their identity on culture. Its role in cities' development is well visible in figures. In 2008, in 110 bln PLN spent altogether in communes, 4.04 bln were spent on culture. Within the capital expenditures of the communes, 23% were spent on culture. Also, handing the cultural institutions over to self-governments has helped them survive and in most of the cases they are developing. Not only none of them was closed, but the number of theatres has doubled.

### Culture as the factor of development

Measures from the Self-Government Analyses System, for over 10 years run by the Association of Polish Cities, clearly show the slight, but stable rise in the expenditures for culture and conditions of the culture development in cities.

Cultural strategies should not only regulate, but also stimulate. Cultural policy shall link public, private and civic activities and support local groups, projects and innovations. It is also an important factor of social inclusion. Many cities succeeded in implementing these directives and culture is their development priority.

Some are strongly building their cultural brand, competing for the honor of **European Capital of Culture 2016**. This is an additional incentive for local authorities to use cities' potential .

### Cieszyn – a success story

Local brand of the city of Cieszyn is built around Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise. Thanks to the activities implementing new quality to the Castle (among others: new technologies), new 194 jobs were created. The city is also more recognizable in the field of designing (jacket designed for the Japan market, big exhibition on the theme of the design in public spaces in Łódź). *“In 2000 we just believed that we can do it. – says the castle Director – It turned out that if you can dream about something, you are also able to do it.”*

More:

- The Year of Chopin - [Chopin2010.pl](http://Chopin2010.pl)
- II Self-government Forum of Culture in Sochaczew – report – [website of the Association of Polish Cities](#)
- [Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise](#) in Cieszyn
- Polish candidate cities for the European Capital of Culture 2016:

[Lublin](#)

[Łódź](#)

[Toruń](#)

[Gdańsk](#)

[Poznań](#)

[Szczecin](#)

[Warszawa](#)

[Wrocław](#)

# Women's Local Forum

Summary from the article by Ewa Parchimowicz, Chief editor of "Municipal Self-Government" magazine

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Hope and expectations of bigger share of women in self-governments and a real influence of women in public life in Poland – these were expressed during Women's Local Forum.

The representation of women in local and regional governments is too small. Only 9% Polish mayors are women. For 2500 communities altogether it is less than 200 persons. In local councils women are only 21%. In 1995 this share was 13%, so there is a positive trend, changes however are very slow.

*"Still in Poland there are communities where there is no woman in the council" - says Jolanta Piotrowska, mayor of Giżycko – "We live within the stereotypes, that women are good at cleaning, cooking, housekeeping, but not at managing cities."*

## Woman - the builder

Women mayors not only build hard infrastructure, but also they think of soft initiatives dedicated for women. In Pilawa, its mayor, Albina Łubian, for years has been helping women excluded from the job market, in the hard life situation. Interventions include new qualifications and abilities and successful return to the job market for most of the participants.

Mayor of Oborniki, Anna Rydzewska, is proud of her city, which had managed to overcome financial crisis. She had lead many infrastructural projects. *"I think this is the task for women. For the sum of 1 mln PLN we have adapted and renovated the building for new kindergarten for*

*125 children. It allowed their mothers to go back to work."*

## The charter for equality of women and men in local life

This charter demands activities on local and regional level, that promote gender-based equality and implement the principles of the charter in its constituency. These include the balanced participation of women and men in the decision making process, the assertion that a gender perspective will be taken into account in all activities of local and regional government, and the drawing up of action plans adequately funded to reach the objectives laid down in the charter.

Mayor of Nysa – *"Equality does not mean feminism. We should allow both women and men to benefit from the local budgets. If I build the football field for men mainly, I always wonder, what kind of facility for women might be built for the same sum on money."*

## The position on women's participation in the local elections

Participants of the forum enhanced women from villages, towns and cities to offer their experience and knowledge to the local communities and take active part in the local elections.

*"We, women, constitute 50% of the society. We should therefore co-decide about the development of our local environments."*

More:

- [Full version of the position of Women's Local Forum](#) – website of the Association of Polish Cities

# Urban sprawl – shrinking cities – how to deal with population loss?

Polish cities are shrinking in terms of population. They have been undergoing this process during the last few years. According to the report of the Central Statistical Office, cities in our country have lost over half a million of inhabitants during the last 7 years. This is the high time when cities authorities make some concrete and integrated actions to prevent further sprawl.

### **Middle-sized cities**

Cities, that have not used the chance for fast development in the past years are today facing the process of depopulation. The young, well educated people are leaving to other, mostly bigger cities, to find a place for better life and job. With their leave, the local demand decreases, which does not help to overcome the crisis.

### **Big cities**

The process of urban sprawl in big cities is even more visible. They lose inhabitants each hour in favor of surrounding communities. The statistical research, led by the Association of Polish Cities within the [System of Self-Government Analyses](#), shows, that there is a clear link between cities losing inhabitants and the suburban communities, gaining them. Mostly leaving are young, well educated people with families. They still work in the city, use its educational, cultural, entertainment, service and other facilities, while living closer to the nature. They spend a lot of time in cars, commuting to work and back home, which contributes to high traffic in cities.

### **Citizen-friendly cities**

The only way to stop this trend is to make cities good places to work and live in. This means high quality public space, integrated and accessible public transportation system, cities open for people, not for cars. It also means creative and developing city, with job opportunities and sustainable plans for future.

More and more Polish cities look at the examples of western countries, where this kind of development has been practiced for years already. They also take part in international projects, exchanging experience.

What seems to be even more important, there is a visible rise of awareness among citizens, regarding the issues of sustainability, ecology and “greening” cities. Cities of [Kraków](#) and [Gdańsk](#) have signed [the Charter of Brussels](#), which leads to the bike-friendly city environment.

Cities’ authorities try to stop or reduce the suburbanization process. Also, they cooperate with surrounding communities in development of suburban public transportation systems. Still however, the process needs time and changes in priorities.

More:

- [Analysis on the demographic processes in the member cities of the Association of Polish Cities – Paweł Krawczyk](#) (PL)
- [Residential Market and Urban Planning in Transition. Case Study of Poznań – Adam Radzimski](#) (EN)

## **Conclusions from the conference „Integrated management in agglomerations” Kielce-Częstochowa, May 18-19 2010**

*Summary from the report written by Anna Nadolna, URBACT NDP Poland*

Partners of the URBACT National Dissemination Point in Poland and the cities of Kielce and Częstochowa have run the 2-days conference

dedicated to integrated management in agglomerations. Despite the dramatic flood

situation in the southern part of Poland, the meeting gathered 88 participants.

### **Integration, partnership and trust**

„There are 2 key elements in the management of agglomeration: integration and partnership. The first is a technology of management, while the second is strictly connected with the will of the partners” says Andrzej Porawski, Director of the Association of Polish Cities. “Poland still lacks the urban policy, neither we have the official tools of integrated cooperation. Instead of integrated, we still have the sectoral policies. However, we have good examples of regional Operational Programs, where some aspects of integration are well visible. Urban sprawl does not help cities – leaving are the young, well educated people, who pay highest taxes. This shows, that agglomeration areas present the main development potential of the country.”

Despite of the lack of good tools for public-private partnership “Polish examples show that local governments pretty well operate with private sector – we have a lot of successful cooperation agreements helping local governments fulfill their tasks.”

### **GIS**

A lot of attention was given to the Geographical Information Systems. They are implemented as a tool of managing different issues at the local, subregional and regional level. Still, this process needs legislative and financial support. The success in this field may be one of the measures for the efficient and citizen-friendly administration.

### **CityRegion.Net**

City of Kielce and the city of Częstochowa, which have been partners of CityRegion.Net project, have both presented main prerequisites of their Local Action Plans.

In Kielce it is based on the leading role of Kielce with a agglomeration cooperating and using the potential of the whole region. Development of GIS is one of the main technical tools this cooperation is built on. But the basic prerequisite

for the whole project has been the trust, for years built systematically among all partners.

Częstochowa has focused on the issues of revitalization and land use – integration of the local plans and referring to the whole subregion so that the potential of the agglomeration is used best to achieve the goals.

### **Transborder cooperation**

Poland and Germany have the example of successful cooperation over frontiers – Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder). Two cities, divided after the WW II, have been always linked. Long before joining EU and open Shengen borders, they developed joint spatial plan. Today, they have finalized their cooperation on the URBACT Thematic Network - *EGTC*, which had helped to implement tools of managing joint actions. Słubice and Frankfurt want more - cities are in the process of establishing -the first in Poland - European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, enabling them further common development with stable structures.

### **Integrated Nikiszowiec in NODUS**

City of Katowice has presented the experience in implementing the URBACT Working Group – *NODUS*. During the project Katowice had used tools of choosing the area for revitalization. Using the integrated, re-usable method the authorities prepared the “Integrated Revitalization Plan for Nikiszowiec”. The process involved, among others, the young and famous Silesian architect, Tomasz Konior.

Area of Nikiszowiec, with a historical background, was built in 1912 as a private housing estate owned by the coal mine, for its workers. Its inhabitants have always been strongly connected to the mine, which has been organizing their whole life. Nowadays, during restructuring of industry, there is a need of social revitalization of this place. It took local authorities some time to convince local people that the future of Nikiszowiec is in their hands and to get them involved into local initiatives. The process also involved local press, who has supported the idea.

Today, the citizenship of Nikiszowiec is in revival. Local people see the potential, they slowly use it, create their neighborhood and take care for it. Social integration is better, local initiatives are supported by the city. Each year, a *Nikisz Festival* takes place before Christmas.

In September the city's authorities are opening the *Museum of History of Katowice* in the former building of laundry in Nikiszowiec.

#### **EVUE in Katowice**

Katowice has recently become a partner in a innovative URBACT project – EVUE – Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe. The use of electric cars and buses in cities is a must of future, which is not so far away in time. They reduce the air pollution and also do not produce noise, which becomes a new urban problem.

#### **Different issues, common problem**

During many years of communism people in Poland have lost the tradition of discussion and solving local problems together. Problems have

been solved “centrally” without involving local partners. Nowadays this approach is changing and the revival of civic society is more and more visible.

URBACT II Programme, compelling the Local Support Groups being involved in the whole project, is following the same direction, in a way helping to restore the dialog on local issues, despite the low level **of civic society in Poland**. This approach is crucial regarding the management and development in agglomerations. Nothing can be done in an integrated and sustainable way without the joint engagement of all local partners.

#### **More:**

Full version of the [report from the conference](#)

CityRegion.Net – [official website](#)

Kielce Metropolitan Area – [official website](#)

[Częstochowa in CityRegion.Net](#)

EGTC – [official website](#)

NODUS - [official website](#)

[Nikiszowiec – magic place](#)

EVUE – [official website](#)

## **First Urban Regeneration Congress in Kraków, 14-16 June 2010**

*By Andrzej Porawski, Director of the Association of Polish Cities*

The Association of Polish Cities was co-organizing the Congress, hosted by the Institute of Urban Development in Kraków – one of the partners in URBACT National Dissemination Point Poland.

The APC was hosting the first day of the session. After the introduction based on a research led by the Institute, the representatives of cities presented the most interesting cases of urban regeneration, implemented in cities after the year 1990.

There were 15 case studies, which gave the participants broad view on the scale and problems in the regeneration interventions. The cases included regeneration of historical city centers (Głogów, Kostrzyn, Bielsko-Biała, Poznań,

Szczecin, Bolesławiec, Sopot), regeneration of waterfront historical buildings (Bydgoszcz), post industrial areas (Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Zgierz), areas left by the Soviet military forces (Legnica – part of the city, Borne Sulinowo – whole city – today 5.000 inhabitants, 2.000 jobs, service, schools, etc.), social participation in the process of regeneration (Starogard Gdański, Gdańsk) and regeneration of historical buildings for cultural functions (Warszawa).

There were also some case studies, shown in a broader, regional context: Region of Łódź (problems of regeneration of cities in the region), Mazovia region (experience in urban regeneration within the URBACT project [NODUS](#)),

region of Kujawy and Pomorze (regional system of urban regeneration support) and Silesian region (regeneration of post-industrial areas).

Second day of the event aimed at the discussion on research in the field of regeneration vs. local economy, environment protection and social policy. Third day of the Congress (with the participation of the vice minister of infrastructure, Mr. Olgierd Dziekoński) focused on legal and financial aspects of the process of urban regeneration.

This Congress gathered almost 300 persons – half of them represented local and regional authorities and over 100 persons represented the

research sector. Foreign experts have also taken part in this meeting.

Apart from the great importance on the exchange of experience and knowledge on urban regeneration – the effect of the Congress includes the concrete recommendations of the expected legislative changes.

More:

- [The summary of the Congress by the Chairman of Congress, prof. Zygmunt Ziobrowski, Institute of Urban Development](#) (PL)
- [Website of the Congress](#) (EN)
- [Institute of Urban Development](#)

## Seminar „Youth participation in the process of cities’ development”

*By Anna Nadolna, International Cooperation, Association of Polish Cities*

On February 18<sup>th</sup> the first seminar organized by the URBACT National Dissemination Point Poland took place in Warsaw. Young people, engaged in different kind of local activities – formally (within the Youth City Councils) or informally (through NGO’s) as well as mayors and experts took part in this event.

### Space for the young

Creation of the sustainable public space for the young people, allowing them to develop in their own neighborhood, was one of the conclusions of this meeting. Basing on local patriotism and opportunities and also giving them a proof of their own influence on local issues, youth will not be willing to leave. Young local leaders will constitute local authorities in the future if well enhanced.

### Important opinion

Some cities have already started to take the youth opinion into consideration when planning the future. One of the examples is the city of Wodzisław Śląski – this city consults some city

projects using modern measures – internet with social networks.

In agglomerations the need of cooperation with the young is clearly visible. They use the educational facilities of the big city, while living mostly at home in the suburbs. Good management of the public transport system allows them to combine big city with their own local homeland. It creates one of the fields of social consultations – public transport schedules shall also “think” of the young commuting to schools.

The town of Puszczykowo has some good examples of engaging young people into the process of local development – through seminars and workshops they could see their real influence over the local life.

### For themselves by themselves

The seminar also hosted guests from the city of Malmö, Sweden. They presented the example of engaging “difficult” youth into the improvement of local facilities. Through finding local leaders within these groups, local authorities could have built good relations with them. Together they

have built a local activity center, where the youth may realize different activities and improve skills.

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More:

- [Full report from the seminar](#) – website of the URBACT National Dissemination Point Poland
- [Presentations from the seminar](#)
- Website of the city of [Wodzisław Śląski](#)
- Website of the town of [Puszczykowo](#)
- [URBACT I project “From exclusion to inclusion”](#)

[Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts](#)

## URBACT II

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 255 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

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