

CHANGES IN POLISH REGIONAL POLICY AFTER THE ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION. EUROPEAN DETERMINANTS - DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES

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The widening disparities in the level of development prompt an intensification of intervention measures taken under regional policy. A search for optimum goals and instruments of regional policy is especially important in the European Union. Just as the Fourth Cohesion Report was an occasion for an assessment of the efficiency of cohesion policy at the supranational level of the Communities, the implementation of the new cohesion policy in Poland in the programming perspective 2007-2013, the first full period in which the country is going to participate as a Union member, inclines one to make first comparisons and draw first conclusions. Poland is not only the biggest beneficiary of the European cohesion policy, but also one of the greatest "regional policy laboratories in the world" in which the process of building a new model of inter- and intra-regional policy has been going on since 1999.

The aim of the present paper is to make an assessment of changes that have taken place in Polish regional policy since Poland joined the European Union in terms of their European and domestic determinants. The analysis covers two programming periods: 2000-2006 and 2007-2013, and refers to two levels: European and national. The determinants considered at the European level are those resulting from the solutions adopted in the last two programming perspectives. At the national level, a synthetic assessment is made of their consequences in the form of changes in Polish inter-regional policy in the first period of its EU membership, especially with reference to the goals, budget, and ways of implementation adopted.