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POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR ROLE IN DETERMINING A TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF POLAND

Abstract:

A territorial division of a country constitutes the basis of a current organization of the communal life; hence its stability is a fundamental condition of an effective administration in a local, regional as well as statewide scale. Therefore, political parties that are involved in drafting the law as well as are entitled to accept or reject acts shall perform for the benefit of general public, but for particular reasons.

Key words:

territorial division, territorial structure, conception of division, political programs

Introduction

A territorial division of a country - its model is essential for public administration's operation and functioning of society itself as well as completion of tasks allocated to public subjects. Further to the above, it constitutes the fundament of the communal life. Subsequently, its stability is a fundamental condition of an effective administration in a local, regional as well as statewide scale. In addition, it creates conditions that enable to tie social bonds as well as to build cultural and territorial (local, regional) identification. Thus, drawing up a certain net of territorial system of a country should be compliant with superior goals, i.e. a common good, an effective operation of governmental institutions. But above all, political reasons should be excluded in this scope. Nowadays, it seems that political parties are becoming subjects that have a significant impact on the form of a country. It is currently common that propositions submitted by politicians pertaining to the territorial division are rather

motivated by the political rivalry and fighting for the further election than end-to-end solutions. Further to the above, a quality, professionalism and a reliability of the political discussion raise numerous objections. It was particularly visible during a preparation of a new territorial division in Poland in 1998 and 1999, when political parties were beating themselves in presenting the ideas to improve the above system. In consequence, contentiousness, lack of interest regarding the common good, unreliability were the main causes of the political competition instead of cooperation over the map of an administrative division of Poland.

Preparation for public administration reform - ideas

Since the early parliamentary elections on 19 September 1993 the political situation has changed; hence a slowdown of the reform of the public administration that lasted up until the suspension of working over the new administrative division. Moreover, the systemic solutions regarding the territorial dimension were being replaced by the temporary ones. Only after four years (in spring of 1997) the government created by the coalition of Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and Polish People's Party (PSL) prepared and accepted a program of a decentralization of Poland and an extension of local governments.

An option of a three-tier country, i.e. municipality – district – voivodeship, was focused on the solutions considered before 1993. A document concerning the above was entitled “Państwo sprawne, przyjazne, bezpieczne” (“The effective, friendly and safe country”) [URM lipiec 1996] and was submitted by the Government Representative for the Public Administration Reform, Michał Kulesza. The general conception of the above-mentioned model was to reduce a number of the voivodeships – from 49 to 12-17, to unify the voivodeship administration and to enter local governments at the level of the region and the district. According to this idea, legal and administrative functions of the local and regional authorities should be differentiated. The authorities of the municipality and the district would be responsible for implementing local tasks, whereas big voivodeships, so-called regions, would have local and governmental attributes and would therefore implement general tasks in terms of the regional policy¹. The district map concerning still existing infrastructural, economic and historical conditions was accepted. Especially, the system of local and ethnical societies was taken into account. Thus, the number of districts was reduced by 20-30 units [URM marzec 1996].

1 The first edition from 1993 anticipated 293 districts and 45 separated cities.

Finally, the municipality would be the basic unit of the administrative division and at the same time the fundamental unit of the local government. The main tasks covered by the municipality should directly concern the citizen's needs, either public utility tasks or those specifically administrative.

A two-tier model was an alternative option of the above project. According to this conception the basic benefit of its implementation would be its simplicity and only two administrative levels. The limited number of levels would empower municipality units with additional functions, whereas voivodeships would have regional and overcommunal competences. The main idea of this option was to preserve a net of voivodeships of that time or reduction into 25-30 units, which would be gradually conducted in 2 phases: a) creation of 8-12 regional units and about 111 subregional ones with the preservation of the municipality division; b) default creation of 25-23 regions of the competences of local authorities. A selection of the number of the voivodeships should eliminate the nexus between the municipality and the voivodeship and should depend on the most developed cities and big agglomerations [URM lipiec 1996: 38-39].

The project of the administrative reform anticipated existence of local governments in terms of voivodeship, a province governor – voivode, a governmental representative, who would have competences of an executive voivodeship government with the status of the governmental representative in this region. As far as this model is concerned the decentralization process would be conducted in a way of an extension of scope of the competences and eligibility of municipality units. In consequence, it would led to the categorization of those units into agglomerations, the biggest cities, medium cities, small cities and subdivisions – the most developed ones in order to provide services.

In addition to this system, units responsible for 'space managing' would also be introduced between voivodeship and municipality as well as voivodeship and a centre. Voluntary association of municipalities and union of voivodeships would be created in order to allocate the tasks to united units. Undoubtedly, this would be essential, but in consequence would develop into four- or five-tier model of administration.

A similar idea of the two-level administration was presented in a bill initiated by the Sejm deputies regarding voivodeship authority [URM marzec 1996: 38-39]. The Sejm deputies from PSL party who prepared the above document were advocating the introduction of two-tier solution, i.e. municipality and voivodeship, local and governmental (Art. 2). The project anticipated preservation of 49 voivodeships represented by a voivode (an official of the central administration) and a local assembly, which would be constituted by deputies elected in elections by direct suffrage (Art. 12 and 13).

That project assumed that taking into account the phase of administrative reforms and decentralization process of that time, the changes should be focused on the central state apparatus at the voivodeship level. The preservation of a current division into 49 voivodeship units was acceptable because of civilization conditions and implementing a strategy of social and economic development as well as evolution of land management in a mesoregional scale. Nevertheless, this project was rejected during the 11 Sejm session on 6 February 1998.

At the beginning the main reason for conducting the reform was to introduce the self-governance at the three levels; hence politicians, experts and members of local governments eventually rejected the project, which had been based on the two-tier administration. Furthermore, this conception was in the opposition with certain resolutions of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997. The further decentralization of Poland was determined by the Constitution, which set the future direction of the public administration reform that should be regarded by the creators. Therefore, the Constitution finally ended the conception of the administrative division into two categories. The document mentioned in the Article 164 the local government and included in this scope municipalities and optionally “other units of local government”² as well as regional government”. Taking into consideration lack of a definition of a region it was explained in bills regarding local government [Sejm RP - druk 24/1998]. In such way the legislator was determining the voivodeship government by setting the character of its tasks as regional unlike local ones. The introduction of the clause into the Constitution resulted in linking the scope of voivodeship government, a necessary scale of size and a potential of the voivodeship’s units of the administrative division. The last-mentioned should provide the units with “the capacity to performance of their duties” as in Art.15 (2). Such a systematic and jurisdictional assumption presumed that social, cultural and economic relations should be taken into account while creating new administrative division. Thus, it is essential to reduce the interference in the voivodeships’ borders of 90s. Therefore, some of the projects specifying new administrative division were based on the then net of voivodeships with indication to the membership of their headquarters (the biggest cities) in the new voivodeships³ [Sejm RP - druk 230/1998; Sejm RP - druk 254/1998]; or were taking into consideration the above [KPRM 1998]. For instance, one of the projects specifying the voivodeship’s borders was compliant with the criteria mentioned in the government-issued document, which constituted an appendix to the project. According to recommendations included in the above document, the form of voivodeships’ map should be compliant with the following factors:

2 The following acts regarding district government are referring to this regulation.

3 This regulation was essential to determine a district’s dependence to a voivodeship.

- a functionality;
- a collective security;
- a social, geographical and ecological consensus;
- a compliance with European as well as cultural and historical standards;
- the Polish reason of state.

An implementation of all these criteria at the level of a country would confirm the reasonableness of the division into 10-13 big voivodeships (regions). In the light of the experts' assessments as well as on the basis of the particular criteria, it was assumed that 12 regions associated with the biggest agglomerations of Poland would be the most optimal solution. In comparison to Western European countries such as: Spain, Italy, France and Germany, system of 12 voivodeships is compliant with the European standards and a transregional cooperation in terms of a number of the regions, their average surface and a number of inhabitants.

The results of works disposed then Government Representative for the Public Administration Reform, Michał Kulesza to submit option of 12 voivodeships as a basis of further planned works in January 1998 [RM 101/1997; BKSBI 53/1997: 3]. Further to the above, 12 voivodeships conception constituted the fundament of the act of the basic three-tier territorial division of Poland [Sejm RP - druk 230/1998]⁴. The above bill (Art. 1) assumed that introduction of three-tier administrative division with voivodeships, districts and municipalities as on Art. 2(1) would have become effective on 1 January 1999. According to the superior criterion of the common good set by the Council of Ministers, the map of the division into following 12 voivodeships (Art. 2) was accepted: the Ziemia Białystok Province, the Lower Silesia Province, the Ziemia Lublin Province, the Ziemia Łódź Province, the Lesser Poland Province, the Lesser Eastern Poland Province, the Masovian Province, the Vistula Pomerania Province, the West Pomerania Province, the Silesia Province, the Warmian-Masurian Province, the Greater Poland Province⁵ [Sejm RP - druk 230A/1998]. Pursuant to Art. 3 of this act, the Council of Ministers submitted to Sejm the regulation regarding districts, which were included in voivodeships' units mentioned in Art. 2, as well as municipalities belonging to districts⁶ [Sejm RP - druk 230/1998]. The law recognizes that the particular neighbor regions of then voivodeships (regions) determined their new dependence in the general

4 13 March 1998 submitted to Sejm and read during the 15 session.

5 In terms of self-adjustment the amendments of the Legislative Council dated 23 April 1998 were taken into account. Moreover, in the names of the cities it was convenient to reject name 'ziemia' as it was not consistent with the tradition of some of the regions.

6 310 districts and 47 cities excluded from the districts were established. Appendix no. 1, The Regulation of the Council of Ministers on determination of districts and municipalities included in voivodeships.

territorial division themselves⁷ [Sejm RP - druk 230/1998; BKSBI 433/1998; BKSBI 436/1998]. Meanwhile the deputies of Sejm were working over the new territorial form of the country. In consequence, a group of deputies from SLD party submitted a draft of the new three-tier administrative division act [Sejm RP - druk 254/1998] that anticipated creating 17 voivodeship units (Art. 2): the Ziemia Białystok Province, the Lower Silesia Province, the Higher Silesia Province, the Ziemia Kujawy-Pomerania Province, the Ziemia Lublin Province, the Ziemia Lubuska Province, the Łódź Province, the Ziemia Opole Province, the Lesser Poland Province, the West Lesser Poland Province, the North Lesser Poland Province, the Masovia Province, the Gdańsk Pomerania Province, the Central Pomerania Province, the West Pomerania Province, the Warmian-Masurian Province, the Greater Poland Province⁸ [Sejm RP - druk 254A/1998].

In the contrary to the draft prepared by the Council of Ministers - the Regulation 17 Article 2 (1)⁹ - this act was supposed to introduce districts and determine their borders and municipalities in their scope. This notion was assumed to be effective since 1 July 1999. The deputies who proposed the above changes were justified their conception of 7 voivodeships by the fact that this project 'would - according to the public opinion assessment - evoke the least number of social conflicts, would be the simplest to accept and to introduce because of i.a. the fact, that the net of 17 centres exists until today and on the basis of this net the elements are being created – in other words, majority of administrative net as well as media communication, i.e. press and radio'¹⁰.

Two propositions submitted during the Sejm session, which were depicting different ideas for the spatial and territorial form of Poland and which were the result of the relation between the particular territorial units, were eventually rejected by the deputies and the society. Therefore, it was necessary to choose one of the above conceptions so that to conduct further works concerning completion of other legislative acts. The biggest achievement of the session of

7 The submitted map of the districts was being negotiated and approved by the local governments. The municipalities determined the headquarters of proposed district and their will of dependence to this unit. 88 delegations from municipalities, which defended their dependence to certain districts, were involved in the preparatory works. The adjustment regarding the map of districts were submitted twice due to applications lodged by the municipalities concerning a change of their dependence to a district located in the other voivodeship.

8 On the basis of the submitted self- adjustment the names of the following voivodeships were changed: the North Lesser Poland Province into the Old Poland Province, the Higher Silesia and Zagłębie Province into the Higher Silesia Province, the Ziemia Kujawsko-Pomeranian Province into the Kujawy and Pomerania Province.

9 The list of districts and municipalities was submitted in Self-Adjustment on the Parliamentary draft of the basic three-tier territorial division act. Ibid

10 The statement of SLD deputy, Andrzej Brachmański, during the Sejm commission's session.

the Sejm commissions - for Administration and Internal Affairs (hereinafter – KAiSW) and Local Government and Regional Policy (hereinafter – KSTiPR) – was the acceptance of so-called ‘basic’ draft of the three-tier territorial division act. In accordance with the law and rules accepted by members of the commissions that determined further proceedings regarding ‘basic’ project¹¹ [BKSBI 430/1998] deputies were issuing numerous propositions regarding the content of the document. The project submitted by the SLD representatives concerning 17 voivodeships model was treated as a ‘basic’ one. Meanwhile, the regulation of the Council of Ministers was put to the vote as an amendment to the deputies’ draft¹²[BKSBI 430/1998: 1-7]. The deputies – as the representatives of the society, the regions and places of birth were supporting the preservation of their own voivodeships. In result, that ‘home defence’ was the main factor of submitting other amendments to the ‘basic’ project. Only during the 1 session of the Sejm commissions, deputies lodged 10 applications pertaining to the proposition of the adjustment of preliminary approved borders of voivodeships. The following amendments were submitted amongst the others: preservation of 49 voivodeships, introduction of 27 or 18 regions. Those two propositions differed from the ‘basic’ project in terms of ‘the other notion of municipality’. The proposer of the new ‘17’ advocated for increase of Gdańsk voivodeship by connecting the Elbląg district. The above conclusions were negatively outvoted by members of the commissions. During that session a project of 16 voivodeship was being mentioned for five times. Four of them were submitted by Andrzej Brachmański (SLD). Brachmański’s idea was to exclude Central Pomerania (application no. 5) or Old Poland voivodeship (application no. 7) or the Kujawy-Pomerania voivodeship (application no. 8) or the Lubuskie voivodeship (application no. 9). While submitting the amendments, Brachmański did not justify the purpose of their introduction. Meanwhile, the project submitted by Maciej Jankowski (Solidarity Election Action; AWS) regarding 16 voivodeships without the Central Pomerania (Koszalin) was approved¹³ [BKSBI 1998,

11 Before the session of teams included in the commissions, their chairmen were attempting to determine a way as well as a sequence of amendments’ and applications’ submission and a method of voting.

12 On the basis of the application lodged by the Legislative Office of the Chancellery of the Sejm as well as Jerzy Stępień, the Undersecretary of the State in the Ministry of Interior and Administration, who were present during the session, the adjustments regarding the title as well as some articles of both drafts were introduced, e.g. instead of ‘three-tier’ name they introduced ‘three-level’, the date of regulation’s entry was changed from 1 July 1999 into 1 January 1999. Furthermore, the units’ order in a document was changed into: municipalities, districts and voivodeships. The title of the Parliamentary draft was completed with an adjective ‘basic’.

13 On the application of the Sejm deputy, Franciszka Cegielska, the Legislative Office of the Chancellery of the Sejm conducted an analysis of both applications concerning creating

469:11]. Nevertheless, due to procedural weaknesses the above conclusions had to be rejected and thus it was necessary to revote the submitted amendments to the project of the territorial division of Poland.

The session's adjourn and the resumption over the 'basic' project caused that the Bureau of all the commissions received even more propositions pertaining to the number and the form of the voivodeships. Again amendments concerning preservation of 49 voivodeships and 27 or 18 regions were rejected. The project of 17 voivodeships submitted by Brachmański intended to create 17 voivodeships same, but comparable to appointment of 17 voivodeships included in the 'basic' project – to the country with the application (application no. 4) from previous voting. To the package of 16 voivodeships propositions submitted by Brachmański an application excluding Central Pomerania or Old Poland or Pomerania and Kujawy or Lubuskie was attached [BKSBI 481/1998: 7-8].

Subsequently, the proposition of 13 voivodeships was taken into consideration. The basis of '13' was the Council of Ministers regulation concerning 12 voivodeships plus additional unit. Further to the above, Ryszard Brejza (AWS) voiced the application no. 29 concerning creating additional voivodeship of Pomerania and Kujawy. This proposition aroused controversy. According to the proposer this project fulfilled all the substantive reasons, the conditions compliant with financial calculations and achieved the acceptance of about 300,000 citizens. At the same time, the opponents of this option justified their statement that the above declaration excludes signatures of the inhabitants of Toruń voivodeship, which means that there is no acceptance for incorporating Toruń to the Kujawy and Pomerania voivodeship¹⁴ [BKSBI 1998, 481:8]. Therefore, this project as well as propositions of new voivodeships: Beskidy¹⁵ and Opole¹⁶ were eventually rejected. At the same time, 12 voivodeships model was approved and subsequently submitted in the Sejm¹⁷. This project was comparable to the Council of Ministers regulation (Matter no. 230), but in accordance to the previous assumptions, it only constituted the amendment to the deputies' project.

of 16 voivodeships submitted by 2 deputies: A. Brachmański and M. Jankowski. Inquiries with the analysis revealed that there existed some differences concerning the municipalities' boards as well as differences regarding names of the voivodeships. On this basis those two applications were taken under the vote since they were non-identical.

14 The statement of the Sejm deputy, Jan Wyrawiński (the Freedom Union; UW).

15 The application no. 29a lodged by the Sejm deputy, Henryk Kroll (independent deputy). According to this document in the Opole voivodeship the following districts would be incorporated: the Ziemia Oleska, the Ziemia Dobrodzieńska and the Ziemia Raciborska.

16 The application no. 30 lodged by the Sejm deputy, Grażyna Janiszewska (UW).

17 The application no. 31 lodged by the Sejm deputies: Paweł Bryłowski, Barbara Imiołczyk, Irena Lipowicz and Jerzy Polaczek.

After the third reading (dated 5 June 1998) the Sejm accepted territorial division of Poland into 12 voivodeships¹⁸ [BKSBI 510/1998: 18-28]. Further to the above, the Parliament approved their names and the office of voivode. On the basis of this project (Art. 4) following voivodeships were established: the Białystok Province, the Lower Silesian Province, the Lublin Province, the Łódź Province, the Lesser Poland Province, the West Lesser Poland Province, the Vistula Pomeranian Province, the West Pomeranian Province, the Silesian Province, the Warmian-Masurian Province, the Greater Poland Province.

The approval of the draft of the bill in the Sejm did not mean however its validation by the Senate. The project of 12 voivodeships was considered as 'tentative' and there still existed the possibility to enter new amendments in the further procedure. Numerous propositions concerning administrative division, new opinions and applications lodged by representatives of the local governments or inhabitants of particular regions reflected the complexity of the administrative division. Lack of strategy of '12', disputes between politicians representing different parties affected the further legislative process¹⁹ [Emilewicz., Wołek 2000: 103-113]. After hearing the bill approved by the Sejm [BKSBI 433/1998], the Senate inserted several amendments. In consequence, the project of 15 voivodeship was accepted with 3 new units: the Lubuskie Province, the Opole Province and the Kujawy Pomeranian Province [BKSBI 592/1998: 3]²⁰. Since then the map of the administrative division included following voivodeships: the Lower Silesian Province, the Kujawy Pomeranian Province, the Lublin Province, the Lubuskie Province, the Łódź province, the Lesser Poland Province, the Masovian Province, the Opole Province, the Podlaskie Province, the Pomeranian Province, the Silesian Province, the Warmian-Masurian Province, the Greater Poland Province, the West Lesser Poland Province, the West Pomeranian Province. Similarly to amendments regarding the number of units, the name of voivode office and its headquarters as well as the headquarters of Voivodeship assemblies were determined (Amendment no. 3).

18 The day before the voting the session with the presence of the Commission for Local Government and Regional Policy (KSTiPR) and the Commission of the Interior and Administration (KAiSW) took place. During this meeting 32 amendments regarding the number of voivodeships were considered. Furthermore, 5 applications on 16 voivodeships' creation, 11 applications concerning 15 voivodeships' creation, 10 applications concerning 14 voivodeships' creation and 5 applications concerning 5 regions' creation were lodged that day. All of them were rejected during the voting.

19 Cf. the statement of M. Kulesza, J. Rokita, J. Stępień, L. Dorn, and K. Marcinkiewicz pertaining to the territorial form of the country.

20 At the same time the changes of the voivodeships' names were altered into the adjective form as well the name 'białostockie' was changed into 'podlaskie' and the name of 'Vistula Pomerania Province' was changed into 'pomorskie' (Amendment no.1).

An appendix regarding number of voivodeship units and their names together with the list of municipalities included was the complement of the law. At the same time, it constituted the integral whole as well as completion of the resolution as in Art. 15 of the Constitution²¹.

Districts, the 'indirect' administrative units of the country, were expected to be determined by the regulation of the Council of Ministers with 'taking into account [the Ministers'] capability to perform public duties and the good of local community' (Amendment no. 2).

The Sejm eventually approved the Senate's proposition concerning creating 15 voivodeships on 1 July 1998 and - in compliance with the legislative process - the project was subsequently submitted to the President of the Republic of Poland. Acting on the basis of Art. 122 (5) of the Constitution, the President refused to sign the draft. The reason of this decision was that the drafted three-tier administrative division 'does not satisfy the constitutional demands and in particular does not take into account the current social and cultural ties'. In other words, the draft law of 15 voivodeships accepted by the Sejm did not respect the criterion of capability of inhabitants to administrate the main part of local affairs on their own responsibility and for the benefit of other citizens²² [Sejm RP - druk 284/1998; Sejm RP - druk 465/1998; BKSBI 641/1998: 3-5, 11-17]. Therefore, the President indicated the strong necessity to complete the above document with 2 new voivodeships: the Old Poland Province and the Central Pomeranian Province. This proposition referred to the history of Poland. The 'seventeen' appeared to be the optimal solution for Poland taking into account i.e. the infrastructure. Having accepted the President's veto on 3 July 1998, the Sejm started to work over the new draft of the territorial division act. Then existing conceptions and proceedings regarding number of voivodeships indicated that the perfect solution (and at the same time social compromise) would be creating of 17 voivodeships (regions). Thus, the President's veto pertaining to the draft of 15 voivodeship bill as well as Parliament's rejection of the President's '17' proposition gave a birth

21 During the approval of Senate's proposition of voivodeships' borders the statements of some other groups was taken into account, e.g. resolutions adopted by municipalities and the opinion of different organizations and institutions, e.g. agricultural chambers, political activists. The crucial element pertaining to the borders of voivodeship was the rule of preservation the district. The Statement of Reason issued by Kazimierz Klejn during KSTiPR and KAiSW session on 25 June 1998.

22 The President was categorically underlining this matter and referring to the content of The European Charter of the Local Self-Governance. In his justification he indicated the connection to the Government's Projection of the Political Reform dated on March 1998. Members of KSTiPR and KAiSW were discussing the motives of the President's veto during the session. The referral to the 'social acceptance' was an incentive to a discussion over the statewide referendum. Meanwhile, during the 16 Sejm's session on 20 May 1998 the deputies rejected the application on the statewide referendum.

to the compromise idea of 16 voivodeships. The new draft of the three-tier division bill submitted by deputies of the Sejm [Sejm RP - druk 513/1998] established 16 voivodeship units as in Art. 2(1): the Lower Silesian Province, the Kujawy Pomeranian Province, the Lublin Province, the Łódź Province, the Lesser Poland Province, the Masovian Province, the Opole Province, the Podlaskie Province, the Pomeranian province, the Silesian Province, the Świętokrzyskie Province, the Warmian-Masurian Province, the Greater Poland Province, the West Lesser Poland Province, the West Pomeranian Province²³ [BKSBI 706/1998: 1-4].

Finally, after the adjustment to the draft of the act²⁴ [BKSBI 706/1998; 709/1998], it was accepted by the Sejm and signed by the President on 24 July 1998 [Dz.U. 1998, Nr 96, poz. 603]. The potential assumptions introduced the new spatial and territorial organization. The new territorial division entered into force on 1 January 1999 included three-tier structure of the following units: a municipality, a district and a voivodeship. 16 voivodeship units, 308 districts, 65 cities with district rights (so-called magistrate cities) and 2,489 municipalities were established. The voivodeships' system reflected the dual character of local authorities - local government-government.

Changes in the new territorial organization

This solution however was not enthusiastically accepted. Therefore, the authorities started working over the draft for another time. In accordance with the approved law regulations the Council of Ministers was obliged to assess the new administrative division and to propose any amendments. This obligation was mentioned in a basic three-tier division act and regulations of public administration reform act²⁵.

The accepted solutions after the adjustment concerning the territorial division at the level of voivodeship and district fulfilled local community's claims. In consequence, 7 new districts were established and the change of 2 voivodeships'

23 The following amendments regarding this project were submitted: creation of an additional voivodeship 'beskidzkie' or changing the name 'małopolskie' into 'the Lesser Poland and Podbeskidzie Province' (the Sejm deputy – G. Staniszevska – UW) as well as changing the name 'świętokrzyskie' into 'staropolskie' (the Sejm deputy J. Kasprzyk – SLD).

24 E.g. the name of 'the West Lesser Poland Province' was changed into 'the Podkarpackie Province'. Furthermore, the decision concerning conflict municipalities and voivodeships was made, e.g. municipality Sławków was incorporated to the Lesser Poland Province, municipality Secemin was incorporated to the Świętokrzyskie Province, municipalities: Drgacz, Nowe and Warlubie were incorporated to the Kujawy-Pomeranian Province. In addition, the number of local assemblies and voivode offices was finally determined.

25 The basic three-tier territorial division act dated 24 July 1998 (Dz.U. 1998, no. 96, item 603) determined a due date of assessment up until 31 December 2000 – the bill dated 13 October 1998 (Dz.U. 1998, no. 133, item 872) determined a due date up until 30 June 2000.

borders was accepted by the society and some social group were since then assured that the reform has not stopped on 1 January 1999 and its resolution cannot be treated as the final form²⁶[Cf. Słobodzian 2005: 191-207]. Taking into account the criteria determined by the law, establishment of prone-to-dysfunction units was waived.

The adjustment of the administrative and territorial division of Poland did not end further attempts to reform the existing division. Therefore, the authorities decided to reorganize the voivodeship division of Poland. In result, project of '17' was revived, but this time the proposition concerned creating Central Pomeranian Province and Warsaw Province (within the administrative borders of Warsaw).

Nevertheless, the community of the Central Pomerania rejected this proposition. This group has been attempting to recreate the Central Pomeranian voivodeship for several times since July 1998. This initiative was undertaken after the protests of the inhabitants of the Central Pomerania (especially Koszalin) who were against the 12-, 15- and 16-voivodeship conception (all of them excluded Central Pomeranian Province)²⁷ [*Odpadł tylko Koszalin* 1998], i.a. Stowarzyszenie Pomorza Środkowego 'Integracja dla Rozwoju' submitted memo pertaining to the adjustment of the administrative division of Poland and creating the Central Pomeranian Province²⁸ [B.Słobodzian 2005:200; www.ngo.pl]. Regardless of these attempts, this claim has never been effective.

The similar attempts were undertaken in 2002²⁹ [Polechoński 2002]:

- 1) in May a Sejm deputy, Edward Wojtalik (SLD) submitted in writing to the Marshall of the Sejm a draft of establishment of the Central Pomeranian voivodeship act; this claim has never been taken under the legislative procedure;
- 2) in July with the initiative of 'Self Defence of the Republic of Poland' (Samoobrona RP) party the project of new '17' was created; this proposition also has never been taken under any further proceedings.

In June 2003 the attempts to recreate the Central Pomeranian voivodeship were boosted thanks to the citizens' initiative [Projekt obywatelski 2003]. Once the citizens' signatures have been collected under the draft of

26 The characteristic legislative procedure of accepting and validating of applications resulted in the quantity adjustments on the map.

27 Meaning 'compromise' to '17'. Rozmowa z prezydenckim ministrem Markiem Siwcem, szefem BBN, BBN chief.

28 Stowarzyszenie Pomorza Środkowego „Integracja dla Rozwoju” – an organization founded in June 2000 (registered in KRS), which is involved in promoting the achievements and the future plans regarding the regional development. The above organization also builds up a knowledge database of the local patriotism. Source: www.ngo.pl, 11 March 2009

29 Rozmowa z Lechem Kaczyńskim (posłem i liderem ugrupowania PiS); Sprawne państwo w świetle relacji samorząd terytorialny a administracja rządowa w terenie, Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Komisję Samorządu Terytorialnego i Administracji Państwowej pod patronatem marszałka Senatu Longina Pastusiaka.

the act, the further legislative procedure was on track [*Teraz 100 tysięcy* 2003; *Środkowopomorska akcja* 2003]. On 18 March 2004 the Sejm was given the first reading of a draft of establishment of the Central Pomeranian voivodeship act effective since 1 January 2005. In accordance with the deputies' decision this project was being considered by the Sejm commissions. In justification of the draft the creator was referring to the tradition and the history of this region.

Further legislative proceedings regarding creation of 17 voivodeship (the Central Pomeranian) came across different course and ended up with the failure. A long-lasting discussion over establishment of the new voivodeship resulted in conflict between local communities. The above was reflected in the referenda's results, i.e. the following municipalities refused their dependence to the new voivodeship: Człuchów, Lębork, Złotów, Wałcz [Nagórski 2006: 8; Kamiński 2006: 3; Stankiewicz 2006: A4].

Another attempt to reorganize the territorial division took place in 2009 during the Law and Justice (PiS) Congress in Cracow (dated from 31 January up until 1 February). Members of the party decided on the draft of creating 2 new voivodeships – the Central Pomeranian Province and Warsaw Province [Rada Powiatu Lęborskiego 2000; Bierndgarski 2009: 5].

Having passed the long stagnation concerning labor over another options of the administrative division, on 2014 the proposition of establishment (or rather restore) of 49 voivodeships was submitted. The creator of the above project was the SLD party, which wanted to return to the territorial organization prior the reform of 1998. The above proposition was justified as follows: 'the conception of 16 voivodeships resulted in Polish regions' stratification; hence, the development's division between metropolises and the rest of the country. The 49-voivodeship structure would provide stabilization in all the regions thanks to change of EU funds distribution'³⁰. Donald Tusk supported this claim during a press conference dated 8 January 2014, when he stated as follows: 'The crucial matter is to distribute the funds not only to the biggest cities, but also to the medium ones – previous voivodeship capitals'³¹. Creators of 'Polska x 49' project are claiming that in the forthcoming years EU funds should be distributed to the medium cities (previous voivodeship cities). This gives the medium cities a chance to rebuild their potential and surrounding. Subsequently, the disproportion between 'poor' and 'rich' regions would be decreased³².

30 Centrum Medialne SLD, *Brief Medialny: Projekt Polska x 49 (Główne przekazy medialne w trakcie regionalnych konferencji prasowych)*, Warsaw 2014.

31 Ibid, p. 1

32 Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, *Projekt „Polska x 49”*, Warszawa 2014; this document is devoted to internal use and was available for the Author of this publication through the Programme Office of SLD.

Nowadays works over the above idea are no longer continued – some politicians claim that this attempt ‘was only an element of SLD’s campaign before the elections’ [E.g. Cyrankiewicz 2014: C1; Olczyk 2014: A3].

The current attempts to reorganize the administrative division are in fact diversified (1 or 2 voivodeships) – in other words chaotic and of a dual nature. Above all, they do not determine the main goal. Political parties involved in drafting the territorial division of Poland are prone to treat this theme as an element of the campaign. Numerous propositions concerning the administrative division as well its criteria raise the controversy. As far as political parties are concerned, both, a calendar of works over the public administration reform and its adjustment reflected inconsistency as well as unwillingness to cooperate. Each party submitted propositions concerning the territorial division or new state’s structures(e.g. metropolises, intermunicipal associations) by taking into account only social support, in other words – the electoral victory in local or parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, only one factor was neglected in the legislative processes – the good of the society and the country.

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