

WOJCIECH TOMASZ MODZELEWSKI ▶

Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie

Russian direction in the paradiplomacy of Polish local governments

Abstract

Foreign activity (paradiplomacy) of local governments is one of the elements of Polish foreign policy and plays a special, positive role in the process of Polish integration with the European Union. This paper presents the results of the investigations concerning foreign activity of Polish local and regional governments with Russia. In particular, there is intensive cooperation with the Kaliningrad region, the only region bordering Poland and refers to the neighboring provinces of Warmia and Mazury and Pomorskie. Studies have shown, however, that 11 out of the 16 Polish provinces signed agreements with other regions of Russia and only 2 have no cooperation.

Keywords: paradiplomacy, priorities for international cooperation, partnership agreements with Russian local governments

Резюме

Зарубежная активность (парадипломатия) местного самоуправления – один из элементов внешней политики Польши и один из аспектов современных международных отношений, осуществляемых негосударственными субъектами, на их самом низком уровне. В статье представлены результаты деятельности зарубежных польских органов местного самоуправления с партнерами из России. Особенно интенсивное сотрудничество происходит здесь с Калининградской областью, единственным граничащим с Польшей регионом Российской Федерации и касается, главным образом, соседствующих воеводств, т. е. Варминско-мазурского и Поморского. Исследования показали, что, на региональном уровне, 14 воеводств уста-

новили более или менее интенсивные контакты с российскими регионами, а только 2 не ведут в настоящее время никакого сотрудничества на российском направлении.

Ключевые слова: парадипломатия, приоритеты международного сотрудничества, соглашение о партнерстве с российскими органами местного самоуправления

The beginning of the '90s in the twentieth century brought a change to an international environment of Poland. There has also been a fundamental re-evaluation of Polish foreign policy. In the context of the analyzed subject matter, it was the restoration of the basic level of local government in 1990 and the second phase of the local government reform carried out in the late 90s that were of fundamental importance. Local communities and, later, regional communities were given the right and power (within the limits of the law) to lead and manage a substantial share of public affairs while holding a full responsibility for the decisions made and representing the interest of their people. Local and regional authorities also began foreign activity. It takes place on the basis of partnership agreements or informally (without agreements), and it falls under the following categories: cross-border (in the case of border regions neighborly contacts) or interregional (when there is no neighborhood between regions), bilateral (between two units) or multilateral (within the framework of international organizations and associations).

Despite the fact that the foreign activity of local governments is one of the elements of Polish foreign policy, it is not considered diplomacy. In the literature it is more and more often referred to as “paradiplomacy” (Soldatos, 1990, p. 34–53; Duchacek 1990, p. 1–33) and sometimes: “subnational diplomacy” (Soldatos 1993, p. 45–64; Soldatos, Michelmann 1992, p. 129–134), “non-central governments diplomacy”, “microdiplomacy”, “protodiplomacy” (Łuszczuk, 2013, p. 121–135) or “non-sovereign diplomacy” (Kuznetsov, 2015). Paradiplomacy of local governments is one of the dimensions of international relations, carried out by non-state participants, at their lowest, social level.

In the 90s, Poland created the institutional infrastructure, including the legal one, to facilitate the foreign activity of local and regional govern-

ments. For example, becoming a member of the Council of Europe, Poland accepted the guidelines issued by the Council and introduced European standards for foreign contacts of local governments. Poland also signed a number of bilateral interstate agreements, defining a formal framework for cooperation on specific borderlands. Three agreements of that kind were signed with Russia; one regarding cross-border cooperation (02.10.1992) and two of them regarding interregional cooperation: north-eastern Polish provinces with the Kaliningrad Region (22.05.1992) and Polish regions with the St. Petersburg region (02.10.1992). Based on these agreements, two councils were created: Polish-Russian Cooperation Council of Polish Regions and the Kaliningrad Oblast (in 1994), Polish-Russian Cooperation Council of Polish Regions and the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) Region (in 1996) and Polish-Russian Intergovernmental Commission for Interregional Cooperation (in 2010). The main purpose of these councils is to create a platform for exchange of views on cross-border and interregional cooperation between the government and local governments on both sides of the border. All that to coordinate activities and to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of local government cooperation.

Polish partnership of local governments

There is no comprehensive studies showing foreign activities of Polish local and regional governments. However, in order to show the dynamics of the phenomenon, despite methodological differences, surveys from 2000 (Żelazo, 2001; 2002) and 2004 (Skorupska, 2005) were used as a reference. The surveys were commissioned by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, on a sample of 500 and 502 municipalities and research from 2012 implemented by the Association of Polish Cities (APC – Związek Miast Polskich) involving all levels of local government (Fuksiewicz, Łada, Wenerski, 2012). Out of many aspects, the focus was placed on the scale of the phenomenon (% of local governments cooperating) and geographical directions of cooperation, particularly the one with Russia.

In 2000 42% of Polish municipalities declared partnerships with other countries, regarding more than 40 countries, including distant: Mexico, Canada and Cameroon. In the first place was Germany. Out of all the mu-

municipalities declaring partnerships with foreign countries, 66% cooperated with the German local governments. The second country with the largest number of contact with Polish municipalities was France (28%), and then: the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine and Hungary. Out of all the Polish neighbors, Russia was ranking 12th (5.3%) and was ahead of only Belarus. The countries ahead of Russia included the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Żelazo, 2001, p. 36–37; 2002, p. 28–29).

In 2004 54% of Polish municipalities already declared partnerships with other countries, regarding contacts with than 50 countries, for example Brazil, Chile and Ecuador. Germany remained in the lead (60% of municipalities that have partnerships), and were followed by: Ukraine, France, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and the Netherlands. Russia was ranking 10th (7%) together with the United Kingdom, still ahead of only Belarus (17th place) out of all the countries neighboring Poland (Skorupska, 2005, p. 24–29).

The 2012 research conducted by the Association of Polish Cities involving all levels of local government showed that 72% of local governments (who completed and sent the survey) declares international cooperation. Germany remained in the lead (62%) and were followed by: Ukraine, France, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy and the Czech Republic. Russia took the 9th place (16,5%) and Belarus was ranking 10th. The research findings indicated that Polish local governments cooperated with 57 countries, including such exotic India, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Iraq (Fukiewicz, Łada, Wenerski, 2012, p. 22–23). In 2014 Polish municipalities declared contacts with 54 countries; Germany remained in the lead (75% of municipalities that have partnerships), and were followed by: Ukraine, Italy, France and Russia (Skorupska, 2015, p. 24–32). What is more, in 2009 the Association of Polish Cities conducted a series of surveys that was part of “Europe for Citizens” project. The surveys involved all local governments. The results showed that the total number of foreign partnerships exceeds 4000, almost a double number comparing to the results of similar studies conducted by APC in 2003 (2100 partnerships). Still the greatest number of agreements was concluded with local governments in Germany, followed by the Czech Republic, France and Slovakia. Russia was ranking 9th. APC also created a website dedicated to the partnership: <http://www.twinning.pl> (Paczyńska, Stachowiak, Porawski, Leki, 2009, p. 45).

Last but not least, it is important to take a look at the structure of multilateral cooperation, in other words: Euroregions – international association of local governments, operating on all Polish borders. Out of the 16 Euroregions currently active in Poland, three of them include local governments from Kaliningrad Region FR: “Niemen” (founded in 1997), “Baltic” (1998) and “Lyna-Lava” (2003). The reason behind founding Polish Euroregions was to gain experience before Poland joining the EU, and also to gain experience in the context of the use of EU funds designated for cross-border cooperation. They were perceived as a “laboratory” where the ability of international cooperation, at the lowest level of organizational structures in small areas, could be put to test (Malendowski, Ratajczak, 2000; Modzelewski 2014b).

Cooperation with the Kaliningrad Oblast

Regional level

In particular, there is intensive cooperation with the Kaliningrad region, the only region bordering Poland and refers, most of all, to the neighboring provinces (regions): Warmińsko-Mazurskie (agreements in 2001 and 2002) and Pomorskie (two agreements in 2002), as well as Zachodniopomorskie (agreements in 2004 and 2007). The cooperation is the implementation of the resolutions of international cooperation priorities adopted by the parliaments of these Polish regions. In each of the resolutions, Kaliningrad Oblast and Danish Bornholm are included as areas of cooperation. For example, the resolution of Warmia and Mazury, in the framework of the determinants of international cooperation, points out neighboring with Kaliningrad Region is “particularly important and natural partner for the region”. The resolution of Pomorskie mentions only the Kaliningrad Region, but what’s interesting – in the previous resolution of 2000, the Leningrad Oblast, Eastern Prefecture of Moscow and Arkhangelsk were also pointed out. It should be noted, that the town of Słupsk (the capital of the former province of Słupskie), located in Pomorskie, is twinned with Arkhangelsk. In each of the provinces cooperation dates go back to the beginnings of the old administrative-territorial system, based on the cooperation of former provinces, such as Olsztyńskie (since the mid-50s), El-

bląskie, Gdańskie and Słupskie (Modzelewski, 2015a, p. 105–118; Toszek, 2010, p. 37–55).

Polish provinces that have irregular contacts, without agreements, with Kaliningrad Region include: **Łódzkie**, Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie, Podkarpackie and Podlaskie. In Podlasie international cooperation priorities listed two Russian regions: Kaliningrad and Kursk. In general, geographical proximity significantly determines cooperation, because in each of the resolutions on the priorities of Eastern Polish provinces pointed out partners from Russia. For example, the resolution of Lubelskie mentions the following regions: Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Moscow. The resolution of **Świętokrzyskie** mentions Nizhny Novgorod region and the resolution of Podkarpackie mentions Russia, in general, as one of the priority directions of international cooperation. Additionally, the resolution of **Świętokrzyskie** includes an annex about looking for other Russian partners for cooperation (Modzelewski, 2014a, p. 33–51).

Local level

In the Warmia-Mazury almost 24% communes (gminy) and 52% districts (powiaty) have concluded partnership agreements with the Russian side. The cooperation determines geographic proximity and possibilities of the partners. All districts and communes on the borderland, situated in north part of region, execute cross border cooperation with the Russian side. They work together for many years, performing a variety of cross-border projects. The leaders are the following districts: Węgorzewski – agreement with Czernyakhovsk (2003), Ozyorsk (2003) and Pravdinsk (2005) and Kętrzyński, agreements with Pravdinsk (2004) and Oktiabrsk (2004). There is also an intensive collaboration among administrative units of the biggest economic potential. At the districts level: Olsztyn, an agreement with Kaliningrad (1993) and Elbląg, an agreement with Baltijsk and Kaliningrad (1994). At the communes level, it is important to mention intensive partnership between: Bartoszyce–Pionersky (2000) and Bagrationovsk (2001), Braniewo–Zelenogradsk (1994), Gołdap–Gusev (2004), Olecko–Gusev (2004 r.), Węgorzewo–Czernyakhovsk (1996) (Chełminiak, Kotowicz, Modzelewski, Żukowski, 2012, p. 28–30).

The basic areas of cross-border cooperation include: cultural and sport, tourist and inter-school events, fairs, training, cooperation of local businesses and cross-border trade. The study of 2011, points out the two most commonly indicated causes of cooperation with partners: geographical proximity (80%) and EU funding for joint ventures (73%). The benefits of cross-border cooperation with the Russian are: cultural cooperation (87%), EU funds (80%), the development of tourism (77%) (Chelminiak, Kotowicz, Modzelewski, Żukowski, 2012, p. 22).

Outside of Warmia and Mazury, Kaliningrad twin cities are: Białystok, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Łódź, Racibórz, Starogard, Toruń and Zabrze. Several communes and districts have agreements with partners in the Kaliningrad Region, for example: Bełchatów–Sovetsk, Brzeg Dolny–Czernyakhovsk, Goleniów–Gurevsk, Grudziądz–Czernyakhovsk, Krynica Morska–Baltiysk, Łeba–Zelenogradsk, Nysa–Baltiysk, Pabianice–Gusev, Świnoujście–Svetly, Kutno–Sovetsk. Irregular contacts, without agreements, with the Russian side have Ruda Śląska, Środa Śląska i Szczecin. The research in 2012 that was implemented by APC, points out 43 partnerships between Polish and Russian cities (Fuksiewicz, Łada, Wenerski, 2012, p. 23), for example Białystok agreement with Pskov, Częstochowa with Kazan, Dębna with Kursk and Gdańsk with St. Petersburg. On the other hand, at the district level, there are Russian partnership districts: Kaliski, Kutnowski, Poddębicki and Sredzki.

With the development of international contacts of local governments forms and areas of cooperation change. Namely, if not accompanied by the implementation of joint projects, signed letters of intent and partnership agreements are no longer relevant. With the development of co-operation, there is a growing importance of the economic dimension and the available financial programs necessitate expanding areas of cooperation. Besides, foreign activity are part of the development of local governments in Poland (Skorupska, 2013, p. 95–106).

The functioning of border crossings on the Polish-Russian borderland is of vital importance, together with border traffic and its impact on the development of the communes and districts, sometimes joint lobbying or further opening of border crossings. The priority areas of cooperation include: shared cultural events, environmental protection and preventing associated risks to the cross-border, as well as development of cross-bor-

der tourism infrastructure construction (eg. bicycle paths). Polish-Russian cooperation is stimulated, among others, by the availability of funds for cross-border projects, which results in *ad hoc* cooperation with partners on the other side of the border. It is important to remember about the specifics of political relations between the two countries, as their condition may periodically determine the cooperation in the borderland. The rules governing the crossing of the Polish-Russian border are of equal importance too and in July 2012 they had a positive impact on the introduction of the local border traffic, which, consequently, increased contacts on the border (Modzelewski, 2015b, p. 292–312). While the decision of the Polish government in July 2016 to suspend the agreement with Russia, reduced the intensity of cooperation in the border areas.

Cooperation with other regions of Russia

11 Out of 16 Polish provinces, signed agreements with others (besides the Kaliningrad Oblast) regions of Russia. Individual agreements were signed by: Podkarpackie, Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie, Dolnośląskie, Podlaskie, Małopolskie and Wielkopolskie. More than one agreement was signed by: Mazowieckie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lubuskie and Łódzkie. What is more, since their inception, several provinces have established sporadic contact (sometimes one time) with Russian regions, not finalizing their agreements. These include: Łódzkie and Pomorskie provinces cooperating with the Leningrad Region, Lubelskie with Smolensk Region, Dolnośląskie with Yaroslavl Region.

Only two regions with no contacts with Russia have been noted: Opolskie i Śląskie (see table below). Opole provincial government made an unsuccessful attempt to continue cooperation with Belgorod Region with which the former Opole province entered into a cooperation agreement in 1994. Śląskie also attempted to renew contacts with the Smolensk Region, initiated by the former province Czestochowa partnership agreement in 1996.

The intensity of mutual contacts is very diverse. For example, Wielkopolskie entered into a memorandum of Samara Region in March 2002, it also mentions the Russia region in the latest version of the resolution on inter-

national cooperation priorities that was adopted in September 2013. However, the contacts are not intense. For example, after an 8-year interval, in April 2012 a delegation from the province took part in an international economic forum “Day of the Investor In the Samara”. Consequently, a collaboration agreement between the Samara State Medical University and the Medical University in Poznan was signed. A different example is the Lubuskie Region which has a intensive contracts with the following regions: Pskov (2002) and Vologda (2011). Common areas of cooperation include the exchange of youth at the university level and the exchange of experiences between universities friendly regions.

It should be noted that in order reactivate Polish-Russian cooperation at the regional level, 1st Polish and Russian Regional Forum, “Prospects for Polish-Russian Cooperation; Interregional Aspect”, was held in Moscow in September of 2009. Besides the representatives of local government, the Forum was attended by representatives of national parliaments and ministers for regional development and foreign affairs. The topics of discussion included the conditions of cooperation and the possibility of its development. Also specific offers of cooperation initiated by different regions were presented. Next forums took place every year, alternately in Poland (Warsaw II, IV Tomaszowice) and Russia (III Skolkov near Moscow, and so far the latest, V in June 2013 in Nizhny Novgorod). Forum is supposed to serve as a platform for cooperation between the regions of both countries and also an important platform for the exchange of experience in solving common problems.

Table 1. Partnership agreements of Polish provinces with the Russian regions

1.	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	Kaliningrad
2.	Pomorskie	Kaliningrad
3.	Zachodniopomorskie	Kaliningrad
4.	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	Novgorod, Smolensk, Saratov
5.	Łódzkie	Saratov, Leningrad
6.	Lubuskie	Pskov, Vologda
7.	Mazowieckie	Smolensk, Moscow

8.	Podkarpackie	Saratov
9.	Lubelskie	Novgorod
10.	Świętokrzyskie	Nizhny Novgorod
11.	Dolnośląskie	Leningrad
12.	Podlaskie	Kaliningrad (work plan for period 2008–2009), Kursk
13.	Małopolskie	Sverdlovsk
14.	Wielkopolskie	Samara
15.	Opolskie	–
16.	Śląskie	–

Source: author's research based on the websites of regional governments (Marshall's Offices).

Conclusion

The comparison study of paradiplomacy of Polish local governments shows an increase in the number of partnerships with the Russian side. Despite the fact, Russia is a Polish neighbour, it is not a leader in the discussed processes. A nationwide survey carried in Poland in 2000 showed that Russia was ranking 12th, in 2004 10th, and in 2012 9th.

However, the results of the author's research on the Polish-Russian borderland are more optimistic. The geographical proximity of the Kaliningrad Oblast determines the intensity of contacts with the provinces Warmia and Mazury and Pomorskie, as well as with the communes and districts border of Warmia and Mazury. At the regional level, as many as 14 provinces (over 87%) have established more or less intensive contacts with Russian regions, most of the region of Kaliningrad and Saratov. It should be noted, that all the partner regions are located in the European part of Russia, with an exception of Sverdlovsk Region that is situated on the border of Europe and Asia, in the southern part of the Urals mountains.

In summary, the effect of globalization is the internationalization of matters within the competence of local and regional authorities to take the international activity, treating it as a forum for the exchange of experience, presentation and use of best practices and implementation of joint projects.

Paradiplomacy of local governments affects the state's foreign policy and becomes its permanent social element complementing the tradition-

al diplomacy. For the Polish side, the development of this type of relations with Russia, and especially with the Kaliningrad Region (also in the Baltic dimension) was and is part of the peaceful transformation of this part of Europe. 26 years of local government in Poland, also international activity of local government, encourages positive summary and reflection, and looking to the future with optimism.

DR WOJCIECH TOMASZ MODZELEWSKI

Instytut Nauk Politycznych
Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie
ul. Szrajbera 11, 10-077 Olsztyn, Poland
wojciech.modzelewski@uwm.edu.pl

Literature

- Aldecoa F., Keating M. (eds.) (1999). *Paradiplomacy in Action. The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments* (Cass Series in Regional & Federal Studies). London: Frank Cass & Co.
- Chełminiak M., Kotowicz W., Modzelewski W.T., Żukowski A. (2012). *Stan demokracji lokalnej na pograniczu polsko-rosyjskim i jego implikacje dla współpracy transgranicznej – raport*. Olsztyn: INP UWM.
- Duchacek I.D. (1990). Perforated Sovereignities: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations. In: H.J. Michelmann, P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fuksiewicz A., Łada A., Wenerski Ł. (2012). *Współpraca zagraniczna polskich samorządów. Wnioski z badań*. Warszawa: ISP.
- Kuznetsov A.S. (2015). *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy. Subnational governments in international affairs*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Łuszczuk M. (2013). Zastosowanie pojęcia „paradyplomacja” w świetle ewolucji badań dyplomacji niesuwerennej. W: B. Surmacz (red.), *Nowe oblicza dyplomacji*. Lublin: UMCS.
- Malendowski W., Ratajczak M. (2000). *Euroregiony. Polski krok do integracji*. Wrocław: Atla 2.
- Modzelewski W.T. (2004). Euroregional Cooperation between the borderland regions of Poland and the Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation. In: T. Palmowski (ed.), *The Framework of Regional Development in Cross-border Areas of North-Eastern Poland and The Kaliningrad Oblast*. Gdynia-Pelplin: Bernardinum.

- Modzelewski W.T. (2014a). Priorytety współpracy zagranicznej województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego na tle pozostałych regionów Polski Wschodniej. *Europa Regionum*, 19.
- Modzelewski W. T. (2014b). Сотрудничество в рамках еврорегионов – польский опыт. В: Э.С. Круглова (ред.), *Актуальные вопросы государственного и муниципального управления. Сборник статей*. Калининград: Балтийский институт экономики и финансов.
- Modzelewski W.T. (2015a). Kierunki współpracy zagranicznej województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego na tle pozostałych województw nadmorskich. *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego Acta Politica*, 32.
- Modzelewski W.T. (2015b). От закрытия к сотрудничеству – эволюция границы и пограничья Польши с Калининградской областью Российской Федерации. W: T. Ambroziak, A. Czwoltek, Sz. Gajewski, M. Nowak-Palusz (eds.), *Solidarność a demokracja. 25 lat transformacji postkomunistycznej*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Paczyńska K., Stachowiak A., Porawski A., Leki H. (red.) (2009). *Współpraca partnerska samorządów. Praktyczny przewodnik*. Poznań: Związek Miast Polskich.
- Skorupska A. (2005). Współpraca międzynarodowa samorządu gminnego na podstawie badań. W: Skorupska A. (red.), *Współpraca międzynarodowa samorządu gminnego – Raporty*. Warszawa: PISM.
- Skorupska A. (2013). Współpraca międzynarodowa polskich samorządów terytorialnych. *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, 4.
- Skorupska A. (2015). *Dyplomacja samorządowa. Efektywność i perspektywy rozwoju*, Warszawa: PISM.
- Soldatos P. (1990). An Explanatory Framework for the Study of Federated States as Foreign-policy Actors. In: H.J. Michelmann, P. Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Soldatos P. (1993). Cascading Subnational Paradiplomacy in an Interdependent and Transnational World. In: D. Brown, E. Fry (eds.), *States and Provinces in the International Political Economy*. Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies Press.
- Soldatos P., Michelmann H. (1992). Subnational Units. Paradiplomacy in the context of European Integration. *Journal of European Integration*, 15.
- Toszek B. (2010). Paradiplomacja regionalna w obszarze południowego Bałtyku na przykładzie stosunków transgranicznych Województwa Zachodniopomorskiego. *Środkoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne*, 1.
- Żelazo A. (2001). Samorząd gminny w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Pierwsze przybliżenie. *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 1 (2).
- Żelazo A. (2002). *Współpraca międzynarodowa gmin przygranicznych*. In: Stemplowski R., Żelazo A. (red.), *Polskie pogranicza a polityka zagraniczna u progu XXI wieku – Raporty*. Warszawa: PISM.