

Włodzimierz J. MUSIAŁ, MA

Member of the European Funds Office of the Municipal Office in Białystok, participant of the open doctoral seminar at the Faculty of Law, University of Białystok
e-mail: wmusia6@gmail.com

Wojciech ZON, BA

President of the Scientific Society "Innovation" at the Faculty of Law, University of Białystok
e-mail: zon.wojciech@vip.onet.pl

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OPTIMIZATION OF THE FORMULA FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN BIALYSTOK AND GRODNO

Summary

Socio-economic situation and development of a particular region, county, municipality depend on many factors. Their location (geographic, geopolitical) is of particular importance. It seems that the role of the factor grows in inverse proportion to the deficit of other developmental factors. In other words, if a certain local government unit is not rich economically (e.g. its budget, taxes, etc.), or otherwise privileged, not only it should but it is obliged to take advantage of its position. The issue is to turn what has been generally a limitation (the state border, peripheral character, the end of communication routes) into an asset. That was the historical and geopolitical challenge faced by the municipalities Białystok and Grodno. The historically Polish cities became split not only by the Polish - Belarusian border but also by the external border of the European Union. The problem that naturally arises from the fact can be brought to determining whether existing institutions and procedures allow to alleviate cross-border barriers. In addition, it has to be determined whether the current potential in this regard will provide or may ensure effectiveness. Therefore, the paper covers the principles of local cross-border and euroregional cooperation, prospects on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), as well as geopolitical determinant factors of relations between Białystok and Grodno.

Keywords: twin towns, town twinning, international cooperation of cities, Euroregion „Niemen”, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

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1. Introduction

International cooperation of cities is a result of town twinning, which developed in Europe after World War II. Initially, it was focused on overcoming the consequences of the war. The partnership was implemented through direct meetings of towns' residents of different countries and it could develop through joint initiatives [Kalitta, 2012, p. 37].

Cities were supposed to take on construction of a new Europe. These partnerships developed simultaneously with the unification process of Western Europe [Smith, 2011, p. 50]. Currently, international cooperation of cities can be used in the implementation of EU funds in problematic regions within the European Union's regional policy. Its purpose is to “activate backward regions, to reconstruct depressed regions, to invigorate and reconstruct urban areas and activate the border regions” [Becla, Czaja 2014, p. 21]. Disparities in development of regions are caused by, among others, “processes related to the division of labor in an industrial society; increasingly shorter cycles of innovations’ development; globalization and digitization; new standards in qualifications and skills; different endogenous potentials output of regions” [Greta, 2014, p. 50]. Adequate implementation of regional policy based on international cooperation is an opportunity to improve living conditions of residents, to strengthen local labor markets and business development.

This paper aims to present the most important aspects of cooperation between Białystok and Grodno. Also, based on the analysis presented here, the authors propose of optimization international cooperation between these cities. The opportunity for a change in problem regions is international cooperation in the formula of twin cities, Euroregions or the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. To achieve the aim it will be used the following research methods: analytical method, statistical method and the comparative method.

2. Białystok and Grodno – characteristics of international activity

An example of cities cooperating in the formula of twin (partner) towns is a collaboration between the city of Białystok (Poland) and the city of Grodno (Belarus). Białystok is the capital of the Podlaskie region and the seat of its regional government. It is the largest urban area in the north-eastern Poland. It is the administrative, economic, cultural and scientific center of the region. For many centuries it is a city populated by people of different religions and nationalities [*The Borderland Poland – Belarus...*, 2013, p. 15]. Other indicators characterizing Białystok include: the area of 102 km²; 295, 282 inhabitants (as of 2013), [*Grodno and Białystok...*, 2015, pp. 10, 19].

Grodno is the capital city of the Grodno district, administrative and cultural center of the region [*The Borderland Poland – Belarus...*, 2013, p. 21]. It is characterized by multiculturalism. In the urban are representatives of more than 60 nationalities and different religions are present. The city has 356,557 inhabitants, and its area is 142 sq km overall (as of 2013), [*Grodno and Białystok...*, 2015, pp. 19, 10]. The basic information of Białystok and Grodno are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.

Basic information on Bialystok and Grodno

Description	Grodno	Bialystok
The total area in sq km	142	102
Population	356,557	295,282
Population per 1 sq km of the total area of the city	2 511	2 891
Median of the age (middle age)	33.9	39.0
Natural increase per 1000 of the population	5.3	1.1
Unemployed registered in thousands	1.0	17.2
Colleges	3	11
University students in thousands	29.1	36.0
Theatres	2	3
Tourist units of collective accommodation	22	27
Apartments in thousands	122.7	122.6
Flats per a thousand of the population	10.4	5.3
Cars in thousands of units	115.3	107.8

Source: [*Grodno and Bialystok...*, 2015, pp. 10-32].

The city of Grodno is an important partner of Bialystok within the formula of twin towns. Bialystok also cooperates with many other partner cities, e.g. Eindhoven (Netherlands), Kaunas (Lithuania), Milwaukee County (USA), the District of Dijon (France), Pskov (Russia), Grodno (Belarus), Kaliningrad (Russia), Bornova (Turkey), Gori (Georgia), Balti (Moldova), Gyumri (Armenia), Lutsk (Ukraine), Sumqayit (Azerbaijan), [Internal documents of the Department of the President in the Municipal Office in Bialystok].

Grodno cooperates with the following cities: Limoges (France), Druskininkai (Lithuania), Lazdijai (Lithuania), Vilnius (Lithuania), Chimiki (Russia), Cheboksary (Russia), Vologda (Russia), Slupsk (Poland), Ashkelon (Israel), Kraljevo (Serbia) [<http://grodno.gov.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=2081>, accessed: 03.05.2014].

3. Framework documents for the partnership between Grodno and Bialystok

Nowadays, cooperation between twin cities is of importance in the process of building and developing partnerships between regions. The agreements between the cooperating local government units of the towns situated on two different sides of the same border aim at strengthening and developing friendly relations between the local communities. The twin cities in the framework of signed agreements undertake to create and promote twinning in many areas (for example: economy, education, tourism, sport). The fundamental objectives of the cooperation are exchange experiences, collaboration

between companies, joint activities for development of EU projects, exchange of sport and cultural activities.

The first cooperation agreement between Białystok and Grodno was signed on 16 June 2000. The cooperation between the partner cities defined in it focused primarily on the areas of economy, education and culture. The agreement was in force for a period of three years. According to the agreement, the term was automatically extended for the next three years [*Agreement for 2000-2003*]. Under *the Cooperation Agreement between the City of Grodno (Belarus) and the City of Białystok (Poland) for 2000-2003* the program of cooperation between the city of Grodno and the city of Białystok was adopted, it is presented in Table 2. [*Agreement for 2000-2003*, points 1-4].

TABLE 2.
The program of cooperation between the city and the city of Grodno
Białystok for 2000-2003

Sphere (area, field)	Characteristics
economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – building conditions for cooperation between relevant organizations in Grodno and Białystok; – inspiring cooperation between Chambers of Industry and Commerce in Grodno and Białystok; – assistance in finding partners for cooperation; – encouraging entrepreneurs to participate in exhibitions in Grodno and Białystok
information exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – initiating cooperation between media in the two cities (e.g. exchange of publishing materials, radio and television programs); – mutual visits of journalists to Grodno and Białystok; – cooperation between spokespersons of the Mayor of Grodno and the President of Białystok;
culture, art, education, science, sport, tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – inspiring and promoting exchanges and cooperation between interested entities in Grodno and Białystok (universities and schools, entities responsible for culture, art and tourism);
exchange of experience between local government authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – conducting information exchange of in the following areas: activities of local government bodies, environmental protection, public utilities, public transport, social, sports, culture and arts.

Source: [*The Agreement for 2000-2003*, points 1-4].

Currently, the framework for cooperation between the cities of Białystok and Grodno is specified in the following legal documents:

- *the Agreement on cooperation between the City of Grodno (Belarus) and the City of Białystok (Poland) for 2000-2003*;

- *the Agreement on cooperation between the City of Bialystok and the City of Grodno of 16 December 2009.*

Based on the provisions of the Agreement on cooperation between Grodno and Bialystok projects involving promotion of bilateral relations and social stabilization of both cities and projects in the field of national minority cultures development will be implemented, [*Agreement for 2000-2003*, paragraphs 5-6].

Whereas both parties expressed willingness to continue cooperation, measures to renew the agreement were taken. Another *Agreement on cooperation between the City of Grodno and the City of Bialystok* was signed on 16 December 2009. The document was concluded on the basis of *Resolution No. XLV / 557/09 of the City Council of Bialystok of 7 September 2009*. The document contains the main directions and forms of cooperation carried out on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in the fields of economy, experience exchange in the areas of public tasks, culture, art, education, science, tourism, sports and health [*Resolution of 7 September 2009.*, §1].

The twin cities will, *inter alia*, create conditions for development of cooperation between relevant organizations and stakeholders (e.g. cooperation between Chambers of Industry and Commerce and other business organizations from Bialystok and Grodno), [*Agreement of 16 December 2009*, art. 2].

4. Town twinning – definition

Municipal partnerships or town twinning can be defined as foreign contacts of local governments, which are characterized by direct involvement of residents of municipalities and local organizations in cooperation with municipalities and communities abroad. Municipal partnerships are a form of international cooperation at a local level. They determine close contacts between communities of different countries and enable an access to experience exchange and cooperation in many areas of social life for local authorities in different countries [Skorupska, 2005, p. 15].

Town twinning (municipal partnerships) along with euroregions are organizational forms of cross-border cooperation of local authorities. Their lesser degree of institutionalization or formalization distinguishes them from euroregions.

International cooperation of cities is supposed to bring nations together. The initiator of the action should be local authorities which are close to citizens. This ensures development of social activity, action for local community and bringing other nationalities closer to each other. Involvement and participation in social life of twin cities determine popularization of universal values, e.g. security, justice, tolerance, respect, freedom [Musiał, 2012, pp. 220-221].

Polish local governments engage in thriving international cooperation of a bilateral character. Agreements concluded with neighbor entities and other entities serve as examples. This activity is mainly associated with implementation of EU funds. In addition, local governments eagerly join different types of organizations on a local and regional level to exchange experience, contacts and indicate their presence in the

international arena [Szadkowska, 2010, p. 102]. Twin cooperation between local governments from both sides of the border is often a form of grassroots diplomacy as it is carried out by municipalities (the lowest unit of territorial division of a state), so that they gain some independence from the national government.

5. Legal dimension of international town twinning

The constitutional and legislative reforms, which took place in Poland after 1989, enabled local governments to establish cooperation with local governments in other countries. One of the objectives was to standardize the transformation rules for participation of local governments in international relations [Skorupska, 2005, pp. 12-13].

The basic legal acts relevant for the twinning of Białystok and Grodno include:

1. international law (binding Poland):
 - *European Framework Convention on Cross-border Cooperation concluded between Territorial Communities and Local Authorities* (referred to as *the Madrid Convention*), signed in Madrid on May 21, 1980;
 - *European Charter of Local Self-Government* signed in Strasbourg on October 15, 1985;
2. bilateral agreements between Poland and Belarus:
 - *Declaration on good neighborly relations, mutual understanding and cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Belarus*, signed on October 10, 1991;
 - *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on the principles of cross-border cooperation*, signed on April 24, 1992;
 - *Treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Belarus on good neighborliness and friendly cooperation*, signed on June 23, 1992;
3. Polish legislation:
 - *Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997*;
 - *Local Government Act of March 8, 1990*;
 - *Act on local government units joining international associations of local and regional communities of September 15, 2000*;
4. Belarusian legislation:
 - *Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of March 15, 1994* [Конституция от 15 марта 1994];
 - *Act on territorial administration and local self-government of the Republic of Belarus of 4 January 2010* [ЗАКОН от 4 января 2010];
 - *Act on administrative-territorial system of the Republic of Belarus of May 5, 1998* [ЗАКОН от 5 мая 1998];
 - *Act on national and territorial meetings of July 12, 2000* [ЗАКОН от 12 июля 2000].

These regulations are the basis for international cooperation between Poland and Belarus at the international and regional levels.

6. Is the twinning formula applicable in the relations between Bialystok and Grodno?

To confirm effective cooperation between Bialystok and Grodno in the framework of twinning formula the following legal documents should be mentioned: *Agreement on cooperation between the city of Grodno (Belarus) and the City of Bialystok (Poland) for the period 2000-2003* and *Agreement on cooperation between the City of Bialystok and the City of Grodno of December 16, 2009*, as well as practical effects of the cooperation.

The cooperation of the twin cities of Bialystok and Grodno is reflected in the following areas of social life .:

1. in the field of sports, e.g.: the Podlaskie District Cycling Association organized the 25th International Junior Cycling Race involving players from the city of Grodno and the Lithuanian city of Alitius (29.06-02.07.2013) [Internal documents of the Podlaskie Basketball Club “Zubry” in Bialystok];
2. in the field of culture, e.g.: the Puppet Theatre of Bialystok performed the play “Chopin – Impression” in Grodno (2011); in the Cultural Centre of Bialystok the exhibition "Belarus Press Photo 2010-2011" was presented with guests: Sergey Michalenko and Sergey Gudilin - the winner of the Grand Prix of BPP 2011 (2011). [Internal documents of the Cultural Centre of Bialystok];
3. in the economic sphere, e.g.: representatives of Bialystok participated in a meeting with 15 representatives of the Belarusian Entrepreneurs Club of Grodno and Grodno Free Economic Zone (28.10.2010); delegates from Bialystok took part in the “International Investment Forums. Grodno – the city at the crossroads” (2010-2012), [Internal documents of the Strategy and Development Department of the Municipal Office in Bialystok];
4. in the field of education, e.g.: the University of Bialystok cooperates directly with universities from Belarus, among others, in the area of research, exchange of research results, exchange of academic staff and students, participation in conferences, joint development of scientific publications [Internal documents of the Department of International Relations and Promotion of the Marshal Office of Podlasie in Bialystok].

An important field of cooperation between Bialystok and Grodno is the economy. The twin cities initiate and support development of cooperation between relevant organizations and bodies (e.g. creating conditions for optimum operation of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and other organizations and businesses from Bialystok and Grodno). There is the International Investment Forum “Grodno-City at the intersection of the borders”, a cyclical event organized by the City of Bialystok and City of Grodno. The first forum was held in 2009 in Grodno. The meeting is an opportunity for intensification of cooperation between economic entities, development of exports, attracting investments, promotion and presentation of offers of the

Special Economic Zone GRODNOINVEST. In addition, meetings with exhibitors of the fair “Euroregion Niemen” among others from Belarus, Russia, Latvia, Germany are held simultaneously. The second International Investment Forum “Grodno-City at the intersection of the borders” was held on September 29 – October 1, 2010. On 28-30 September 2011 the third International Investment Forum “Grodno – City at the intersection of the border” took place in Grodno in which the authorities of Białystok participated. Another result of the bilateral economic cooperation between Białystok and Grodno was the meeting of the Mayor of Grodno, the Grodno Oblast Deputy Governor and business representatives from Belarus on 28 June 2010 at the Guest Palace. The meeting was attended by Polish entrepreneurs and representatives of local authorities. They talked about opportunities, conditions and prospects of investing in the capital of the Podlaskie region and principles of cooperation with local companies and entrepreneurs. The XVII Polish - Belarusian Economic Forum Neighborliness 2013 took place on June 26 in Białystok. The main theme of the meeting was “Regional cooperation in the field of agriculture and food industry as a driving force for investment and trade cooperation between Poland and Belarus”. The Forum was organized by the Polish – Belarusian Chamber of Commerce in Warsaw, Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Minsk, the Chamber of Commerce in Białystok and the Department of Trade and Investment Promotion of the Polish Embassy in Belarus with partners: the Belarusian Council of Farmers, the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurs of Belarus, Podlaskie province authorities and the authorities of Lublin and Grodno and the Brest Circuit. In preparation of the project the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Belarus were involved. The forum was attended by over 300 entrepreneurs from Poland and Belarus. There have been many more similar projects.

Effective co-operation of the partner cities of Białystok and Grodno requires certain financial resources. The main sources of funding of this collaboration are: own funds, European Union and international funds, budget resources of foreign partners. Own funds allow governments of both cities for independence and a wide spectrum of activities. It should be emphasized that local government units much easier to set aside funds for implementation of international cooperation in the framework of its own budgets in comparison to resources available to Euroregions or EGTC. It is worth mentioning here about the formula of cooperation within the Euroregion “Niemen”, whose members are, *inter alia*, Białystok and Grodno.

7. Cross-border cooperation within the Euroregion “Niemen”

Cross-border cooperation is an opportunity for development of Eastern Poland, including the Podlaskie region. Even before the Polish accession to the European Union, it was hoped that the effects of the peripheral location of the area will be resolved through cooperation within Euroregions. When initiating the first Euroregions it was envisaged that partners would focus on initiating and strengthening

economic cooperation, promotion of the regions' culture and frontier tourism, joint action to protect environment, cultural and educational activities, strengthening relations with neighboring countries, as well as finding and implementing new possibilities and forms of cooperation [Ram, 2002, p. 190]. That was the case with regard to the decision to create the Association of Cross-Border "Euroregion Niemen".

The Association was established under the agreement of June 6, 1997 signed by representatives of the border regions from Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. It was agreed that it would be of an open character. With time, the regions of the Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation also joined. From the Polish part there were local governments which became the members of the Association of the Euroregion "Niemen" (including the City of Bialystok). From the Belarusian side in the Euroregion there is the Grodno region (including Grodno), from Lithuania the authorities participating in the Association "Euroregion Office in Marijampole" and from the Russian party – the Russian regions: Chernyakhovsk, Gusev, Osersk, Krasnoznamenensk, Moscow Oblast and Nesterov (in 2014 other areas of the Kaliningrad region expressed interest in joining the Euroregion "Niemen"). The city of Suwalki was chosen for its seat. The main purpose of the agreement was to "create conditions for socio-economic and cultural and scientific cooperation in the border areas of the neighboring countries" [*Agreement of 6 June 1997*, § 2.1].

Initially, the formula of Euroregion in cross-border relations was sufficient, though imperfect. The lack of legal personality of all Euroregions meant that they did not have (and still do not have) optimal conditions for effective and efficient activity in their environment. The situation of peripheral areas in Poland has improved after joining the European Union in 2004, but some problems have remained, as in functioning of Euroregions their legal position have not changed – the instrument has not been regulated in EU or even national law; further it has the status of an association.

The Euroregion "Niemen", as well as other cross-border associations established in an EU country, could start to apply for the status of an intermediary in the allocation of EU funds for cross-border activities. Activities related to umbrella projects have become a major and basically the only field of action for many Euroregions. However, the number of grants will drop drastically with the completion of the EU financial perspective for 2014-2020, and other sources of funding may not be available due to the increase in the number of entities applying for funds and because of strict criteria for granting them. This could mean the end of some Euroregions.

In the European Union the search for another path of cooperation, a new formula based on EU law that could compete with Euroregions (and even substitute them) and effectively mitigate the backwardness of cross-border areas has begun. The chance appeared at the end of 2006 when the formula of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was developed.

8. Possibility of cooperation between Białystok and Grodno in the framework of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

The EGTC again aroused hopes of improving the socio-economic, infrastructure and general economic situation of the cross-border area, as well as led to a “new start” in the center-periphery relations [Nadalutti 2013, p. 768]. By virtue of *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of July 5, 2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation* establishing groupings in cross-border areas was made possible. A few years later, *Regulation No 1082/2006* was amended by *Regulation No 1302/2013 of December 17, 2013* and a number of significant changes in order to solve the problems of the first groupings were introduced.

The EGTC is an instrument for cross-border cooperation, which is granted legal capacity and capacity to perform acts in law – moreover, this ability is the broadest allowed by legislation of a country in which the EGTC has its seat. This is what Euroregions particularly lack.

A grouping can be established only in the territory of a Member State, and its headquarters must be located in a country of whose law at least one of the members of the grouping is governed by [*Regulation of December 17, 2013*, Art. 2.1 introduced by Art. 1). The list of entities that can join a grouping is as follows:

- Member States or authorities at national level;
- regional authorities;
- local authorities;
- public undertakings within the meaning of Art. 2. 1 point b) of *Directive 2004/17/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council* or public law entities within the meaning of Art. 1 par. 9 second subparagraph of *Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council*;
- undertakings entrusted with implementation of services of general economic interest in accordance with national and EU law applicable;
- national, regional or local authorities or bodies or public enterprises equivalent to those referred to in point d) from third countries, subject to the conditions laid down in Art. 3a [*Regulation of December 17, 2013*, Art. 3.1 introduced by Art. 1];
- associations of the aforementioned entities [*Regulation of December 17, 2013*, art. 3.1 introduced by Art. 1].

The EGTC can be joined by members of third countries or overseas territories [*Regulation of December 17, 2013*, Art. 3a. par. 1 introduced by Art. 1] – it is an opportunity for real cooperation between Białystok and Grodno within EGTC.

Facilitating and promoting territorial cooperation through the EGTC in the area of cooperation aim at achieving a kind of social and economic cohesion. Activity of a grouping may be limited to a given task / project or multiple tasks / projects [Niczyporuk, Perkowski, Kołodko Sawicki, 2010, p. 253]. These are the types of tasks that can be carried out by a grouping:

- “to implement programs under the European Territorial Cooperation (e.g. EGTC as the Managing Authority and / or the Joint Technical Secretariat for ETC programs),
- to implement projects co-financed by ETC structural funds (e.g. cross-border / transnational / interregional projects),
- to initiate other forms of territorial cooperation outside EU funding,
- to implement other EU funded projects regarding territorial cooperation” [Niczyporuk, Perkowski, Kołodko Sawicki 2010, p. 253].

In Poland, three groupings have now their headquarters, and in the Podlaskie region works on starting a Polish-Lithuanian EGTC are going on. Successful completion of the works could be an opportunity for a future access of the Grodno region to the Polish-Lithuanian EGTC. The creation of grouping should be treated as an investment – its establishment is time consuming and expensive, but with correct use of the collaborative tool it can bring a return on investment in the form of better infrastructure, creating high-quality networks of social and human capital and efficient use of natural assets in the cross-border areas.

Potential cooperation between Białystok and Grodno within the framework of an EGTC is primarily an opportunity of economic development. Cooperation of entrepreneurs, including the area of tourism, processing or marketing, can be crucial for development of the Polish-Belarusian border area. For many years it has been possible to cooperate with Belarus within activities of the Euroregion "Niemen" and funds for cross-border cooperation. The EGTC can intensify the cooperation and bring it to an entirely new level.

9. Summary

For many years Białystok remains in close relations with Grodno, and the formula of town twinning is applicable in relations between them. The formula of twin towns of Białystok and Grodno is an important platform for international cooperation of local governments, as well as stimulates and activates local communities. Binding agreements and its empirical results confirm the twinning. Representatives of both cities take part in many cultural, sporting and economic meetings. Cooperation between Białystok and Grodno in the field of economy; exchange of experience in the field of public tasks; culture, arts, education, science, tourism; sports; health improves bilateral relations and builds friendship between the cities. The formula of town twinning between Białystok and Grodno is evolving.

The fruits of cooperation may seem insufficient given the problems with the entry into force of *the Agreement on local border traffic between Poland and Belarus* [Agreement of February 12, 2010]. The entry into force of the Agreement will result in a positive change in the social, cultural, familial, economic and political sphere. This may be a stimulus for an even broader opening of Belarus to the West.

The cross-border cooperation within the Euroregion “Niemen” exists, although it is very limited, and therefore ineffective, due to the lack of legal personality of Euroregions.

Accordingly, the catalogue of measures that can be implemented with the cooperation is quite narrow and not directly proportional to problems that occur in peripheral areas. The possibility of cooperation between Białystok and Grodno in the framework of the EGTC seems to be more attractive. Since Polish-Belarusian border cooperation takes place on the basis of the Euroregion “Niemen”, it has also a chance to come through a grouping. This is a chance for strengthening cross-border economic, social, economic and even scientific (including in R&D sector) development of Białystok and Grodno, and even of entire regions – the Podlaskie region and the Grodno region. The catalogue of potential activities is much broader, and even access to EU funds appears to be much simpler both in the current EU financial perspective for 2014-2020, as well as after such a kind of support.

Any form of international cooperation undertaken should be based on partnership and mutual benefits. Its results will depend on strong commitment, determination and high competence of partners. Only this guarantees success.

The authors' participation in the preparation of the article

Włodzimierz Musiał – development of concepts, assumptions and methods, carrying out the research and the remaining input of work – 50%

Wojciech Zoń – development of concepts, assumptions and methods, carrying out the research and the remaining input of work - 50%;

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