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## PARADIPLMACY OF SELF GOVERNMENTS OF POLAND AND UKRAINE IN ASPECT OF RUSSIAN AGRESSION IN 2022

*The unjustified aggression against Ukraine committed by Russia on February 24, 2022 opened a new chapter in the field of foreign cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian cities, which had often previously established relationships within the framework of twinning, i.e. partner cities. The war in Ukraine did not go unnoticed by local governments in Poland. Paradiplomacy, which is an element of their functioning, allowed for specific actions, including organizing aid for Ukrainian citizens, transporting gifts, and even terminating contracts with partner cities in Belarus as a sign of protest and solidarity with the Ukrainian nation. In this article, which is of an illustrative nature, the author would like to demonstrate what forms of assistance and cooperation were implemented by selected local governments in Poland, and also present the cooperation of the partner cities of Koszalin and Iwano Frankiwsk in the form of a case study. Moreover, prospects for the development of institutional cooperation in the field of paradiplomacy of Polish and Ukrainian cities will be presented. The content also takes into account the perspective of the duration of the war in its further period. The selected research methods used are: quantitative and qualitative, historical methods, analysis of materials available on the Internet and selection of publications.*

**Key words:** *Ukraine, paradiplomacy, twinning, cooperation, Poland, self government.*

**Introduction.** Foreign cooperation of individual regions or even cities, known as paradiplomacy, allows local authorities to take action to consolidate partnerships between neighbours located mostly on the other side of the border, to undertake joint initiatives and to create development strategies at the level of the Euroregion. This is made possible by legal instruments and the catalogue of own tasks that each local authority has, which also includes the possibility of representation abroad and the creation of cooperation with other foreign entities<sup>1</sup>.

Circumstances which influence the formation of partnerships and agreements with other cities are their similar size, geographical location, as well as cultural factors or local history. This is in the case in Poland and Ukraine. Also on the western side of the Polish border, for example in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, where in the post-war period settlers also arrived from the so-called “Kresy” (borderlands), the former territories lost by Poland during World War II, hence there is no shortage of partner cities in the Ukraine. Various associations and institutions are involved in maintaining good relations and initiating events to bring the Ukrainian and Polish sides closer together, and they act as actors in the urban paradigm [6]. In the context of Ukraine, the Union of Ukrainians in Poland with its field branches is very active. The activities of this organisation after the Russian aggression in 2022 has been raised rapidly.

Local government paradiplomacy is a phenomenon that has recently attracted increasing interest from researchers analysing the scope and forms of local government activity. Paradiplomacy is referred to as IRSSG- International Relations of Sub-State Governments or parallel diplomacy. It is the object of public discourse and the subject of analyses concerning its role and positioning in the foreign policy of states. In the world, the conduct of autonomous foreign contacts between regions or cities was noted as early as 1961 (Rohan Butler). The paradiplomacy of local governments is also referred to

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<sup>1</sup> Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodship (Journal of Laws of 1998 No. 91 item 576), Act of 8 March 1990 on municipal self-government ((Journal of Laws of 2023, item 40 and 572), Act of 5 June 1998 on district self-government (Journal of Laws of 1998 No. 91 item 578).

in the literature as ‘local government diplomacy’, ‘microdiplomacy’ or ‘protodiplomacy’. According to political scientist Noe Cornago’s definition, paradiplomacy is ‘the involvement of sub-regional governments in international relations, through the establishment of formal and informal contacts, permanent or ad hoc, with foreign, state or public actors, in order to promote socio-economic, cultural or political interests’. Alexander Kuznetsov in his book ‘The Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy. Local Governments in Foreign Relations’ gives as a definition of paradiplomacy, as a form of political communication, for political, cultural, economic or other gain. Local governments, involved in these activities, are complicit with foreign, governmental and non-governmental actors [3].

**Materials and methods.** The research methods used in this article are the historical method, the quantitative method and qualitative, empirical research. An in-depth interview method was also used. It was based on the analysis of internet sources, local acts, laws and publications concerning the topic under study. Because of large scale of paradiplomacy made by Polish local governments, author decided to chose a few examples and explain the context, as well the case study was chosen.

Cooperation of cities before the outbreak of war in Ukraine and during the period of later.

In a study conducted in 2012 by the Institute of Local Self-Government, Ukraine as a country was one of the leaders when it came to the directions of paradiplomacy of Polish local governments (only Germany was ahead, with France in third place). In 2020/2021, another study was conducted, which confirmed the high interest in partnership with Ukraine [5].

The international situation, which changed after the Russian Federation’s onslaught, also intensified the phenomenon of paradiplomacy in Polish-Ukrainian relations. According to data from the Union of Ukrainian Cities in March 2022, more than 100 Ukrainian cities had nearly 700 foreign partners, mainly in the form of Polish cities, over time reaching more than 550 concluded cooperation agreements. Examples include the agreements concluded between Chernihiv and Rzeszów (Rzeszów was recognised by the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, who awarded it the title of ‘rescue city’), Kharkiv and Lublin, Równe and Tarnopol with Jelenia Góra, Zhytomierz and Gdynia.

Partnerships were sought on the Polish side by cities in Ukraine such as Dubowa, Solonianka, Dederkały Wielkie, Nowa Ushitsa, Rożyszcze, Zarzecze, Zaleszczyki and Irshavska. City cooperation on the Polish and Ukrainian sides is not about dialogue, cooperation and tangible assistance, but also about representing the local government, traditions and history of the area, getting to know the partner, strengthening ties and possible joint projects for the future. Olga Bogorodecka from the East European National University in Lutsk listed the characteristics of twinning on the Polish and Ukrainian sides. According to her, twinning cities are characterised by friendship, cooperation, mutual understanding and respect for culture, tradition and history. She also noted that common relations go far beyond bilateral contacts, as Poland and Ukraine share a common past and cultural identity [1].

When the attack on Ukraine occurred, Polish local authorities did not leave their partners without care and assistance. One of the examples is the West Pomeranian Voivodeship<sup>2</sup>. There, as also in the other parts of Poland, a special support package for Ukrainian citizens was prepared through social welfare institutions. 15 million PLN was earmarked for this purpose. These funds were used to finance legal aid, psychological assistance and the hiring of interpreters. These activities were also complemented by a project implemented in partnership with associations such as the Union of Ukrainians in Poland, Szczecin branch. From Szczecin, the capital of the voivodeship, the “Green Roads” foundation sent more than 350 tonnes of products in just two weeks to the partner city of Dnipropetrovsk, with which Szczecin has maintained contact since 2010. The city of Walcz supported Chocim and Korzec (partnership agreements from 2019) with donations and financial assistance, and a medical delegation travelled to Chocim to train specialists on site. In the area of Western Pomerania,

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<sup>2</sup> A region of Poland located in the north-west of the country, bordering Germany and Scandinavia. The administrative division of West Pomeranian Voivodeship includes 113 communities, including 11 urban communities, 55 urban-rural communities. See [www.eregion.wzp.pl](http://www.eregion.wzp.pl) [accessed 27.02.2024].

1.5 million refugees from Ukraine were received during the first period of the war. Humanitarian aid was organised and transports were sent out, coordinated by the provincial state administration; the collected gifts went to the Strategic Reserve Agency in the Lublin Voivodeship. Numerous cities, as a sign of protest, broke their existing cooperation agreements with the Russian side or Belarus, which supported the aggression on Ukraine<sup>3</sup>. The forms of support for Ukraine by local governments manifested themselves most often in the form of: – organising places to stay, reception and accommodation facilities, sending donations, humanitarian aid – psychological assistance and subsequent help with adaptation (work, school, environment) – information activities and information points in offices – the involvement of external participants in the form of the Honorary Consul of Ukraine, associations.

However, another year of war in Ukraine is underway and the model of assistance has changed from ad hoc to more institutional, including infrastructure and professional activation for people affected by the armed actions. The West pomerania voivodeship has planned almost PLN 15 million for this purpose, and support will include the organisation of integration sites for people fleeing war in Ukraine providing activities involving refugees and the host community, assistance in finding employment and childcare. Legislation has also changed. The President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, signed an amendment to the Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine. The act has already been published in the Journal of Laws and entered into force on 22 February 2024. It provides for the extension of entitlements for war refugees from Ukraine in Poland until 30 June 2024<sup>4</sup>.

Since February 2022, a number of local government partnership initiatives have emerged, such as the “Polish Cities of Ukraine” initiative signed on behalf of the Union of Polish Metropolises, the EU Committee of the Regions and the Union of Polish Cities and the Union of Ukrainian Cities in Kiev on 8 November 2022<sup>5</sup>. Four task forces were set up to address assistance in specific areas: municipal economy, housing issues, social assistance and humanitarian action, and assistance in integrating Ukraine into the European community. It is precisely the municipal economy that seems to currently be the most important in terms of helping Ukrainian metropolises struggling to clean up after the devastation caused by shelling and bombing. In July 2023, a convoy organised by Polish cities under the slogan ‘Cars for Ukraine’s municipal services’ set off from Gdansk for Ukraine. Polish local authorities have so far donated to Ukrainian local authorities, among others, six pneumatic tents with equipment, dozens of power generators, construction materials and tools, hygiene products, food-stuffs, 13 buses, dehumidifiers, fans and chainsaws with a total value of several million PLN.

**Koszalin and Ivano-Frankivsk as an example of urban paradiplomacy.** Among the local governments, it is worth noting the cooperation between the cities of Ivano-Frankivsk and the Polish city of Koszalin<sup>6</sup>.

Ivano-Frankivsk used to belong to Poland and was called Stanislaviv, and a group of former residents settled in or near Koszalin after the Second World War. Koszalin’s foreign contacts with the town of Stanislavow were sealed with an agreement in 2010. The scope of cooperation included culture, education and economy, and the document was subsequently extended for a further 10 years. Koszalin’s education system has benefited from this cooperation in the form of pupil exchanges,

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<sup>3</sup> In Swinoujscie, at the beginning of March 2022, the Russian partner city Svetlyy was changed to the Ukrainian city Truskavets. In front of the Swinoujscie magistrate's office, the name of the former Russian partner city was officially removed and replaced with the new Ukrainian one.

<sup>4</sup> Infor.pl, *Entitlements for Ukrainians in Poland extended until mid-2024*, [https://www.infor.pl/prawo/nawosci-prawne/6485998,uprawnienia-dla-ukraincow-w-polsce-wydluzone-do-polowy-2024-roku-planowane-jest-kolejne-przedluzenie-co-ukraincy-przebywajacy-w-polsce-powinni-wiedziec.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.infor.pl/prawo/nawosci-prawne/6485998,uprawnienia-dla-ukraincow-w-polsce-wydluzone-do-polowy-2024-roku-planowane-jest-kolejne-przedluzenie-co-ukraincy-przebywajacy-w-polsce-powinni-wiedziec.html#google_vignette) [accessed 27.02.2024].

<sup>5</sup> Union of Polish Cities, *Trust and cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian cities*, <https://www.miasta.pl/aktualnosci/zaufanie-i-wspolpraca-miast-polskich-i-ukrainskich> [accessed 27.02.2024].

<sup>6</sup> Koszalin is the second largest city in Western Pomerania with a population of over 100,000. Ivano-Frankivsk lies south west of Ukraine at a distance of 150-300 km from the borders of Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia. It is a city of regional significance, administrative, economic and cultural centre of the Precarpathian region. Official site of City Ivano-Frankivsk, <https://www.mvk.if.ua/en/aboutcity> [accessed: 27.02.2024].

and a delegation from the Koszalin municipal authorities has also visited a memorial to those murdered near the city, which was also in keeping with the common policy of remembrance. When war broke out in Ukraine, Koszalin sent donations to Ivano-Frankivsk on no fewer than 11 occasions. Power generators, batteries, chargers, foodstuffs and medicines were donated. A group of 14 people, including four women and ten children, were also received in Koszalin. The last charity transport took place to Ivano-Frankivsk at the end of 2023, and aid is now organised in the form of education for children, care and adaptation to life in Poland. Koszalin still intends to continue its cooperation with Ivano-Frankivsk and looks forward to its development.

**Results.** The issue of the paradiplomacy of Polish and Ukrainian cities will undergo further development and further in-depth research in this direction seems to be necessary due to the growing tendency to create new partnerships and to attract more twin cities in both countries. Taking into account the period before the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the administrative reform of that country from 2015–2020, which introduced the decentralisation of Ukraine, It should be recognised that there has been an increased interest in cities in Ukraine on the Polish side since February 2022. Thus, Poland, has become one of the main foreign partners in Ukraine's paradiplomacy, among countries such as France, Germany or Italy. The further development of international relations between the cities and regions of Poland and Ukraine will, of course, depend on the political and war situation in Ukraine, but successive aid plans and the development of institutional cooperation indicate that cooperation between the cities will have a sustainable and viable dimension. There is also visible some kind of change, contained the support of materials. Nowadays, cities on Ukraine need the most all types of construction equipment. However, not all twin cities in Poland are able to supported them by this.

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### **Tomasz Wojciechowski. Парадипломатія органів самоврядування Польщі та України в аспекті російської агресії у 2022 році**

*Невиправдана агресія проти України, учинена Росією 24 лютого 2022 р., відкрила новий розділ у сфері зовнішньої співпраці між польськими та українськими містами, які раніше часто встановлювали стосунки в рамках побратимів, тобто міст-партнерів. Війна в Україні не обійшла стороною органи місцевого самоврядування у Польщі. Парадипломатія, яка є елементом їх функціонування, давала змогу здійснювати конкретні дії, зокрема організацію допомоги громадянам України, перевезення подарунків і навіть розривання контрактів із містами-партнерами Білорусі на знак протесту та солідарності з українським народом. У цій статті, яка має ілюстративний характер, автор хотів би продемонструвати, які форми допомоги та співпраці реалізували вибрані органи місцевого самоврядування у Польщі, а також представити співпрацю міст-партнерів Кошаліна та Івана Франківська у формі тематичного дослідження. Окрім того, представлено перспективи розвитку інституційної співпраці у сфері парадипломатії польських та українських міст. Зміст також ураховує перспективу тривалості війни в її подальший період. Вибрані методи дослідження: кількісно-якісні, історичні, аналіз матеріалів, доступних у мережі Інтернет, та вибірка публікацій.*

**Ключові слова:** Україна, парадипломатія, побратимство, співпраця, Польща, самоврядування.