

The Regio Futures Programme – The Feasibility Study (FS)*

Introduction

The innovative idea of the Regio Futures Programme emerged in the framework of the Warsaw Conference – The Future of European regions, Warsaw, May 31st – June 2nd 2007. The Conference was an interesting example both in intellectual and pragmatic dimension.

The real success of the Conference is however in the wisdom, imagination and efficiency in the follow up of the Conference – *Vivant sequentes*. The follow up was indicated in the suggestion of dr Grażyna Gęsicka – The Polish Minister of Regional Development – to incorporate in the mind set of European Regions – *The Regio Futures Perspective of the year 2050*.

In this context we are inspired to design a proposal of a Research Programme – *Regio Futures 2050*. The preconference volume is an useful starting point in our reflection related to the design of the proposed Programme.

In September 2007 - before the November Meeting - we will have already the Post Conference Volume – as a next step in our thinking related to RFP.

The Feasibility Study presented in this contribution is a set of approaches, suggestions and proposals how to change the idea of the Programme into a real intellectual and institutional construction. I hope that this Feasibility Study will be useful in the design and implementation of the Meeting organized by the Polish Ministry of Regional Development – The Regio Futures Programme, Warsaw – November 8th – 10th 2007.

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After some internal brainstorming reflection I have accepted the following outline of the Feasibility Study (FS):

- I. The concept of Feasibility Study**
- II. The triple feasibility**
- III. The mission and goal of the programme**
- IV. The empirical and prospective substance of the Programme**
- V. The methodological landscape of the Programme**
- VI. The diagnostic methodology**
- VII. The visionary methodology**
- VIII. The scenario methodology**
- IX. The interactive model of a case study – The Regio Futures of Region X**
- X. The strategic role of three communities**
- XI. The dialogue of regions and corporations as an inspiration for the Programme**

* Warsaw, August 2007.

- XII. The programming network of the European Commission as a framework and inspiration for RFP**
- XIII. The concept and monographic contributions of OECD as an inspiration for RFP**
- XIV. RFP as a laboratory of holistic approaches in social sciences**
- XV. The pragmatic validity of RFP**
- XVI. The Regio Futures Consortium as the institutional foundation and framework of RFP**
- XVII. The general conclusions of the Feasibility Study**
- XVIII. The proposal of a tentative Programme of the November Meeting**

I. The concept of Feasibility Study

I think that it is necessary to quote the Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Chicago, 1986) presenting the following indirect definition of feasibility:

“feasibility – the quality of being feasible”
“feasible - capable of being done”,
“feasible – capable of being managed, utilized or dealt with successfully”.

In this context I would like to formulate the following thesis: *“The Regio Future Programme is feasible – capable of being done and dealt with successfully”.*

I hope that the content of my contribution will be recognized as a prove supporting this thesis.

II. The triple feasibility

In the RFP the question – “feasible - capable of being done” – has three answers:

Capable of being done – in the domain of the theory and methodology

Is our intellectual equipment strong enough to answer the challenge of RFP? The answer is positive. However we have to acknowledge the difference related to the strong theoretical and methodological network of Regio history and Regio diagnosis and the relatively weak theoretical and methodological network of Regio futurology. The RFP may create contributions integrating the domain of Regio history, Regio diagnosis and Regio futurology.

Capable of being done in the domain of factographical knowledge of the past, present and future

We have a rich and comprehensive factographical knowledge related to Regio history and Regio diagnosis. This knowledge is the empirical foundation of RFP. We hope that we will have the proper analytical capacities to use this knowledge in a selective and at the same time comprehensive way.

In the Regio futurology we find a difficult and may be paradoxical problem of factographical knowledge. Prima facie the factographical knowledge of the future is *ex definitione* not existing. However our wisdom, imagination and cognitive will is creating a *sui generis* “factographical” knowledge of the Future. It is interesting to note that there is a quickly growing stream of “information” related to years 2020 and 2050 emerging in different places of the global scene. This means that our RFP will not function in a global and European vacuum. Just the opposite the regions will be challenged by the pressure of the global and European scene – to find their place in the landscape of 2020 and 2050.

In this context the Regio Futurology proposed by RFP is not an option - it is a hard necessity which will emerge in the very near future. The RFP is only an anticipation of this near future.

Capable of being done in the domain of institutions and policies

There is no doubt that RFP can be incorporated in the framework of the philosophy of grand international organizations and especially of OECD and the European Union. I am convinced that the innovative initiative of the Polish Ministry of Regional Development will find support and cooperation in numerable institutions responsible for regional development in European and non European countries. So we have a clearly positive answers to the question of the institutional capable of “being done”.

It is interesting to note the creative interaction of the three dimensions of feasibility – the theoretical knowledge, the factographical knowledge and the institutional will to design and implement the RFP.

III. The mission and goals of RFP

The crucial pragmatic mission and goal of RFP is to develop the internal knowledge, imagination and will of the regions – to recognize the urgent necessity of long term future oriented approaches. These approaches are important inputs into the present decision making process trying to solve the basic contemporary problems of the given region. The decision making process in a region is blind without the knowledge and imagination related to long term global perspective. The RFP will create inspirations for the individual regions – how to develop the knowledge imagination and will related to the performance of the region in the future.

This future oriented “mind” of the regions will at the same time improve the quality of the dialogue of the regions and governments, regions and international organizations and regions and corporations. The future oriented “mind” of the region should have a strong endogenous motivation. Such a region will be not only a recipient of recommendations generated by national governments, European Union and OECD. It will be a partner and innovative participant of the great debate concerning the future of Regions. The case studies presented in the framework of our November Meeting will be a testing field of the feasibility of this pattern of motivation and thinking.

I understand that the mission and goal of RFP can be formulated in different ways following different cognitive and pragmatic assumptions. I think however that we should try to find a leading formulation giving a strong cognitive and pragmatic backbone to RFP.

IV. The empirical and prospective substance of RFP

In the conventional pattern of our methodological reflection, the empirical and prospective substance are two separate dimensions. The empirical domain is the domain of real substance which can be tested as an objective reality. The prospective domain is related to our perceptions of the future which are the products of our knowledge and imagination. We need a deep methodological reflection related to the integration of empirical and prospective substance keeping in mind that the experience of each day of our life is changing the future into history. This to my mind is the philosophy of long duration and the philosophy of turning points. This is an important problem of RFP which will be discussed in the next parts of our FS.

V. The methodological landscape of RFP

In the network of case studies we should find some common denominators in the field of theoretical reflection and methodological approaches. In this context somehow paradoxically I am presenting for your consideration three methodological dualities – the duality of diagnoses, the duality of visions and the duality of scenarios.

1) The historical versus prospective diagnosis

In the proposed studies we would like to outline not only the diagnosis of the historical transformation of the years 1996 – 2006 but also a new type of diagnosis called the prospective diagnosis of the year 2020. This diagnosis would be a starting point for the vision of 2050 and for the scenarios 2020 – 2050. The essence of our methodological innovation is related to the assumption that our vision of 2050 has as a diagnostic starting point not the reality of the year 2000 but the imagined reality of the year 2020. This assumption is very important for the methodology of Regio Futures 2050.

2) The medium term versus long term visions

The visions of the Future are based on knowledge, imagination and mental courage. In the medium term vision of 2020 the foundation of knowledge is very firm. Imagination and mental courage have a very strong background in our knowledge of Future. In the long term vision of 2050 our knowledge is relatively weak. In this situation the imagination and mental courage are most important.

3) The medium term versus long term scenarios

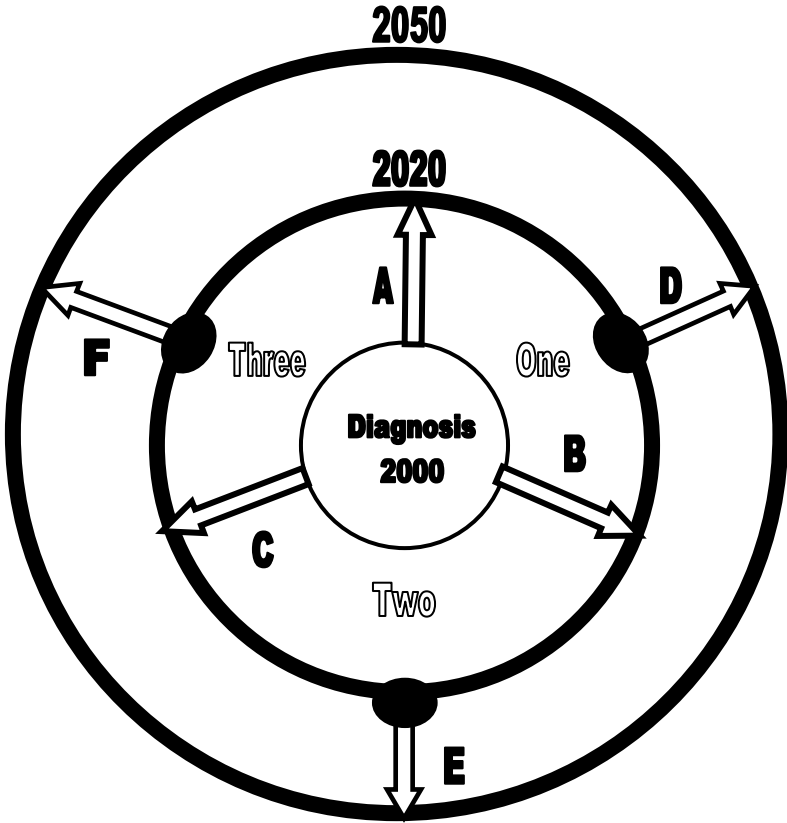
It is very clear that the methodological construction of medium and long term scenarios must be quite different. The climate of uncertainty for the years 2007 – 2020 is quite different in relation to the climate of uncertainty of the years 2020 – 2050. The scope and scale of uncertainty in medium and long term visions and scenarios are a great challenge for our mind and imagination.

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To my mind the methodological dualities are an important innovation in the construction of our project. We see very clearly the diagnosis, the visionary and the scenario dualities. We see the difference in the climate of uncertainty dominating in the medium and long term visions and scenarios.

I am convinced that The Regio Future Programme would be an important contribution to the emerging New Futurology of the year 2050.

Let us look at the following methodological landscape* :



- ABC – Scenarios 2007 – 2020
- DEF – Scenarios 2020 – 2050
- 2000 – The diagnosis of 2000
- 2020 The vision of 2020 and the “diagnosis” of 2020

One – The diagnostic background for Scenario D – the field between Scenario A and B
 Two – The diagnostics background for Scenario E. The field between Scenario B and C

* The inspiration for this landscape is derived from the suggestion of J. Muszyński.

Three – The diagnostic background for Scenario F. The field between Scenario C and A.
2050 – The vision of 2050

VI. The diagnostic methodology

The diagnosis is the empirical cornerstone of the RFP. In diagnostic studies the main theoretical and pragmatic difficulty is the selection of a proper set of questions which are organizing the cognitive and pragmatic pattern of the diagnosis. Our mind and will can face a double deficiency in this process:

- ✓ the deficiency of knowledge paralyzed by the scope of conventional wisdom,
- ✓ the deficiency of moral and intellectual courage paralyzed by opportunism and political correctness.

There are numerable examples of diagnostic studies which are carefully avoiding the real questions and concentrating attention on problems of marginal importance. We should try very firmly to eliminate such approaches in RFP.

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In the framework of RFP we will have diagnostic studies of three types:

- 1) static diagnostic studies
- 2) dynamic diagnostic studies
- 3) prospective diagnostic studies

The static diagnostic studies will concentrate attention on the experiences of the region in the year 2006. In dynamic diagnostic studies – we will analyze the experience of the transformation of the given region at the turn of the XX and XIX century (the decade 1996 – 2005). The prospective diagnosis is an invented “diagnosis” of the year 2020 as a take off platform for the visions and scenarios related to the year 2050.

VII. The visionary methodology

The vision is an “invented” future. It is very difficult to say that in the treasure of our imagination, knowledge and wisdom we can find a methodological framework suggesting how to “invent” this future in our case – the future of the year 2050. naturally the challenge of the “invented” future is greater for the year 2050 than for the year 2020. There is a great difference in the relative role of knowledge and imagination in medium and long term visions. In any case the “invented” future is a set of questions which must be answered in the challenging process of “inventing” the future - in our case the Regio Futures.

VIII. The scenario methodology

This is a very rich field both in academic and pragmatic terms. In our case I would like to concentrate attention of the scenarios around four fundamental dilemmas:

- 1) long duration versus turning points
- 2) path dependency versus path creation
- 3) virtuous versus vicious circles
- 4) catching up versus lagging behind climate

In any scenario writing we must face the dilemma long duration versus turning points. We have to make a decision what is more important – the process of long duration – the process of continuity and accumulation or the process of turning points – as phenomena of rapid change – the change in the structures and driving forces in the developmental processes.

The second dilemma is related to the concept of path dependency versus path creation. In the Pre and Post Conference Volume we find excellent contributions in this field.

The third dilemma is the dilemma of virtuous versus vicious circles. In the process of scenario writing we can try to find an answer in this field. Are we expecting that in the scenario we will find the prevailing power of virtuous circles – driving the cumulative dimension of change in a positive direction or we will find the prevailing power of vicious circles- driving the cumulative dimension of change into the direction of a catastrophe.

The dilemma of catching up or lagging behind - climate and psychology is a dilemma of all European regions. This dilemma has a different face in regions representing different level of development and welfare. This dilemma is assuming that for example California is the most attractive model of regional development. If we reject this hypothesis then the whole problem of catching up or lagging behind psychology must be reformulated. The catching up versus lagging behind problem is de facto related to the suggestion that the region is exposed only to the forces of path dependency and that the region has no power of path creation.

The process of scenario writing – the process of development Scenarios ABC and Scenarios DEF is much broader and comprehensive than the scope of four dilemmas outlined above. I think however that the four dilemmas are a good starting point in the construction of Scenarios ABC and Scenarios DEF.

IX. The interactive model of a case study – The Future of Region X

In the RFP 2050 we have to reconcile two sometimes conflicting principles. The principle of academic freedom and the principle of coordination and cumulative effects.

The first principle is opening our mind to innovate approaches and to the discovery of new empirical and prospective insights.

The second principle is opening the comparative perspective in which each case study is a contribution to the implementation of the general idea of RFP 2050 to discover the grand mechanisms linking the perspective interactions of the global and regional scene.

In this spirit I would like to propose that each case study could eventually accept the following thematic sequence (compare the Pre conference Volume).

- 1) **The methodology of the case study – diagnosis – visions – scenarios – the wisdom and honesty of the diagnosis – the different methodologies of medium and long term visions and scenarios**
- 2) **The transformation of the region at the turn of the XX and XXI century (the diagnosis)**

The transformation of regional economy, regional society, regional governance. The transformation of education, science and culture, the interaction of the regional, European and global scene. The spirit of innovation and imitation in the processes of regional transformation. The emergence of a creative regional economy and society. The power of comprehensive, courageous and honest diagnostic studies.

3) **The visions 2020**

In each case study we should outline the comprehensive vision of 2020. The power of our wisdom and imagination in the field is quite strong. The theoretical and pragmatic demand for this vision is very great especially in the case of European regions, where the visions of 2020 are *de facto* an anticipation of the results of two planning cycles of the European Commission (2007-2013 and 2014-2020).

4) **The scenarios of regional development 2007 – 2020**

Our intellectual equipment to outline medium term scenarios for 13 years is in relatively good shape. In this scenarios we can test two hypotheses well documented in the Pre conference Volume:

- ✓ *Primo* – the path development, the path destruction and the path creation hypotheses
- ✓ *Secundo* – the catching up and lagging behind hypotheses.

In my methodological framework the scenarios are an intellectual and pragmatic bridge linking the diagnostic studies of chapter six and the visionary studies of chapter seven.

5) **The “diagnosis” of the year 2020**

For the sake of methodological elegance and consistency we should rewrite the 2020 vision into a *sui generis* “diagnosis” of the year 2020 – as a starting point for the vision of the year 2050 and the scenarios 2020-2050.

6) The visions of 2050

The long term visions are a weak point in the methodology of prospective regional studies. The long term visions are a great challenge for our knowledge and imagination. There is no doubt however that the 2050 time horizon is emerging very clearly in global prospective studies. It is an open question if in this field the regional scene will accept a passive approach to be only an observer of the transformation of the global scene. The ambition of RFP 2050 is to promote the region as an active participant of the global dialogue 2050. So in each case study we should at least try to outline different visions of the year 2050.

7) The scenarios of regional development for the years 2020 – 2050

The XXI century is an age of uncertainties and challenges never experienced in the history of human kind. In this context the mission to outline regional development scenarios for the years 2020-2050 is maybe an impossible mission. The proposed case studies should at least try to see the scenarios 2020-2050 as a field of our creative imagination which sometimes is more important than knowledge.

8) Research priorities of the development of RFP 2050

Naturally this model cannot be seen as an imposed pattern to be implemented by the participants of the RFP. It is only an open proposal submitted to the attention of the Authors of the case studies. The liberal interpretation of this proposal should however not eliminate the idea of common denominators emerging in RFP. Naturally this model will be reformed in the framework of the November Meeting.

X. The role of three strategic communities

The Regio Futures Programme should be seen as an multidimensional activity including integrated approaches in the field of theoretical, methodological and pragmatic reflection. This means that the Euro Futures Consortium should incorporate as active members three strategies communities:

- ✓ Primo – the academic community
- ✓ Secundo – the governance community
- ✓ Tertio – the business community

The academic community will face the challenge of innovative reflection – a joint challenge of knowledge and imagination – a challenge to see the Future of the region as a holistic phenomenon – an excellent field to test the interdisciplinary and meta disciplinary methodologies.

Each case study should be seen as a laboratory of creative social sciences. Each case study will be also a testing field for new inspirations for the institutions of governance at the global, European, national, regional and local levels. The ability and art of long term approaches is not the strongest feature of the conventional structures of governance. The Euro Futures Programme could perform an important role to promote this art and ability in the broad domain of governance.

The RFP must solve the difficult problem – how to involve in this Programme open minded members of the business community. We know that the grand transnational corporations have very efficient and brilliant offices for long term strategic planning. It would be a great success of the RFP if this experience of the corporations could be one of the valid inspirations for RFP. We should develop our imagination and effort to answer the question how to involve into the RFP at least five strategic planning offices of the grand transnational corporations. The success of this initiative will open new perspectives in the design and implementation of RFP.

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The interaction of three strategic communities is not only an important mission of RFP. It is also a challenge for metadisciplinary social sciences – how to create conditions and motivations for effective cooperation of persons and institutions having sometimes very different perceptions of the past, the present and the futures.

XI. The dialogue of Regions and Corporations as an inspiration for RFP

There are four most important actors of the global scene of the XXI century:

- ✓ the transnational corporations (T.N.C.)
- ✓ the regions
- ✓ the states – countries
- ✓ the international organizations

In the RFP we will concentrate attention on the strategic partnership of corporations and regions. This is a challenging problem which could be a great inspiration for theoretical reflection and pragmatic action. In this context will present some opening remarks related to the following topics:

- 1) **TNC as an inspiration for regions**
- 2) **The regions as an inspiration for TNC**
- 3) **RFP as an inspiration for meta-disciplinary approaches in managerial and regional studies**
- 4) **The management of the future**
- 5) **The four perspectives**
- 6) **The three dimensions**

1) **TNC as an inspiration for regions**

Following the observations of S. Boisier we can say that in the framework of Old Regionalism the region was seen as a quasi state – in the framework of New Regionalism the region should be seen as a quasi corporation. In this context the TNC is a model for the reconstruction of regional governance leading to the reduction of relations based on political power and increasing relations based on management.

This means that the corporational reconstruction of regional governance is an important indirect suggestion emerging from RFP.

2) **The region as an inspiration for TNC**

It is well known that the current reconstruction of corporate governance is changing the relations between the classical stiff approaches of functional universalism to elastic approaches allocating an important place to spatial units in the management of the corporation.

The spatial units are getting a growing autonomy in the decision making mechanism (decentralization). This autonomy is pushing the TNC into a growing recognition of the *genius loci* represented by the individual identities and assets of different regions.

This means that the role of the regional *genius loci* in the global success of TNC is growing in the conditions of the XXI century.

3) **RFP – as an inspiration for meta-disciplinary approaches in managerial and regional sciences**

The managerial and regional sciences are two different domains of academic reflection and pragmatic activities. The RFP will supply a rich field of cooperation and inspiration for meta-disciplinary approaches emerging in this two domains facing the challenge of the strategic partnership of corporations and regions.

4) The management of the future

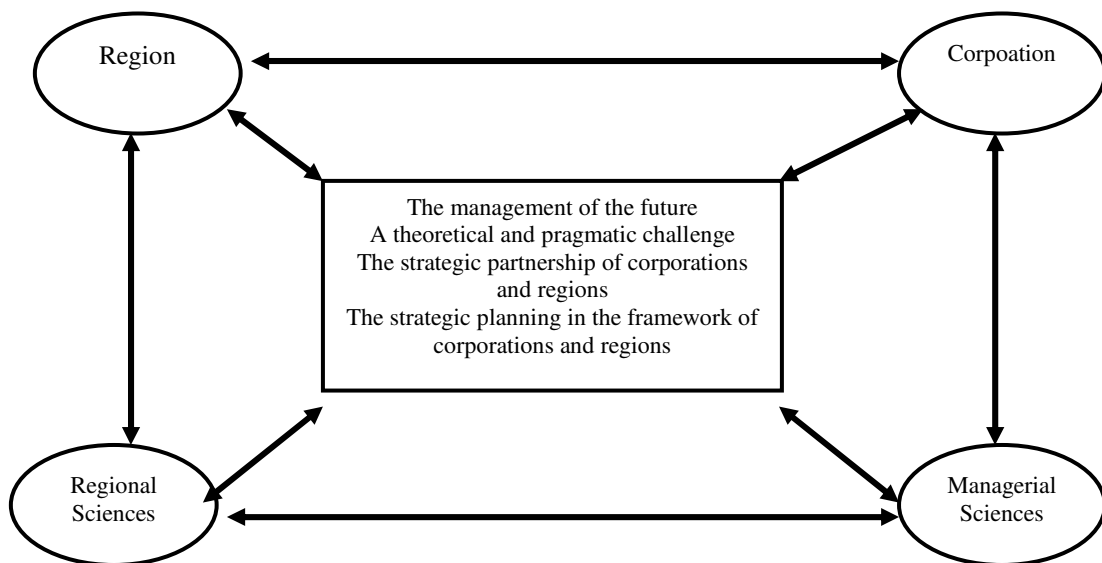
This is a most challenging formulation both in theoretical and pragmatic reflection. In the framework of RFP we should try to face this unique intellectual challenge.

5) The four perspectives

In this context four perspectives were introduced:

- a) the regional governance in the perspective of TNC
- b) the corporate governance in regional perspective
- c) the perspectives related to the mutual interaction of managerial and regional sciences
- d) the perspectives involved in comprehensive approaches to the management of the future

Table II
The four perspectives



6) The three dimensions

The network of reflection related to RFP could be developed as a field of interaction of three dimensions:

- 1) the theory of the region and the corporation, the theory of the management of the future,
- 2) the empirical studies related to the experiences of strategic partnership of regions and corporations,
- 3) the pragmatic studies outlining the corporate reconstruction of the regions and regional reconstruction of the corporations.

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The dialogue of regions and Corporations will have a especially important place in the structure of the November Meeting.

XII. The Programming Network of the European Commission as a framework and inspiration for RFP

It would be not difficult to see the European Commission as a huge and highly competent programming network. The European Commission has a brilliant chapter in the promotion in the member countries of a future oriented programming culture. This culture has however three features:

- 1) it is more concentrated on medium than on long term approaches
- 2) it is concentrated on programming of selected domains like cohesion policies, transportation policies, agricultural policies, R and D policies etc.
- 3) it is less concentrated on holistic Programming of the Future of the European Union *in toto*, for example – the Commission has not prepared a comprehensive vision of Europe 2020 or Europe 2050.

In this context the Regio Futures Programme of Regio Futurology 2020 and 2050 could be seen as an important innovation in the programming structure of the European Commission.

XIII. The conceptual and monographic contributions of OECD

In the field of global future oriented studies OECD is probably the leading international organization. The magnificent library of OECD contributions is widely and highly recognized in the global scale. The relevance of the OECD contributions for RFP should be analyzed in a separate paper. In this context let us mention only the monographs of Regions and Cities published by OECD.

We propose to build one of the panels of the November Meeting around the monograph of Randstad Holland, naturally adopted to the framework of RFP. We hope that the theoretical and pragmatic assumptions of RFP will find a favorable reception and support in the great intellectual and pragmatic community of OECD.

XIV. RFP as a laboratory of holistic approaches in social sciences

RFP should try to create innovative contributions in the field of theory and methodology of transdisciplinary social sciences. We should try for example to overcome the tradition of holistic approaches where holistic interpretations mean simply multidimensional interpretations. In a conventional interpretation holism is a multidimensional approach without recognition of the difference between essential and non essential driving forces of development.

In the RFP we should test a new interpretation of holism as the knowledge, imagination and ability to find the crucial question, the crucial problem which will organize our reflection related to the holistic vision of the past, present and the future.

Sometimes it would be difficult to discover the only one crucial question and one crucial problem. Maybe two or three crucial questions will be necessary. We should avoid however a situation when our attention is dispersed in the framework of a long list of questions and problems pushing us out from the domain of holism into the domain of conventional multidimensionality.

In this context I would like to propose to consider four fields of holistic interpretations in the framework of RFP.

The first field is the theory and methodology of regional transformation and diagnostic studies related to this transformation. Contrary to popular opinions the diagnostic studies are a very difficult field. You need a lot of knowledge, imagination and intellectual and moral courage to discover and analyze the real crucial problem of the diagnosis. It is easy to find in our experiences diagnostic studies concentrating attention not only on real crucial problems but on secondary and maybe fictitious problems. The history of the Polish Diagnosis of the State of Space Economy in the eighties is a striking example in this field. It would be interesting to analyze from this point of view the huge library related to the explanation of the experiences of the Italian Mezzogiorno.

The second field is the theory and methodology of Regio Futurology. In the medium and long term visions, scenarios and strategies a lot of attention is allocated to holistic approaches. However the futurological holism is a greater challenge than the diagnostic holism.

The third field is the theory and methodology of regional policy. We have a long way to go to discover the model of holistic regional policy as a holistic instrument transforming the European megaspace as an element of the global space. In the experiences of the past, the regional policies have recognized the necessity to use from time to time the holistic terminology but in most cases the regional policies were designed and implemented as regional economic policies.

The fourth field is the development of regional studies as a domain of transdisciplinary theoretical and pragmatic approaches leading to the transformation of the European megaspace at the continental, national and regional level. The regional studies have an excellent record seen in theoretical, methodological and empirical perspective. The RFP should inject into the theory and practice of regional studies – The Regio Futures Perspective.

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The Regio Futures Programme should be seen as a laboratory of holistic approaches in social sciences. We can change this laboratory into a charismatic intellectual and pragmatic venture.

This is a great challenge for RFP. We have to stretch our knowledge and imagination to implement not only the direct mission of RFP but also the more general indirect mission in the field of the development of transdisciplinary social sciences.

XV. The pragmatic validity of RFP

The knowledge, art and imagination applied in the field of regio Futures has triple pragmatic validity as an input:

- ✓ Primo – into the programming domains of the European Commission and OECD.
- ✓ Secundo – into the process of the construction of regional policies in the member countries of the European Union.
- ✓ Tertio – into the mindset of individual regions as an instrument to build up future oriented approaches. The global European regional futures of 2020 and 2050 are not only an academic problem but first of all a policy problem – or urgent necessity from the point of view of the decision making processes designed and implemented *hinc et nunc*.

XVI. The Regio Futures Consortium as an institutional foundation and framework of RFP

The RFP should have the status of at least a medium term venture covering the period five – six years. The Consortium of participating regional, national and international institutions should create a strong and durable managerial backbone for RFP. It is an open question how to envisage the scale of the Consortium – here the dilemma large versus deep framework of cooperation is coming to our mind. The first priority is the deep and comprehensive cooperation. The second priority is the selection of the scale of fifteen, fifty or hundred participants. The November Meeting will face the crucial decision in this field.

XVII. The general conclusions of the feasibility study

I hope that the content of the Feasibility Study can be summed up in the classical statement:

“*Quod erat demonstrandum*” – “The regio Futures Programme is feasible – capable of being done and dealt with successfully”.

XVIII. The tentative Programme of the November Meeting

The innovative idea to design and implement The Regio Futures Programme (RFP) is a follow up of the Warsaw Conference – *The Future of European Regions* - which was organized in Warsaw May31st -June 2nd 2007. The substantive, methodological and pragmatic success of the Warsaw Conference is an excellent starting point for RFP and for the First Meeting – November 8th-10th 2007.

In the present early stage of our thinking the Meeting can be seen as a sequence of the following seven panels:

- ✓ Panel one – The goals, substance and methodology of RFP – The Consortium – The Feasibility Study
- ✓ Panel two – The case study of Piedmont – t.b.c.
- ✓ Panel three – The case study of Lower Silesia – t.b.c.
- ✓ Panel four – The case of Slovenia - - t.b.c.
- ✓ Panel five – The case study of Randstad Holland - - t.b.c.
- ✓ Panel six – vacant
- ✓ Panel seven - The experience of strategic choice of TNC as an inspiration for RFP

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The First Meeting will be designed as a forum of creative interaction of about 50 personalities representing the academic, the governance and the business communities. We hope that the First Meeting will incorporate at least ten regions finally committed to the idea of RFP.

We hope also that the corporate panel of the First Meeting will be supported by the five Transnational Corporations. Last but not least we hope that the idea of RFP and the First Warsaw Meeting will be supported by three international organizations: the European Union, the OECD and the World Bank.

Concluding remark

This Feasibility Study will be submitted for critical evaluation by the Polish Ministry for Regional development and by the potential Participants of the November Meeting.

In the years 2003 – 2007 The territorial development Policy Committee of OECD has published a splendid series of 15 volumes - *The series of territorial reviews on urban and metropolitan regions*. The spirit and letter of this series is well reflected by the autopresentation of two case studies. The case study of Milan¹ and the case study of Randstad Holland².

Milan

“Milan has earned a high-profile reputation as a center of advanced functions in addition to being an international capital of fashion and design. However, both internal and external challenges are putting strains on Milan’s aspiration to become a southern European and Mediterranean hub. On the internal front, Milan has grown from a successful industrial city into the core of a wider metropolitan region and a service platform for a significant share of northern Italy, thereby buttressing national competitiveness. Its capacity to act as a strategic powerhouse will be determined by the supply of adequate public goods and permanently updated services. On the external front, increasing global competition has revealed the limits of Milan’s historical lead and the need to renew its comparative advantages.

This review highlights Milan’s potential to capitalize on its advanced services to bolster the regional innovation dynamics and to fuel national growth. It also points out that failure to accelerate the innovation process and to enhance the region’s attractiveness as well as its capacity to implement flagship projects could prove costly. Finally, it calls for rapid metropolitan governance reforms to design and implement a competitiveness strategy for the entire metropolitan region.”

Randstad Holland

“The Randstad is a poly-centric urban area in western Netherlands, comprising Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and several smaller cities. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the OECD, and has developed into an advanced urban economy with many leading sectors, such as logistics, horticulture and financial services. The Randstad has one of the lowest unemployment rates in all OECD countries, and it is one of the most attractive metropolitan areas for Foreign Direct Investment.

However, even though the Randstad had high growth rates over the 1990s, it performed less well in the 2000s. In particular, the Randstad has witnessed relatively low labour productivity growth over the last decade - much lower than cities such as Munich or Stockholm for instance.

¹ OECD Territorial Reviews – Milan, Italy, OECD, Paris 2006.

² OECD Territorial Reviews – Randstad Holland, Netherlands, OECD – Paris

This Review aims to provide a detailed diagnosis and solutions for improving the competitiveness of the Randstad. The Randstad does not seem to exploit well the proximity of its four large cities, and it does not represent an integrated functional urban system. Key recommendations are: improve internal accessibility within the area; facilitate knowledge transfers to the private sector; increase flexibility in housing and labour market; and strengthen the coordination of the economic specialities of its cities, such as higher education and tourism. Changing the governance framework is a key condition of success: individual city-regions within the Randstad should be strengthened, and a Randstad agenda should be created, prioritising improvement of regional public transport.”

This OECD Series is a great substantial. Methodological, pragmatic and editorial inspiration for The Regio Futures programme:

- 1) it is an inspiration how to create a conceptual framework of comparative assessment of empirical experiences of a set of cities and regions,
- 2) it is an inspiration how to outline diagnostic judgments and how to formulate short and medium term policy recommendations,
- 3) it is an inspiration – if you like this inspiration – to use a language of perfect but somehow conventional wisdom – operating in an environment of a magnificent international organization functioning however in a climate of silent but strong assumptions of political correctness ,
- 4) it is an inspiration of intellectual and pragmatic discipline to concentrate attention on two important and well selected domains – economic development and multilevel governance. The Series is outside the glory and misery of holistic approaches,
- 5) it is an inspiration of a perfect editorial approaches and bibliographical information.

Verba Volant scripta manent exempla trahunt. **The OECD Series is a driving example for the Regio Futures Programme** – in this sense – that our Programme should also in the next 2 –3 years produce a network of ten to twenty five monographic case studies demonstrating a high level of intellectual discipline, empirical and prospective comparability and a system of policy oriented recommendations. **However the OECD Series is not a model for the Regio Futures Programme.**

The Regio Future Programme and the regio Future Publication Series will try to face four challenges:

- 1) the challenge of preference for brainstorming and innovation recognizing as less important the principle of theoretical empirical and pragmatic perfection,

- 2) the challenge of the glory and misery of holistic approaches to find the crucial problems not only in the field of economic and institutional development but also in the fields of transformation of the society, science, education and culture. The holistic approaches are very risky in intellectual and pragmatic dimensions but we have to accept this risk in diagnostic and future oriented studies,
- 3) the challenge of the glory and misery of long term future oriented reflection the challenge to “invent” the future,
- 4) the challenge of the glory and misery of controversial discussions and reflections – the courage to present wrong observations, evaluations and value judgments. The challenge – to be not paralyzed by the vision of error and mistake.

* * *

There is a great intellectual and pragmatic potential in the comparative evaluation of the philosophy applied in the substance and methodology of the OECD Series and the philosophy applied in the substance and methodology of the proposed Regio Futures Programme.

Maybe this comparison could be analyzed in the terms of paradigm shift – where the new paradigm is formulating a new set of questions addressed to the history and the future and a new set of tentative and risky answers related to those questions.

* * *

The OECD Series is a great achievement both in intellectual and pragmatic dimension. I know that “difficile is mutare in melius”. I am convinced however that the open minded and innovative institutional culture of OECD will be interested to support the Regio Futures Programme and the November Conference as proposals to test the possibility to create a demand for a new paradigm.

Post Scriptum Two

OECD – Territorial Reviews *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy*¹ – as an inspiration for the Regio Futures Programme

The *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy* is an outstanding publication being a creative inventory of knowledge related to Metropolitan Regions as a very important phenomenon of the global scene of the XXI century. The publication can be seen in a three dimensions:

- 1) the conceptual and methodological dimension
- 2) the factographical dimension
- 3) the pragmatic policy oriented dimension

In this perspective we can analyze the 3 most important chapters of the volume:

Chapter 1 – The emerging role of metropolitan regions

Chapter 2 – Competitiveness, Livability and Strategic Vision

Chapter 3 – The governance of Metro regions

Using the background and example of this volume – the Regio Futures Programme could outline and present to OECD a comprehensive proposal to prepare and publish a great volume – *The regions as actors of the global scene of the XXI century*. This volume could be a field of three innovations in relation to the conventional practice of OECD.

The first innovation is a holistic approach transgressing the limits of the traditional scope of attention of OECD (economic development – multilevel governance).

The economic and institutional dimension is a clearly partial and insufficient scope of attention. In the proposed study we should incorporate not only economy and governance of public authorities but also corporate governance (TNC) and the domains of the society, culture, education and R and D. The history and the future of the Regions can be explained only in holistic terms. Dry economic and institutional interpretations are elegant in methodological dimensions but non efficient in cognitive and pragmatic perspective. The dynamic and dramatic sometime tragic clashes in the regional society can not be assumed away. We cannot also disregard the power of culture, education and science and the strategic power of transnational corporations.

The second innovation are future oriented approaches of medium and long term. These approaches are presented in this Feasibility Study. These approaches could be considered as interesting for OECD.

The third innovation is a real comprehensive typology of 1000 regions which can be seen on the global map of the XXI century. The regional typology applied by OECD² using three types of regions - predominating urban regions, intermediate regions, predominating rural

¹ An OECD Publication, Paris 2006.

² OECD, op.cit., p. 35-36.

regions – is a very simple but not fully effective solution both in cognitive and pragmatic dimensions. The real regional typology will emerge via the applications of the dendrite model developed by the Polish Mathematicians of the Wrocław School. It would be a challenge to apply this model to a global network of 1000 regions where each region is described by 10-20 features³.

* * *

Via the dendrite we will see in the sky of the XXI century constellations of regions in their networks of structural and dynamic proximities and distances. The analysis of this dendrite will create a real global typology of regions. The changing typology of this type will be an effective instrument for OECD to monitor the global regional scene of the XXI century.

* * *

This Post Scriptum Two is indirectly indicating that the ideas, approaches and proposal developed in the framework of the Regio Futures Programme can be seen as an experimental testing field for the European Union and OECD.

³ Perhaps it would be possible to test the dendrite method in the typology of 268 Regions of the European Union. See the Pre conference Volume, p. 294.

Post Scriptum Three

Regional Foresight as an inspiration for the Regio Futures Programme

To promote our brainstorming thinking related to the Regio Futures Programme let me propose to confront our Feasibility Study with the conceptual and pragmatic framework of Regional Foresight. In the rich list of publications and studies related to this topic we find an excellent volume – Practical Guide to Regional Foresight in the United Kingdom¹. In this volume a clear definition of Foresight was formulated (p. XI):

“Foresight can be defined as the application of systematic, participatory, future-intelligence-gathering and medium-to-long-term vision-building processes to informing present-day decisions and mobilising joint actions. Foresight brings together key agents of change and various sources of knowledge in order to develop strategic visions and anticipatory intelligence. Regional Foresight is the implementation of the five essential elements of Foresight – anticipation, participation, networking, vision and action – at smaller territorial scales than the better-known national studies. At such scales, proximity is a dominant factor.”

“Foresight examines long-term futures with more of a holistic analysis than is typical in conventional forecasting activities, and with greater links to action and wider participation than do many futures studies. One core difference between Foresight and other planning activities relates to the participative dimension of Foresight, its emphasis on networking. This is often a feature that is highly appropriate at the regional level. This can be challenging to policymakers. They, and others, will require that Foresight justifies itself in terms of the scope for action based on the results or improved networking. The overall design of a Regional Foresight process will strongly depend on specific regional characteristics – such as its degree of autonomy, financial competence, infrastructure endowments, business profile, etc.”

I will not present the content of the practical guide in this context. Let me say only that the conceptual and practical framework of this guide is opening the way to enrich the Regio Futures Programme via the absorption of the experiences in the field of regional foresight developed by the European Union and numerous European countries. I would be most grateful for critical comments and suggestions along these lines. I am convinced that the Regio Future Programme will create direct and indirect contributions related to the development of the theory and practice of regional Foresight. This Post Scriptum Three is an example of a trajectory incorporating the Regio Future Programme into a broad European scene of ideas and activities trying to develop the long term thinking related to the Future of

¹ Practical guide to regional Foresight in the United Kingdom, European Commission, Directorate General for Research, European Communities 2002.

This however is only a guide. At the present moment I have no information when and where the substantive results of the application of the regional foresight methodology were published.

European Regions. This means not however that the Regio Futures Programme will lose its identity and originality which is very firm and comprehensive.

Post Scriptum Four **The Programme as a logically correlated system of questions**

Intellectual capacity is the key factor in the design of a research programme. The main test of this capacity is the ability to formulate the proper questions.

In this context it is advisable to quote the following observation of Gunnar Myrdal¹:

“Theory’ in this context means nothing more than a logically correlated system of questions addressed to the material. It is in the nature of this conception of theory – which will be further developed in the Prologue – that the author of a theory should not fear, but expect as a perfectly normal consequence of fresh research, that further insights into various components of the complex of social interrelationships about which he has tried to inform himself will invalidate his theory, perhaps in fundamental respects.”

In order to formulate the proper system of questions we need three elements:

- 1) “the material” – in other words – the diagnostic knowledge
- 2) a theoretical framework illuminating the selective process leading towards the proper questions
- 3) the willingness to reformulate the theory following the results of empirical analysis

I would like to suggest to apply this test of imagination and intellectual capacity – to the system of questions emerging from the rich content of the Programme.

In this framework we can also formulate a broader methodological question – how to grasp the interaction on the axis theoretical reflection versus empirical analysis².

* * *

Having in mind the broad methodological inspirations derived from the observation of G. Myrdal let us concentrate our attention on the main operational dimension of our Programme – “How to construct a logically correlated system of questions?. In this construction we face four challenges:

Primo – the stiffness versus elasticity of the system. A stiff system of questions will improve the comparability inside the set of regional monographic studies. An elastic system of questions stressing the quasi uniqueness of each case will diminish the comparability increasing at the same time the cognitive and pragmatic value of each individual case study.

¹ G. Myrdal, *Asian Drama. An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol I, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1968, p XII.

² compare: A. Kukliński, *The development of social sciences – The experiences of the XX century – The prospect of the XXI century* (in:) A. Kukliński, W. Orłowski (eds) *The knowledge based economy. The global challenges*, KBN, Warsaw, 2000.

Secundo – higher versus lower level of generalization in the formulation of questions. In practical terms this means the choice – a shorter list of more general questions or a longer list of more specific questions.

Tertio – One set of questions for the Programme versus individual sets of questions for each case study.

Quarto – One set of questions for the comprehensive time horizon of the Programme or individual set of questions for diagnostic studies, medium term studies and long term studies.

* * *

The construction of the logically correlated system of questions organizing the substance of the programme should be seen as a process of consecutive approximations leading to a solution most effective in cognitive and pragmatic dimension. I hope that the November meeting will be an important step in this direction.

We are not trying to provide an answer how to construct the system. We would like only to indicate five theoretical domains which can be seen as potential fields generating the theoretical background of the programme:

- ✓ The crucial driving forces of regional transformation and development
- ✓ The barriers for development
- ✓ The path dependency, path destruction and path creation hypothesis³
- ✓ The long duration and turning points hypothesis
- ✓ The creative and innovative future⁴

I hope that this modest Post Scriptum is an inducement how to start the discussion related to the construction of a logically correlated system of questions organizing the substance of the Programme. There is no doubt that the success of our Programme is highly dependent on our ability to construct a valid system of questions. Therefore a lot of effort and attention should be dedicated to the solution of this crucial substantial and methodological problem.

³ compare: G. Schienstock (in:) A. Kukliński, C. Lusiński, K. Pawłowski (eds) Towards a new creative and innovative Europe – Pre Conference Voilume. Nowy Sącz, Warsaw 2006.

⁴ compare: Towards a new and innovative Europe, op.cit.

Post Scriptum Five
The Regio Futures Programme (RFP)
Warsaw Workshop Meeting
November 8th-10th 2007

The main mission of the Meeting is to outline a vision of the activity of the Programme for the years 2007 – 2013. The general framework of the Meeting is presented in the Feasibility Study (see p. 3, 15, 16). This Study will be discussed in Panel One.

* * *

Panels two, three, four, five and six will concentrate attention on the presentation and critical analysis of case studies of selected regions – outlined following the methodology presented in p. IX of the Feasibility Study. Each regional panel will – if possible – include the following agenda:

- 1) an academic presentation,
- 2) a governance presentation
- 3) a presentation of a Transnational Corporation (TC) strategically involved in the future of the given region.

Each of the regional panels will be a creative encounter of three strategic communities – the academic community, the governance community and the business community (see p. X).

This strategic triangle is the cornerstone of the innovative and pathbreaking trajectory of the Regio – Futures Programme.

* * *

Panel seven – The experience of strategic choice of TNC as an inspiration for RFP. We are very happy that dr Krzysztof Rybiński the Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Poland has accepted our invitation to be the Co-Chairman of this Panel. The Transnational Corporations have developed the wisdom and art of strategic choice. We hope that Panel Seven will induce the interested regions absorb critically some elements of this corporate wisdom and art (compare p. XI of the Feasibility Study). The corner stone of Panel seven will be the presentations by personalities representing the Offices of Strategic Studies of invited Transnational Corporations.

* * *

The Warsaw Meeting should be seen as a consecutive stage in the development of The Regio Futures Programme as a network of creative cooperation of 40 to 80 institutions interested in Regio Futures.

* * *

The managerial expression of this will of cooperation will be incorporated into the charter of the Euro – Futures Consortium. The first outline of the Modus Operandi of this Consortium for the years 2007 – 2013 will be discussed in the framework of Panel one of the Warsaw Meeting.

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The Regio Futures Programme is an intellectual and institutional venture *in statu nascendi*. Please join the brainstorming process of the design and implementation of RFP.