Tadeusz Palmowski
Wiktor Szydarowski
Małgorzata Pacuk
University of Gdańsk
Department of Regional Development Geography

Chapter I. Determining the Formal, Legal, Planning and Programmatic Framework for the Creation of a Development Zone for the Via Hanseatica Transport Corridor

1. The European Context

1.1. transport Corridors - the Notion and the Concept of Development in the Expanding European Union (the context of TEN-T and TINA)

The notion of a transport corridor shall mean a bunch of high-capacity technical links which make it possible to move transport and shipments in a given direction. Since transport connections have the capability of forming functiona spatial structures which, among other, affect the shape of the networks of urban centres or the distribution of green areas, their functions have become the subject of planning efforts undertaken on the European forum.

Analytical work carried out by the European Commission's General Directorate for Transport brought about the concept of the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T). The 1998 report of the European Commission emphasises the role of TEN-T in making the European Communities more competitive and in securing stable jobs. Equally important is their role in strengthening the socio-economic cohesion of the territory of the European Union, as they ensure efficient communication with regions located in the peripheries (European Commission, 1998).

The concept for a Trans-European transport network served as a point of reference for the plan of consolidation of transport infrastructure throughout the entire European continent. Formulated in 1997, the plan assumed the establishment of the so-called Pan-European Transport Corridors and the Pan-European Transport Areas on the borders of the European Union and the neighbouring areas to the South and East.

The concept to the Pan-European Transport Corridors included extending the TEN-T network towards candidate countries on the basis of TINA (Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment) initiative. This initiative entailed determining the directions of heaviest transport traffic in East and Central Europe, planning a network of road and railway connections with high technical parametres to go along the axis of the traffic and determining the necessary infrastructure investment projects.

During the Pan-European Conference of Transport Ministers held in 1998 in Helsinki, a network often Pan-European transport corridors was established, which linked metropolitan cities or urban areas evolving into metropolis in Central and Eastern Europe with the European Union transport system. Eventually, in the process of adding new states to the Union, the network of transport routes drawn out as part of TINA is to be embedded into the Trans-European network (CEMAT, 2000).

The key role of transport corridors for the spatial development of Europe, especially in the context of their effect on the spatial organisation, was appreciated in official documents which formulate (1) the principles for spatial development of the European continent, (2) the territory of the European Union, and (3) the Baltic Sea Region as an area of cooperation on spatial planning between UE member states and institutions from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Principles..., 1995; VASAB, 1994; European Commission, 1999). The documents discuss the issue of optimum utilisation of multi-modal potential of the transport infrastructure developed within the TEN-T network through:

- shifting the pressure of transit traffic from roads to railway lines (with emphasis on the development of special purpose express railroads) and inland water ways,
- extending the system by including airports and seaports, which could supplement land transport by utilising short-sea shipping and regional air connections,
- creating cargo and passenger junctions in locations which are particularly appropriate for changing the mode of transport,
- providing access to transit transport networks to areas which are not located in their direct vicinity, via regional public transport (rail, coach and air),
- anticipating development of info-structures (information networks) which reinforce the conventional infrastructure and in perspective may help reduce passenger traffic.

The fundamental tasks for the Pan-European transport corridors are to increase spatial integration of the European Continent, reinforce the settlement network, improve availability of labour markets and sales markets, and increase the internal cohesiveness by reducing differences in the standards of living. Fast and efficient links between European cities, which guarantee swift movement of cargo and passengers and optimum utilisation of the potential offered by various means of transport, are designed to stimulate the economic development of the peripheral areas. According to more recent concepts this activity is to be paired with reinforcement of the metropolis-centred settlement system in such a way, that metropolitan areas should be well connected with the surrounding area via regional and local settlement networks (European Commission, 1999). This is especially relevant for the so-called "gateway cities" which are to be understood as towns which open access to the territory of the European Union. These include

large seaports, intercontinental airports, locations of important trade-shows and cultural events and also metropolis cities located in the boarder territories of the European Union, which utilise the competitive advantage related to low labour costs and specific ties with economic centres beyond the EU borders (European Commission, 1999).

A special role in increasing the cohesion of the area of the European Union is played by the so-called Euro-Corridors which follow along the main transport axes connecting metropolitan areas. They are not strictly speaking transport corridors, because they constitute an interface between transport infrastructure and urbanisation processes, development of the settlement network and economic growth. They serve as an important tool for supporting cooperation between urban centres and facilitate tying sector policies by means of spatial planning tools. Thus, Euro-Corridors are potential corridors of development in which regional policy includes the spatial context for the proposed solutions.

From the perspective of spatial planning, the policy of developing transport corridors should therefore look at two possible solutions: (1) developing a denser network of high-tech links (motorways and main rail lines), which brings short-term benefits or, (2) including infrastructure investment projects into the framework of broader spatial development programmes, thanks to which less developed areas gain more benefits from having access to transport networks.

1.2. Transport Corridors Versus Development Zones - Definitions and Differences

The policy for developing a transport corridor is essentially based on an analysis of: traffic flows in response to economic needs, the quality of the infrastructure which bears the traffic and the efficiency of traffic management systems. In this way it can identify the impact of transport-related processes on a given area. The development corridor policy has a much broader scope: due to the changes which take place across national borders it often requires using spatial planning tools on international level. As it is highly integrated, it complements transport policy with inter-regional actions in such areas as education, culture or research and development, as well as activities which reinforce the competitive position of smaller urban centres.

The development corridor is usually defined as follows: it is a point-line spatial structure, developed along a communication axis which links metropolitan areas; it is characterised with highly dynamic socio-economic activity and accelerated integration processes, stimulated by network co-operation and strategic alliances of entities which operate inside it (Szydarowski W., 2003).

The proposed definition of a development zone does not consider the quality of performance of internal elements within the system, understood as a specific reaction of the inter-metropolitan area to stimuli radiated by the metropolises. In this way it is still possible to create a typology of development zones.

The development zone policy is implemented through the so-called corridor projects (Damsgaard O., Groth N.B., Zaucha J., 1998). Their purpose is to: (1) optimise sector investments for regional development, (2) connect the activities in the areas of transport planning and spatial planning which should lead to synergy in favour of speeding up and improving regional development, (3) reinforce multi-sector approach to planning infrastructure projects based on their effect on various areas of life, e.g. the settlement structure, the system of green areas etc. (4) review strategic concepts of infrastructure development from the perspective of spatial planning, in particular multi-modal transport, (5) initiate the mutual learning process in which representatives of various entities and various levels of government authorities cooperate to develop transport corridors which affect regional development.

1.3. Corridor Projects in the Baltic Europe

The concept of initiating projects which would look at spatial aspects of existing transport networks in Baltic Europe was taken up within the framework of the international programme Vision and Strategies around the Baltic 2010 (VASAB 2010). The programme document, adopted by the ministers responsible for spatial planning during the conference in Stockholm in 1996, included the need to draw socio-economic benefits from the existence of transport corridors. The preparation and implementation of corridor projects was met with the arguments of its dual (positive and negative) effect on regional development. On one hand, transport networks encourage economic growth as they allow better spatial mobility, attract human and financial resources and improve access, on the other hand, they may pose a threat to the stability of non-renewable resources, in particular the natural environment. They can also bring about cultural or social degradation, or destabilisation of local communities.

The document quoted above provides guidelines for creating a scope of topics for corridor projects. First of all they should shift emphasis from technical issues, typical for infrastructure projects, to issues related to their effects on the socio-economic environment. It is therefore necessary to carry out functional analyses of settlement networks located within the transport corridor, the potential of the green areas located within the area being affected by transport traffic, and the viability of introducing alternative means of transport (multi-modal transport). Such scope determines the need for all levels of public administration, as well as public and private entities, to cooperate on implementation of corridor projects.

The Stockholm Report VASAB 2010 (1996) presents preliminary results of four pilot projects carried out in the Baltic Europe, which focused on determining the viability of using selected sections of Trans-European transport corridors to respond to the needs of sustainable regional development. Their achievements include formulating recommendations related to linking road, rail and water transport with ecologically safe economic development, which does

not deteriorate the quality of life, maintains cultural heritage and respects the needs of the local community. The report emphasises the needs to transfer our experiences to other transport corridors, using proven methodology. In the following years, thanks to starting up a new component of the EU INTERREG Initiative, dedicated to transnational projects on spatial planning, work on planning and building development corridors was continued.

Corridor projects carried out between 1998 and 2001 in Baltic Europe had the direct goal of creating an interregional co-operation in reinforcing the joint development potential and in finding lasting solutions to mutual development problems. The analyses linked the issues of transport infrastructure with other issues derived from recognition of common development priorities. These included: cooperation between networks of cities and attracting new business activity, building networks of valuable natural areas, exchange of experiences and joint investment in tourism, culture and science, development of rural areas adjacent to economic growth centres.

Although the achievements of the corridor projects co-financed by the INTERREG IIC Initiative have not yet been fully evaluated, it can be stated that they have made an important contribution to the development of corridor planning policy:

- they established lasting networks of cooperation at supra-regional level, involving local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations, research institutions and business associations;
- they initiated the process of mutual learning by doing;
- they made an assessment of the functional cohesion of the sections of the corridor in the boarder zone, both from the perspective of developing multi-modal forms of transport and making strategic investment in other areas of the economy;
- they carried through the process of assessing the effects of the transport corridor on the regional, sub-regional and local scale;
- they determined the scope for coordination of planning activities resulting from the concepts adopted at national level - in terms of planning investment in transport infrastructure, establishing trans-border protected areas or creating polycentric settlement network across national borders;
- their analytical work included among the conclusions some specific recommendations for the type and distribution of capital and non-financial investment which would contribute to sustained development of the studied area;
- they formulated joint strategic documents which included a vision and perspective for development of the area under analysis with regards to economy, society, culture, ecology and spatial development;

- they developed a forum for exchange of views in terms of spatial planning and sector policies as a tool for regional development.

1.4. The Via Hanseatica Corridor in Strategic Documents of the Baltic Europe

The VASAB 2010 conference in Gdańsk (1993) adopted a document entitled "Towards the Concept of Spatial Development in the Baltic Area". Among the priorities proposed by Poland were such issues as: the A 1 and A 3 motorways, Via Baltica and Via Hanseatica routes, the TER railway line, opening the waterway to the Baltic Sea through the Pilava Strait and taking advantage of the opportunities related to the development of Gdańsk and Szczecin urban areas as part of the Baltic Europe, as well as prevention of further deterioration of the Middle Coast area.

The Polish representative emphasised the fact that international initiatives related to transport channels as Via Baltica (Helsinki - Tallinn - Riga - Kaunas - Warsaw) and the transport route along the Baltic coast, Via Hanseatica (Kaliningrad - Elbląg - Gdańsk - Szczecin - Hamburg), are of great importance for stimulating economic cooperation between our countries. It was hoped that friendly relations between Poland and Kaliningrad District, evident from opening of new boarder crossings and creation of good development environment for Polish companies, would set great opportunities for the Elbląg voivodship in terms of transport and tourism.

VASAB 2010, which was one of the essential elements of international cooperation, highlighted the high importance of transport issues. This was expressed in the sector report entitled "Technical Infrastructure", which pointed out that such projects as TEM, Via Baltica or Via Hanseatica create new development perspectives, the consequences of which require that fundamental development processes in Poland need to be reconsidered (1994). The main elements of the technical infrastructure subsystem on national and international scale are the major urban-port junctions and infrastructure belts, which link them to the national and European systems. Apart from the belts linking Szczecin and Gdańsk with southern Europe, the following belt was indicated: West Europe - Berlin - Szczecin conurbation - Koszalin - Słupsk - Gdańsk conurbation - Elbląg - the Baltic states. This last belt receives special attention in the Baltic programme, as it provides a natural link to Europe for the "frozen" areas.

The vision of spatial development included in the Tallinn report (1994), in the section related to transport, indicates the network of ports, regular marine links and well developed multi-modal links. The long distance road network presents, among other, Via Baltica and Via Hanseatica. The main international rail links included, among other, the line Tallinn - Riga - Kaunas - Warsaw - Berlin - Hamburg. The supplementary regional networks, where travelling speeds are less important than comfort and reliability (although it was indicated that in Eastern and Central Europe speed also required improvement) included the following rail links: Tallinn -

St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad - Kaunas - Vilnius - Minsk, and Berlin - Szczecin - Gdansk - Kaliningrad - Kaunas - Vilnius - Minsk.

One of the four transport corridor pilot projects included in the Stockholm Report ("From Vision to Action" of 1996) focused on the Tampere - Helsinki - Tallinn - Riga transport corridor. It was noted that there was growing interest to replicate results achieved by the pilot projects and their methodology with regards to the Riga - Warsaw corridor (southern section of Via Baltica, transport corridor 1) and Via Hanseatica from St. Petersburg southwards to corridor 1, possibly to be extended to Hamburg. The importance of aligning the development of sea transport with the development of roads, rail and seaports was indicated as an important goal for spatial planning.

The corridor projects presented in Rostock (1997), which were to lay foundation in terms of information and concept for the assessment of regional effects of rail and road routes in the South Baltic Region included: TEM motorway, TER rail line and the international road Via Hanseatica: Berlin - Szczecin - Koszalin - Gdańsk - Kaliningrad.

Study work and conceptual efforts regarding development zones are to pertain to regional effects (economic, social and infrastructure development) and the effects on the natural environment. The need was indicated to maintain balance between these areas as a necessary foundation for sustained development. Since two major development zones cross in Gdańsk, one of which leads from Scandinavia to South Europe, the other, Via Hanseatica, from Berlin, via Słupsk, towards Kaliningrad and Klaipeda, it has been deemed necessary to identify real and potential points of innovative development in regional context (technopolis, multi-modal centres etc.)

The report from VASAB 2010 and INTERREG II C entitled "National Urban System in the Baltic Sea Region", which was held in Vilnius in 2000, in the section prepared by Lithuanians and Estonians indicated, among other, Via Hanseatica as a very important belt of urban development for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) is an example of increasing role of spatial development in Europe. In Baltic Europe during the Vismar conference of 2001 the Spatial Development Programme VASAB 2010 Plus was adopted. The document indicates the role of spatial cohesion in economic development. Among six priorities presented there are trans-national transport links, important from the perspective on internal integration of the Baltic Sea Region and its integration with Europe as a whole. The highlighted road and rail corridors included among other the Pan-European Corridor 1, called Via Baltica (Riga - Kaunas) - Białystok - Warsaw, together with its Connection 1 A (Riga - Kaliningrad) - Gdańsk (to corridor 6).

After the administrative reform which introduced self-governing voivodships, the strategic directions of spatial development in the northern Poland gained importance. And so, the authorities of the Pomorskie Voivodship, through VASAB 2010 Plus, are promoting the

development of two transport corridors A-1 and Via Hanseatica (national route no. 6), which are of key economic importance for determining strategic interests of Poland on the Baltic Sea.

Via Hanseatica constitutes a potential development zone which is to integrate internally, improve functional links, stimulate cooperation within the so-called South Baltic Arc. The project aims to:

- improve trans-national integration, especially with regards to Kaliningrad District;
- make trans-border adjustments of regional development plans;
- encourage areas which participate in the programme to act jointly towards regional development;
- support Via Hanseatica as a transport link coordinated with the development of port infrastructure and access to ports;
- develop mutual support and learning in the area of regional strategic development.

Although the Via Hanseatica corridor is not officially acknowledged as a TINA development corridor, and the transport route from Szczecin to Gdańsk did not have a high status in the long-term plans of the former Polish Ministry of Transport and Maritime Economy, or the current Ministry of Infrastructure (apart form section A22, Elbląg - Grzechotki), the initiative gathers increasing support and interest as part of the South Baltic Arc project, both from the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and from the East - Kaliningrad District, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The examples of VASAB programmes clearly show that even on a broader forum of Baltic cooperation, such initiatives as Via Hanseatica, as a development opportunity for the South Baltic Region, is mentioned in all documents and reports of this most important forum for development of the Baltic area.

The South Baltic (Sapphire) Arc initiative, with its main transport corridor, Via Hanseatica, constitutes a significant opportunity for joint work of the self-governments of coastal voivodships, poviats and gminas, as well as the non-governmental institutions located between the two metropolitan centres at the mouths of the Oder and the Vistula.

The northern Poland is the only Baltic area without a planned European-grade transport corridor (Corridor A.l leads from Kaliningrad, but only up to Gdańsk). Failure to include Via Hanseatica in the plans may weaken the spatial cohesion of the southern coast of the Baltic Sea and become an important factor towards turning this region into a periphery of the integrating Baltic Europe. Therefore, the Sapphire Arc initiative, with Via Hanseatica as its main axis, is an opportunity to arrest degradation, stimulate social an economic activity in North Poland and fully include the area as part of integrating Europe.

1.5. Creating Development Zones in Border Areas - the Role of Euroregions

A trans-border region is "an area extending across at least one national border, which is the sum of at least two socio-economic areas organised according to the polycentric model. An essential element of this definition, which is also the basis for creating a euroregional structure, is the will to engage in economic, social, cultural and other forms of cooperation, explicitly expressed by the border regions which belong to two different countries, and the consistence of all activities within such structures with the national law of the given state (Skrzydło A. 1994).

A particular form of trans-border cooperation is euroregional cooperation. Its main features include more institutionalised structures of cooperation, mainly in the form of associations, euroregional councils, secretarial offices, work groups, management committees etc. These groups are tied with specialised national and international institutions which coordinate the cooperation. Euroregions are the highest form of institutional structure for trans-border cooperation. The Baltic areas of euroregional cooperation on the Polish sea border include Euroregions Baltic (established in 1998) and Pomerania (1995).

One of the priorities for Euroregion Baltic is the development and modernisation of transport infrastructure. Efficient infrastructure is a fundamental condition for economic and social stability of the area. Improvement of internal cohesion and accessibility of the Polish section of Euroregion Baltic is related to road, rail and telecommunications infrastructure. Therefore the directions for future activities are as follows:

- modernise local roads which extend the area served by supra-local centres;
- modernise and increase the capacity of regional-status transport routes, which fulfil a transit function for cargo and passenger traffic;
- promote multi-modal solutions which utilise the potential of rail, waterways and cross-regional air links;
- support and lobby for central investment projects in transport, which make the Polish part of the Euro-region more competitive and more accessible, in particular projects related to the A1 motorway, the Via Hanseatica transport corridor, investment in national roads and major rail links, construction of border crossings and development of the airport network;
- promote a bigger role for sea transport, including the development of a network of small cooperating seaports;
- support commercial projects which improve availability of telecommunications and information technology in the Polish part of the Euroregion.

The other area for euroregional cooperation on the Polish sea border is Euroregion Pomerania, which constitutes a link between Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe. With

the growing integration of European countries it will become more important, also for East-West transport, especially between the Baltic States and West Europe.

Projects which are designed to create opportunities for economic development and integration of Euroregion Pomerania reinforce its role as a link between Scandinavia and continental Europe. Apart from motorways A11 form Berlin and A20 from Hamburg - Rostock on the German side, TINA plans also include motorway A6 from Szczecin to the Polish-German border and national road 3/A3 between the border of the voivodship and Świnoujście.

Opening new border crossings for cargo traffic and for cars, extension of existing border crossings and development of the road system along the East-West direction contribute to further development of transport activities, especially between Germany and Poland, and at the same time to trans-border economic development of Euroregion Pomerania.

Efficient, high quality transport infrastructure, appropriate for the needs of the public, the economy and public services and institutions, is one of the most important parameters for the development of Euroregion Pomerania. This is true for increasing intra-regional transport accessibility of the Euroregion, overcoming the existing barrier effect of the border crossings and gaining links with over-regional Trans-European networks. This area requires the highest investment expenditure to quickly catch up, by eliminating existing development backlog.

Another issue is the improvement of internal transport infrastructure of the Euro-region (roads, railroads, waterways, air transport) with special emphasis on accessibility of central location, industrial areas and tourist attractions.

Key actions are targeted at:

- improve regional accessibility of centres and regional infrastructure in order to support cross-border exchange of experiences,
- develop mulit-modal connections between the intra-regional network and the over-regional network,
- promote improved traffic flow and transport safety.

The goals for both Euroregions overlap with the strategic goal of the Sapphire Arc project, with Via Hanseatica as its main transport corridor. Increasing competitive potential of the coastal voivodships on the basis of interregional cooperation, both with domestic and foreign partners to the East and to the West, and tying the voivodships with transport routes creates a big opportunity to fully include the northern Poland in the process of European integration. Euroregional co-operation is one of the most significant forms of action contributing to the transformation of border areas, which for decades were often marginalised, into potential development zones.

2. Domestic Context

2.1.The Transport System Szczecin - Tricity - Olsztyn - Node with Via Baltica in the Concepts of the National Spatial Development

Work on the concepts of spatial development of the country begun in 1946 at the Chief Office of Spatial Planning. The starting point for the national plan was to identify the main directions of traffic on the territory of Poland. An assumption was made that this traffic, as it traces out "dynamic belts", will at the same time indicate the areas of most intensive use of land. The adopted starting point was the so-called directional system, i.e. a network of main directions of traffic, for both transit flows and links between main urban centres. To these directions belts of influence were attributed, which were to constitute the basis for development of more intensive forms of economy and land use.

The directional layout of 1947 shows a network of specific transport links between border points and major urban centres. The main directional route in Pomerania between Szczecin and Gdańsk was route no. 10 from Szczecin, through Stargard Szczeciński towards Wałcz, and further along the track of road 22 through Chojnice, Starogard Gdański, Tczew, Elgląg towards Kaliningrad. The route of today's road no. 6 from Gdańsk through Koszalin to Szczecin was a lower ranking link. A similar ranking was allocated to the routes connecting Gdańsk and Olsztyn - roads no. 7 and 16 and road no. 55 (and its extension towards Białystok) and route no. 51 from Olsztyn through Bartoszyce to Kaliningrad.

The map of functional layout of the country from the same year, included in the National Plan Study, clearly marked the strong effect of the Szczecin - Koszalin - Gdańsk route on the potential economic stimulation of the entire coastal belt between this route and the sea shore. The importance of the belt Gdańsk - Elbląg - Olsztyn - Białystok was even more clearly highlighted.

In the belt-node concept of settlement structure in Poland, developed in mid-sixties by B. Malisz and presented in publications in the seventies, the author marked belts along transport routes and nodes at their crossing points. The belts are areas of concentration of processing industry, the nodes include tertiary functions (management, education, services) and the areas between the belts include agriculture, forestry and tourism. The belts of the first rank crossing Pomerania include the belt Szczecin - Gdańsk with nodes in Szczecin, Koszalin and Gdańsk. The group with the highest rank also includes the belt Gdańsk - Elbląg - Kaliningrad. The node in Olsztyn is connected by secondary belts with Elbląg, Kaliningrad, Augustów, Ostróda and other towns.

The concept of the Office for Spatial Development of the Country in the Planning Commission of 1971 includes five urban systems, which include nine conurbations of over 500 thousand inhabitants. The coastal system extends form Szczecin conurbation to Gdansk and

Elbląg. It is connected with a belt extending from Western border to Eastern border, in the direction of Kaliningrad. In this concept Olsztyn was included in the North-East system, together with Ostrołęka and Białystok. The communication link between both systems, i.e. the route Elbląg - Olsztyn, was of secondary importance.

In the schematic of moderate polycentyric concentration, which constituted the national plan of 1971-1974, Gdańsk and Szczecin were classified as mature agglomerations, Koszalin and Olsztyn were classified as potential agglomerations and Słupsk and Elbląg as national development centres. All of these centres are linked with the artery of technical/economic infrastructure which is the main axis of Pomerania, and which from Elbląg extends to Kaliningrad and Olsztyn; from Olsztyn further towards Augustów.

The concept of urban/industrial agglomerations developed by S. Leszczycki in 1975 is an upgrade of the agglomerations model of 1971, developed by S. Leszczycki, P. Eberhardt and S. Herman. Szczecin and Gdańsk are mature urban/industrial agglomerations, Koszalin and Słupsk constitute a potential, joint agglomeration extending along the main transport route across the northern Poland towards the potential agglomeration of Olsztyn and further eastwards.

Another draft plan for spatial development of the country which was part of the long-term spatial policy of the state dates back to 1989-1990. In this plan Szczecin is a moderate growth agglomeration, Koszalin, Słupsk and Olsztyn are multi-functional centres of national importance for which moderate growth is envisaged and the Tricity and Elbląg are classified as limited growth agglomerations. The whole is connected by the main transport axis of the coastal area, from the western border and Szczecin, through Koszalin and Słupsk to Gdańsk and Elbląg. Olsztyn binds the transport routes which connect it with Elbląg through Ostróda and with Białystok and Suwałki through Augustów.

The sustainable development strategy produced in the year 2000 by a team led by J. Kołodziejski presents potential belts of accelerated development, which are formed together with modernisation, development and construction of technical infrastructure. The belt of accelerated growth of international significance extends from the West connecting two European centres of polarisation - Szczecin and Gdańsk, and extends further through Elbląg towards Kaliningrad. In this belt Koszalin is a national centre of sustainable development and Słupsk is a regional centre of sustainable development.

Olsztyn is located in the belt, which ranks as national and inter-regional, and extends from Ostróda (link with the international belt Gdańsk - Warsaw) to Suwałki and the Eastern border. In Suwałki the Olsztyn belt links with the international belt of the future Via Baltica, the Polish section of which will extend form the Lithuanian border, through Suwałki and Białystok to Warsaw, and from there towards Berlin.

A sustainable development model was also presented as part of the latest concept of spatial development of the country, of 26 July 2001. In this concept the model of sustainable development was supplemented with a map of stability-bringing elements, which shows, among other, an expressway and modernised rail line along the main route in Pomerania, from Szczecin, through Koszalin to Gdańsk, and the road from Gdańsk, through Tczew and Elbląg to Kaliningrad. Olsztyn is linked to Elbląd with a rail and road link and with Via Baltica through Ełk with a possible fast road.

The above examples of concepts of spatial development of the country clearly show that in the recent 56 years the main transport belt crossing Pomerania from the Western border through Szczecin, Koszalin, Słupsk to Gdańsk has been the main transport axis of the region in almost all concepts presented. Tracing the Via Hanseatica corridor along this route may contribute to better transport accessibility of the area, and stop the process of marginalisation of Pomerania, especially its central part. Good transport links may not just stimulate economic growth in the area, but also include it in the network of links of integrating Europe, especially the Baltic Europe.

2.2. Importance of the Via Hanseatica Corridor for Operation and Development of Polish Seaports

As has been documented above, development concepts of a transport system parallel to the Polish coast have been present in the Polish literature for several dozen years, however, it was only in the nineties that an animated discussion began, on the necessity to develop a system of transport corridors in northern Poland as an integral part of the Baltic Europe and to actively include the Polish ports in it.

In the study entitled *Transport Connections of Cities Located by the Baltic Sea* prepared by the working group for transport and marine economy of the Association of Baltic Cities it has been emphasised that it is the transport system consisting not only of the A1 motorway and specific elements of the North-South transport corridor but also the route running eastwards from the west along the Baltic Sea that crosses on our territory that is of great importance for the development of closer contacts with the Baltic States and the development of transit supporting facilities of the Polish ports. This transport route runs through Lubeck where construction of a motorway leading to Szczecin has been commenced, from where a motorway to Kaliningrad and the cities of Lithuania, Estonia, Finland and the Scandinavian countries should lead via Gdynia and Gdańsk.

The issue of sea-land transport connections to further include transport on the deep hinterland of the port cities has become particularly topical in light of a report on the impact of the transport infrastructure in Europe on future competitiveness of trade and development presented

by the North European Club in 1991. The priority draft plan of the transport infrastructure in North Europe assumes development of the transport system linking Groningen, Friesland, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklemburg and the northern part of Poland to the transport system running through Russia (Kaliningrad and Petersburg), the new Baltic republics and Finland. The design contains a concept of a transport corridor including road (motorway) and railway connections without excluding a sea-short shipping along the coast.

Most of the industry studies emphasise the benefits of activation of a transport corridor parallel to the Polish coast (Via Hanseatica) both for the region as a whole and for its specific elements such as seaports.

It is not enough for the integration of Polish sea regions and eastern areas of united Europe to create one transport channel on the east-west axis and the traditionally conceived north-east transport corridor but it is also important - especially in the interest of Poland - to develop it in the direction of Kaliningrad and Klaipeda, and to supplement it by a coastal route to Szczecin so as to create the Via Hanseatica corridor. Its expressway status is determined by not only its international function but its role in the economic activation of the whole Pomerania, including areas with high unemployment rate. An additional aspect is economic activation of the Kaliningrad District and its inclusion - not in institutional terms, though - in the European integration system.

Within the Scandinavian-Oder Basin transport corridor particular attention is paid to the modernisation of the Berlin-Szczecin railway connection, construction of the A20 German motorway from Lubeck to Szczecin via Rostock and modernisation of the A11 motorway from Berlin to Szczecin. The Via Hanseatica transport route is clearly related to the Scandinavian-Oder corridor. In such a situation it is the German A20 motorway which is successively commissioned and from which according to the German projections approximately 20 thousand cars per day on working days and approximately 30 thousand cars on leisure days will head to Szczecin that will be of great importance for Poland. Nearly half of that number will go farther in the direction of Koszalin, Gdańsk and Kaliningrad. This means that the traffic intensity on the international E28 road (national road no. 6) will increase by 14-20 thousand vehicles per day (Bąbczyńska-Jelonek Z., 2002).

The Lubeck - Szczecin - Gdańsk - Elbląg - Kaliningrad road, which is the shortest transit connection between Russia and Germany, will contribute to a multiple increase in the transport of freight and passengers. Construction of the road, even if it should be a road of the planned express traffic standard, will activate transport of passengers and freight in both directions increasing, in economic terms, the value of the region through which the route will run. The port cities of the eastern, central and western coast will have special opportunities for development (Krzyżanowski M., 1995).

Due to the connections of the trans-European transport corridor No. 1 (from Helsinki to Warsaw via Tallinn, Riga - Via Baltica, with a fork to Kaliningrad - Elbląg - Gdańsk - Via Hanseatica) with the transport network of the Baltic republics and the Kaliningrad District and farther with the CIS, the ports of Gdańsk and Gdynia will obtain in future a highly efficient road and railway connection with the eastern segment of potential transit supporting facilities of those ports. The ports of Szczecin-Świnoujście have motorway, railway and inland water connections with the German and West European road system. Ferry and ro-ro connections of the Polish ports with Scandinavian ports and container transport services to the North Sea ports constitute a basis for the development of sea-land inter-modal transport systems serving in particular the regions of central and northern Poland and foreign supporting facilities, especially the urban centres of Prague, Budapest and Bratislava (Szwankowski S., Tubielewicz A., Matczak R., 1999).

2.3. Legal conditions for formation of development zones in Poland

The legal solutions adopted in Poland do not directly oblige public authorities to formulate a development concept of corridor systems. However, there are statutory provisions which justify such activity in terms of entity (who should deal with it) and in terms of the subject matter (what needs should be met by such activity).

The Voivodship Self-Government Act dated 5 June, 1998 (Journal of Laws No. 91, item 576) refers in Art. 11 item 2 to the contents of a voivodship development policy which should be conducted by the voivodship self-government. The instruments to implement that policy are the voivodship development strategy and voivodship programmes. When implementing the voivodship development policy the voivodship self-government cooperates with other entities operating in the public area including, but not limited to, territorial self-government units from the voivodship area, government administration, other voivodships and international organisations and regions from other states, especially the neighbouring ones. There is also a non-specified provision referring to the competence of poviat self-government with respect to spatial management introduced by the Poviat Self-Government Act dated 5 June, 199S (Journal of Laws No. 98, item 578).

In subject matter terms, the voivodship self-government's tasks include provision and conducting of the spatial policy in the voivodship including adoption of the voivodship development strategy and spatial development plan and coordination of supra-local spatial development plans (Art. 4 item 2 of the Spatial Development Act dated 7 July, 1994 - Journal of Laws No. 89 dated 25 August, 1994 item 415). In order to determine the conditions and directions of spatial policy, voivodship self-government agencies conduct analyses and studies, develop concepts and prepare programmes relating to areas and issues - accordingly to the needs and objectives of the undertaken works (Art. 54 item 1 of the Act). Spatial development analyses and

studies may be also conducted by the poviat self-government if such issues relate to the poviat's area and are important for its development (Art. 54a, item 2 of the Act).

Notwithstanding a high degree of complexity of the tasks related to the policy of development corridors formation, its basic material are spatial development tools lying in the hands of the voivodship self-government (Art. 14 item 1 of the quoted Act). The spatial development plan includes government and voivodship self-government tasks, which have to take the form of programmes. They can be launched once they have been included in the spatial development programmes being within the powers of the gmina self-government (Gmina Self-Government Act dated 8 March, 1990).

The tasks written in voivodship and government programmes are executed by way of agreements. Among the documents constituting the basis for those agreements, in addition to the voivodship spatial development plan, it is the country's spatial development concept that is listed in the Spatial Development Act.

The country spatial development concept which was adopted by the Cabinet on 5 October, 1999 and by the Parliament of the Polish Republic on 17 November, 2000 contains a number of issues constituting a content-related basis for conducting the policy of formation of development corridors in terms of spatial development. Country spatial development elements of the concept, *inter cilia,* include:

- a European and national technical infrastructure system whose bearing structure will be a system of motorways and expressways, modernised railways, seaports and airports and power and water economy systems;
- a set of potential poles (centres) of social and economic development of European importance (so called Europoles) which will create increasingly stronger bonds of entrepreneurship and innovation in the process of international (European) competition influencing the entire Polish and European space; among the potential Europoles named are the Tricity and Szczecin;
- belts of potentially highest social and economic innovativeness and activity being formed interdependently with the construction and modernisation of the international and national technical infrastructure system (its main element will be the building of motorways and railway trunk roads, telecommunication lines, and fuel and power lines).

Pursuant to the provisions of the Concept, the development zones formation policy (called here the accelerated development belts formation policy) may be considered as a component of a sustainable development policy which sets the most effective direction for the country's spatial structure development by way of formation of junctions, niches, areas and fields of activity, entrepreneurship and innovation at places, which will be chosen by market economy mechanisms. This means a gradual departure from spatial planning as a basic implementation element in favour

of integral planning understood as creation and execution of regional development structural transformation programmes.

Under the Concept the Marshals of voivodships are authorised and obliged by the Cabinet to integrate the Concept of the country's spatial development policy with the policies of territorial self-governments and sector policies conducted in voivodships including but nor being limited to cooperation with the neighbouring voivodships and neighbouring trans-border regions.

The currently prepared draft new Spatial Planning and Development Act (version of 30 October, 2002) contains two new issues which should be defined in the regional spatial management plan. These are: (1) problem areas including the principles of their development and metropolitan areas; (2) support areas. The former of those issues is of significant importance for the special dimension of development zones formation, the latter - shows the way of action to obtain financial means to stimulate the social and economic development of those areas under the regional development policy. Attention should be also drawn to the fact that in the discussed version of the Act it is required that the provisions of the country spatial development concept should be taken into account in the regional spatial management plan.

3. Regional Context

3.1. Via Hanseatica as a transport Axis of Pomorskie Voivodship - Provisions and Arrangements of the Regional Spatial Management Plan for the Pomorskie Voivodship

The Regional Spatial Management Plan for the Pomorskie Voivodship constitutes an element of strategic planning with a prospect of proposals of solutions for the next twenty years. It is also a tool of balancing the development of various regional development sectors, being an intermediate link between national and trans-national planning and - local planning.

In the transport system structure of the Pomorskie voivodship the Tricity area is a transport junction of European importance covering all the basic branches of transport. According to the plan the trans-regional infrastructure development will take place in the transport corridors running through the region and constituting the future extension of the Trans-European Transport Network of the European Union. In addition to Corridor VI (Gdańsk - Katowice - Żylina) they include Corridor I A (Riga - Kaliningrad - Gdańsk) constituting a section of the future Via Hanseatica. Those corridors in the Pomorskie voivodship area should be supplemented by the northern corridor (Tricity - Słupsk - Koszalin - Szczecin) with national road no. 6 and railway line no. 202. It has been shown that the corridor running along the so called Hanseatic Route lies in the circle of interest of the Baltic states. Moreover, several regional transport corridors have been set out in the voivodship area.

It has been shown in the regional spatial management plan of the Pomorskie voivodship that the importance of the northern corridor depends on the future importance of the entire southern Baltic Sea area as a European development area (Sapphire Arc area). That factor will have decisive impact on future functions and technical classes of roads and railway lines in those corridors. In the directional assumptions on the voivodship development it has been assumed that:

- both the mentioned corridors which are of interregional importance may, on the initiative of the Baltic states, become corridors of international importance;
- the coastal corridor will become an element of the Trans European Transport Network and the basic infrastructure in that corridor will be made up by the Via Hanseatica land route and the Rail Hanseatica railway line.

In addition to that, in its planned section between the Tricity and Lębork called the Lębork Route, Via Hanseatica creates new development conditions in the gminas of Szemud, Luzino and Linia located in the Gdańsk metropolis suburbanization area. The new section may become an important direction of metropolitan transport connections.

As part of the Pomorskie voivodship road system development for the years 2001-2006, in accordance with the programme to adapt the Polish road system to the European Union standards, it has been planned to modernise road no. 6, build the Lębork Road-,.reconstruct-the Strøebielino - Słupsk and Wejherowo - Trzebielino sections and construct a large ring road around Słupsk.

3.2. Importance of Via Hanseatica for Pomorskie Voivodship Development Strategy and Voivodship Operational Programmes

The implementation of the region's vision is served by the strategic objectives and execution tasks set in the development strategy of the Pomorskie voivodship. The strategic objectives are of a general nature and define the desired statuses or processes. The execution tasks show what should be done so as to achieve a given strategic objective. The strategic goals are convergent with the goals and principles of the National Strategy of Regional Development and official government documents.

Among the execution tasks enumerated are actions related to the broadly understood development of the Via Hanseatica transport corridor:

Priority 2. Restructure and modemise the economy

Objective 2.4. Develop services, transport and tourism - under the heading of transport:

- Create a transport system balancing the role of railway, road and water transport.
- Create centres of distribution and logistics.

Priority 3. Develop and modernise the infrastructure serving to increase competitiveness and region cohesion.

Objective 3.1. Accelerate modernisation of the Tricity metropolis:

- Formulate a strategy to restructure the ports of Gdańsk and Gdynia as a complementary system offering a handling potential for the neighbouring countries, particularly for Belarus and Ukraine.

Objective 3.3. Develop and modernise transport infrastructure

- Modernise and increase the importance of national roads nos. 6, 7, 22 and 50.
- Improve transport accessibility to the transport junction including the ports of Gdańsk and Gdynia, the airport and small ports.

Objective 3.4. Develop and modernise the port infrastructure

- Coordinate infrastructure investments in the ports within the region from the point of view of regional interests.
- Support modernisation and development of the infrastructure of small ports.

Priority 5. Develop voivodship international cooperation

Objective 5.1. Increase the role and importance of the Pomorskie voivodship in the Baltic Sea Region

- Actively participate in the works of Euroregion Baltic and the Baltic.Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC).
- Support projects developing multilevel and multi-entity cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. VASAB 2010, HELCOM, Association of Baltic Cities).
- Create conditions for effective use of aid funds for financing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. INTERREG).

The Pomorskie Voivodship Development Programme for the years 2001-2006 is a programme document developing the development strategy. In the context of the Via Hanseatica corridor particular attention should be paid to Priority 3 including actions aimed at improving spatial cohesion of the region and its competitiveness in the sphere of social and technical infrastructure. The proposed actions include development of the voivodship integrated transport system aimed at improving the transport infrastructure technical standards and improving the quality of passenger service and cargo transport. The activity formulated in such a way is focused among other things on:

- investment improving access of western and eastern areas of the region to the Tricity urban areas;
- development of the railway and road infrastructure in the already set pan-european transport corridors located in the Pomorskie voivodship area (corridors nos. VI and IA) and the potential corridors, e.g. those related to the initiatives of the Baltic regions (Via Hanseatica);
- improvement in the quality of transport of cargo and seaport competitiveness by improving their transport connections;
- development of havens and ferry service connecting the region with Europe;
- use of multi-modal technologies in integration of transport branches;
- organisation of a logistics centre of European importance.

The areas of regional transport corridors along the main infrastructure routes have been considered to be problem areas.

The Pomorskie Voivodship Development Programme for years 2001-2006 is implemented by voivodship operational programmes included therein and by individual projects. The operational programmes show the period of duration and schedule of projects execution, the implementing institutions, performance indicators and the expected effects of actions, and also total outlays and outlays broken into various sources of financing.

Priority 1 (infrastructure development and modernisation serving to strengthen the competitiveness of regions) included in the draft version of the Regional Operational Programme for the Pomorskie Voivodship in the years 2004-2006 reverberates actions aimed at improvement of its spatial cohesion and competitiveness in the field of technical and social infrastructure. Among the proposed actions attention should be paid to modernisation and extension of the regional transport system (including, but not limited to, construction and modernisation of road sections providing access to new investment areas of strategic importance for the regional development, connecting the regional- and poviat-status road systems with the national road network as well as road and railway investments aimed at improving the accessibility of seaports, small ports and sea havens).

When formulating the priorities of the Operational Programme of the Pomorskie Voivodship for PHARE 2002 and 2003 Social and Economic Cohesion Programme particular attention was paid to the possibility of integrated mitigation of the most severe development problems of the Pomorskie Voivodship. Priority 1 includes actions aimed at improving the spatial and transport communication cohesion and growth of regional competitiveness, most of all, by way of investments in the technical infrastructure area. Under that priority the following actions are assumed:

•facilitation of access to the key areas where industrial and sales activity may be developed;

•modernisation and development of national and regional roads, particularly those facilitating access to trans-European transport corridors.

Activities focused on improving the road capacity and quality of passenger and freight transport will contribute to an increase in the region's internal cohesion and its accessibility from outside, especially basing on a network of trans-regional transport corridors. The direct effect of infrastructure investments will result in decreasing the barriers for development of economy and tourism in the identified problem areas.

4. Conditions Relating to the Possibility of Implementing the Planned Project Results in the System of Regional Development Programming in Poland

According to the arrangements made among representatives of coastal regions interested in the Sapphire Arc project, one of the material effects is to produce and adopt a programme, which would contain strategic infrastructure investments in the development zone of the transport axis connecting Szczecin, Koszalin, Słupsk, the Tricity, Elbląg with Kaliningrad. Location indications for strategic transport and complementary investments are to become an element of the programme which - having been agreed upon with self-governments - would be a seedling for infrastructure projects seeking for external funds.

The project pipeline procedure attached to the programme has yet to take into account the regional development programming system which is planned to be used in Poland and which involves UE Structural Funds. On 26 March 2002 the Cabinet adopted the *Preliminary System of Objectives and Priorities of the National Development Plan for the Years 2004-2006 Based on Government Economic Programme Including a Proposal of an Operational Programmes System and Indicative Division of Financial Funds.* The following conclusions for implementation of the provisions of the Sapphire Arc project result from that document and from further works at formulating an implementation system for European Union aid funds:

- execution of investment projects with application of European Union aid funds requires that they should be included in the operational programmes system;
- such projects should be coordinated by voivodship self-governments which will in due time define the detailed conditions of access to the aid funds;
- institutions applying for the financing of investments have to provide their own funds in the amount stipulated in EU regulations;
- investments should be prepared and executed in accordance with the defined European Union rules, including horizontal Community policies.

The Preliminary System of Objectives and Priorities of the National Development Plan for the Years 2004-2006 Based on Government Economic Programme Including a Proposal of . Operational Programmes System and Indicative Division of Financial Funds indicates three paths of "pumping" investment projects resulting from the Sapphire Arc project into the system of operational programmes.

The first one consists in the application of a regional development programming scheme on a voivodship level. The proper instrument here is the Regional Operational Programme, and in fact - the voivodship component of the Integrated Regional Operational Programme for which the Ministry of Economy is responsible.

The second path assumes direct negotiations with the appropriate central ministry to introduce investments to the national program (sectoral operational programme system). Its implementation procedure is centralised and top-down orientated and is not always accompanied by negotiations with the voivodship self-government. In such event the institution reporting a project would most probably be obliged to conduct direct talks in a given ministry on the conditions of including investments in the programme. And the voivodship self-government's task would be to lobby for including in those programmes projects satisfying the criteria defined by particular ministries.

The third path entails a direct inclusion of specific projects on a list of intended investments in Poland to be co-financed from the EU Cohesion Fund. However, they have to be located in the paneuropean transport corridors (in case of transport investments - on expressways and national roads and on railway routes or have impact on large settlements (in case of environment protection investments, mainly in the area of sewage treatment plants and waste management systems).

In the Pomorskie Voivodship Development Program for the years 2001-2006 adopted by the Regional Parliament of the Pomeranian Voivodship the criteria to select projects of the greatest impact on the region's social and economic development have been enumerated and described. They include eligibility criteria which arise from the requirements set by disposers of funds and qualitative criteria which will enable the voivodship self-government to rank those project proposals which will pass through the former.

The rules of expediting aid funds as well as horizontal policies that are practised by the European Community impose significant conditions on projects resulting from proceedings on the Sapphire Arc project. In particular the following items should be mentioned at this point:

- partnership principle - obliging for broad consultations of the prepared intentions and also their multi-entity implementations (participation of business and social partners);
- concentration principle - imposing the requirement of planning a smaller number of larger investments;

- additionality rule - pursuant to which the planned projects should respond to the actual development needs of a given entity and the funds for which demand is reported would not replace the entity's own funds which have been nonetheless reserved in a certain amount;
- sustainable development policy - according to which the planned projects should introduce permanent solutions reconciling social and economic interests with the needs of natural environment protection;
- pro-innovativeness policy - under which the planned projects should be focused on implementing innovative and modernisation solutions;
- information society policy - the planned projects should lead to improved access and popularisation of the Internet in the building of a knowledge-based economy;
- employment policy - the planned projects should contribute to the creation of new permanent jobs.

The foregoing considerations relate to evolution of the Sapphire Arc project which has a chance to appear in the years 2004-2006. The probable scenario of events in that period assumes a gradual decrease in effort and expenditure on research stage in favour of investment stage. However, research can be still continued preparing the grounds for new investments. Poland will have at its disposal an additional pool of funds under the INTERREG Community Initiative which will be divided into three components: A, B and C. It is expected that 16-20% of the funds may be allocated to international cooperation in spatial planning which will require "association" with the funds of the applying entities. Attention should be nonetheless drawn to the fact that the opening of new funds for Poland (and other candidate countries in the Baltic Europe) will be accompanied by exhaustion of the Initiative financial resources for the "old" member states. This may result in a mirror reflection of the difference in activity and initiative, which is determined by accessibility of funds, between the western and eastern part of the Region including a lean-out to the East this time. This may at the same time create a certain two-stage quality in the Sapphire Arc project with the "Kaliningrad" stage being moved into the future.

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