

THE ROLE OF PARADIPLMACY IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS EXEMPLIFIED BY POLISH VOIVODESHIPS

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this article is to analyse the international activities (paradiplomacy) of Polish voivodeships through the lens of the system for managing sustainable regional development. Paradiplomacy serves as both a tool for carrying out public tasks of a regional nature and an instrument for socio-economic and cultural development, for which voivodeship self-government is responsible in Poland. Another aim of the article is to present the geographical directions of voivodeships' paradiplomacy, which, in addition to European regions, also includes partners from outside Europe. Thus, the article offers an academic reflection on the issue outlined in the title, approached from the perspective of social sciences and the discipline of political science and administration.

KEY WORDS: *foreign cooperation of regions (paradiplomacy), regional development, geographical directions of cooperation.*

JEL CODES: F55, R58, H77.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15181/rfds.v46i2.2731>

Introduction

The 1999 administrative and territorial reforms divided Poland into 16 voivodeships, 314 counties, 66 cities with county rights, and 2,477 municipalities. Voivodeships function as both governmental and self-governing regions, while counties and municipalities are units of local self-government. The Act on the Introduction of a Three-Tier Territorial Division of the State (24 July 1998) established, among other things, the names of the voivodeships and the seats of the voivodes (provincial governors) and regional assemblies, adopting in Poland a model that equates the voivodeship with an administrative, internal-state region.

From the perspective of political science and administration, a region can be defined as a territorial administrative unit that constitutes the first level of the state's administrative and territorial division. It is distinguished for the purpose of public administration, and possesses its own political authority, i.e. political self-government. A defining feature of a region is its ability to articulate its own regional interests and represent them beyond the borders of the state, including engaging in paradiplomacy (see Elżanowski et al., 1990; Skawiński, 2008, 18).

Paradiplomacy can be defined as the involvement of subnational authorities in international relations through the establishment of formal and informal, both permanent and ad hoc, contacts with foreign public or private entities. Its aim is to promote socio-economic, cultural and political issues, as well as any other dimension of international activity conducted within the framework of constitutional competencies (Cornago, 1999, 40).

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Thus, paradiplomacy is the ability of subnational entities to engage in spatial political interactions that transcend national borders, encompassing all forms of international cooperation, both formalised (regulated by agreements) and non-formalised (carried out without agreements). While similar to state diplomacy, it remains subject to national law and policy, and employs similar tools such as diplomatic protocol, despite not being conducted by professional diplomats. The subject of paradiplomatic activity may include any issue falling within the legal competencies of territorial authorities. It reflects the growing role of regions as non-state actors in contemporary international relations (Raś, 2016; Modzelewski, 2019).

The primary objective of this article is to analyse the international activities (paradiplomacy) of Polish voivodeships as an instrument within the system of managing sustainable regional development. Paradiplomacy is closely linked to the principles and goals set out in the voivodeship's development strategy and the priorities of its international cooperation, which are adopted by regional self-government. The article also presents the geographical directions of the paradiplomacy of Polish voivodeships, identifying the countries whose regions engage in cooperation with them.

The main objective of this research is to analyse the role of paradiplomacy within the system of regional development management in Poland, using the example of Polish voivodeships. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Examine how regional self-governments utilise international cooperation (paradiplomacy) as a tool for carrying out public tasks and fostering socio-economic and cultural development;
- Identify and present the geographical directions and scope of paradiplomatic activities undertaken by voivodeships;
- Explore the link between regional development strategies and foreign cooperation priorities;
- Provide practical examples of regional partnerships to demonstrate the application and outcomes of paradiplomatic engagement.

The study employs research methods and techniques characteristic of the social sciences, including an analysis of existing data, such as official documents produced by regional self-governments. These encompass resolutions on foreign cooperation priorities, agreements, letters of intent, memoranda, work plans, and other official publications. Furthermore, a review of relevant literature was conducted, along with an examination of the official websites of regional self-governments to ensure the information remains up to date.

1. Regional development strategies and foreign cooperation priorities

In the mid-1990s, Poland began implementing regional policy as a tool to enhance economic competitiveness and prepare the country for accession to the European Union. Pre-accession funds played a significant role in this process, and as a beneficiary of EU funds, Poland adapted its administrative structure to meet EU requirements. Measures introduced included the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistical purposes (NUTS) and a range of institutions responsible for monitoring and managing EU funds at the voivodeship level. Regional policy was decentralised, granting local governments greater influence over their region's development and planned investments. The region became the primary entity responsible for shaping development, with the main objective of regional policy being to initiate and stimulate actions aimed at economic growth and reducing developmental disparities (Tomaszewicz, 2014; Tuziak, 2022).

In compliance with the legal requirements, each Polish voivodeship has adopted a regional development strategy outlining key assumptions and conditions, development visions and objectives (both strategic and operational), the territorial dimension of the strategy, and its implementation framework. These strategies form the foundation of regional development policy, and the paradiplomatic activities undertaken by local governments must align with the conditions set out in these documents. Another legal requirement was the adoption by regional assemblies of 'Voivodeship Foreign Cooperation Priorities', which specify: (1) the main objectives of foreign cooperation; (2) the geographical priorities for future cooperation; and (3) plans for joining international regional associations (Article 6 of the Act of 5 June 1998). Both documents serve as overarching planning instruments, ensuring the coherence of strategic decisions, and guiding the voivodeship's development.

As an example, this article examines the current development strategies and foreign cooperation priorities of two voivodeships, Pomerania and Lublin.

The self-government of the Pomeranian Voivodeship places a particular emphasis on developing economic and trade cooperation, a focus largely determined by the region's coastal location. Its strategy states that the region's development is shaped by its national and international position: 'Pomerania, particularly due to its coastal location, should be a strong centre of socio-economic development in northern Poland and the Baltic Sea region, and should engage actively on the international stage at the EU, European and global levels [...] The voivodeship's involvement in Baltic networks aims to contribute to building a strong Baltic Sea region and enhance its competitiveness and innovation [...] Furthermore, engagement in Baltic networks supports the promotion of the Pomeranian Voivodeship's interests in European regions' (Pomeranian Voivodeship Development Strategy 2030).

Additionally, the resolution on foreign cooperation priorities states: 'The international cooperation of the Pomeranian Voivodeship leverages its regional advantages, such as: (1) significant economic potential derived from its geographical location in the Baltic Sea area, the transit functions of seaports, and the presence of pan-European transport corridors; (2) economic strength rooted in the region's traditional industries, the rapidly growing service sector, and broadly understood innovation, as well as the region's tourism assets; (3) intellectual capital associated with the higher education institutions and research centres operating in the voivodeship, which serve as the foundation for technological progress; (4) a rich cultural heritage shaped by historical factors and ethnic diversity; (5) high levels of social engagement and entrepreneurship among residents' (Resolution No 463/XXII/08).

In the Lublin Voivodeship, a particular emphasis is placed on developing mechanisms to coordinate the region's international activities based on the regional development strategy, as well as providing necessary support, assistance and coordination for international initiatives at the local level. The current development strategy of the voivodeship includes the strategic objective of 'strengthening social capital', which encompasses the operational goal of 'enhancing cross-border and interregional cooperation'. The strategy acknowledges the significant impact of the region's geographical position on its development processes: 'The Lublin Voivodeship's border location on the external frontier of the European Union, combined with its proximity to the Ukrainian and Belarusian regions with relatively lower levels of development, presents a major challenge for regional policy. This situation necessitates the search for innovative solutions to overcome barriers and developmental constraints stemming from the region's so-called peripheral position. One of the key issues is the restricted nature of the Polish-Ukrainian/Belarusian border, which will significantly affect its functioning and the potential for cross-border cooperation. In cross-border relations, efforts will focus on fostering good-neighbourly relations that facilitate economic and cultural exchanges, as well as addressing shared challenges related to environmental protection, water management and public security. In the context of interregional cooperation with EU regions, the exchange of knowledge and experience in mutual learning processes is essential. Intensive interregional contacts with partners from both EU and non-EU countries should create new opportunities and possibilities, particularly in terms of the region's economic development' (Lublin Voivodeship Development Strategy 2030).

In the resolution on the priorities of international cooperation, we read that: 'The international cooperation of the Lublin Voivodeship is determined primarily by: 1) Poland's membership in the European Union; 2) membership of the European Economic Area; 3) the border location in the eastern part of Poland; 4) direct proximity to the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine; 5) the location on the external border of the European Union' (Resolution No XXII/358/2020).

2. Paradiplomacy

The perception of regional development solely through the lens of economic and spatial factors has been replaced by a multifaceted and multidimensional approach to this process. Regional development is now understood as the coexistence of various phenomena, mainly economic, socio-cultural and political (Hryniewicz, 2000; 2004; Gorzelak, 2003).

A key reason for initiating paradiplomacy lies in the shared characteristics of regions (e.g. tourism and economic assets) which determine their development potential. For instance, the main reason for cooperation between Poland's Pomeranian Voivodeship and the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa, and the Jeollanam-do and Gyeongsangnam-do regions in South Korea, is their maritime nature and the role of the shipbuilding industry in their development. Similarly, the partnership between the Lesser Poland Voivodeship and the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh focuses on economic ventures in advanced technology and IT services, while cooperation with the Italian region of Tuscany (which remains informal) is centered around tourism. A notable example is the 'Małopolska – Travel Destination' project, funded by the Regional Operational Programme of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship for 2014-2020. Within its framework, 'Tuscany Days' were organised in Lesser Poland in 2022, alongside 'Lesser Poland Days' in Tuscany (POT supported Lesser Poland Days; Małopolska and Ryglice in Tuscany).

In the case of cross-border paradiplomacy, i.e. cooperation between regions from different countries that share a common border, the focus is on issues such as border management, transboundary protected areas, and addressing the peripheral status of border regions. Proximity plays a significant role in encouraging local governments to cooperate more closely, though this is contingent on the nature of the national border, particularly its openness. Cooperation between Polish local governments and regions within the Schengen Area (e.g. Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania) differs significantly from that with regions outside the zone, such as Belarus and Russia. For example, after 2022, all cooperation between the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship and Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast ceased entirely.

Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 was a crucial factor in the development of paradiplomacy. During the pre-accession period, many West European regions shared their EU membership experiences with Polish local governments, particularly regarding the utilisation of EU funds for regional investment and development challenges. For instance, Austria's Styria provided such insights to the Łódź Voivodeship both before and after Poland's accession, while France's Brittany engaged with the Warmian-Masurian and Greater Poland Voivodeships.

Let us use the paradiplomacy of the Lublin Voivodeship as a case study. The Lublin Voivodeship has partnerships with multiple international regions, including Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary), Gelderland (Netherlands), Grand Est (France), Styria (Austria), Henan (China), Murcia (Spain), Veneto (Italy), West Flanders (Belgium), Telemark (Norway), Nevada (USA), and several Ukrainian oblasts (Lviv, Volyn, Luhansk, Odesa, Ternopil, Rivne, Khmelnytskyi and Zakarpattia).

For example, cooperation with Norway's Telemark region focuses primarily on ecology, agriculture and green technologies, including waste management, water and sewage systems, and renewable energy, collectively known as CleanTech. The partnership is coordinated by Green Business Norway, an organisation that brings together institutions and companies involved in environmental protection. As a result, the Norwegian firm TergoPower invested in biomass technology to generate clean energy from straw produced on Lublin's farms (Telemark-Lubelskie partnership).

Collaboration with Hungary's Hajdú-Bihar region encompasses traditional areas of paradiplomacy, such as economic and social development, local government operations, and regional promotion. Notable joint projects under Interreg Europe and Interreg Central Europe include 'Smart Watch', which aimed to establish industry-specific observatories to support knowledge management in regions, and 'CLUSTERS3', which sought to enhance regional cluster policies (Komitat Hajdu-Bihar).

Three Polish voivodeships, Lublin, Silesia and Mazovia, collaborate with the US state of Nevada. This partnership is partly due to the active efforts of the honorary consul of Poland in Las Vegas, who in 2024 received the Special Ambassador Award from the Lublin Voivodeship for his role in fostering cooperation and promoting the region internationally. As part of this collaboration, the Lublin Voivodeship, in partnership with the Nevada governor's Office of Economic Development, has organised several editions of the 'NLAB Lubelskie – Nevada Acceleration Bridge' programme. Beneficiaries of this initiative have participated in Bootcamp Lubelskie workshops focused on international expansion strategies, US business conditions, investor presentations and negotiation techniques. The programme has selected dozens of Polish companies

whose representatives have travelled to the US to gain insights into startup development, innovation and new technologies (NLAB: Bootcamp Lubelskie).

Given its border location and proximity to Ukraine, the Lublin Voivodeship has historically prioritised cooperation with Ukrainian regions. At the turn of the 21st century, the focus was on supporting democratic reforms in Ukraine, particularly local government reform, a key aspect of paradiplomacy. Poland's decentralisation model was widely emulated in Ukraine, with Polish local government officials acting as experts and sharing their experiences. Territorial governments and various institutions have facilitated study visits, internships and training for Ukrainian administration representatives. Notable projects in this area include 'Study Tours to Poland' (by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation), 'The Local Government System in Poland: Why Does It Work?' (by the Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI, co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Democracy Support Programme in 2015), and initiatives supported by the Polish MFA such as 'Cities in the Transfer of Polish Decentralisation Experience to Ukraine' and 'Preparing Ukrainian Local Government for the Implementation of Decentralisation Reforms and Association with the EU (2014–2015)'. Many Ukrainian officials participated in study visits to Poland under the 'Civil Servants Mobility Programme' funded by the International Visegrad Fund and organised by Think Visegrad in collaboration with the Polish MFA (About STP; Polish experience; Completed projects).

On the Polish-Ukrainian border, numerous projects have been undertaken to foster closer ties between the two countries and societies. Given that this border is also the EU's external frontier, these efforts have contributed to Ukraine's integration into European structures. Local governments seeking to implement joint projects have utilised Polish development aid and MFA grants supporting local government and civic engagement in foreign policy. However, they have primarily drawn on EU funds, such as the Poland-Ukraine-Belarus Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, which had a budget of €170 million for 2007–2013 and funded 117 projects. In the 2014–2020 programming period, the programme operated under the European Neighbourhood Instrument, funding 167 projects worth over €170 million, making it the largest cross-border programme on the EU's land borders (About the Programme).

Among the many initiatives of the Lublin province, we can mention, for example, the trilateral project 'Building a Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian Water Policy in the Bug River Basin', the effect of which was the coordination of the activities of institutions responsible for water management and conducting a common water policy. Projects promoting the common borderland were also implemented, e.g. with the Lviv partner regarding Roztocze, within the framework of which, among others, a common strategy for promotional activities, a common tourist offer of the Roztocze area, and permanent cooperation of travel agencies were developed and implemented. On the other hand, with partners from the Volyn and Brest regions, a project concerning Polesie was implemented, consisting of the development and promotion of this area as a tourist product. The actions taken in it consisted, among others, in the development of a common strategy for promotional activities, the publication of advertising materials, the development of a tourist offer concerning Polesie, cooperation with travel agencies, and the promotion of Lublin airport.

The paradiplomatic activities of the Polish provinces with Ukraine, like those with other countries, serve to develop economic cooperation, including by promoting regions and supporting local entities in their expansion abroad. The most popular forms of promotion include: participation in international fairs and investment forums, the preparation of economic missions organised at home or at a partner's, and promotional campaigns or distribution of material in foreign languages. In practice, local government authorities create the framework and conditions for entrepreneurs to undertake foreign cooperation.

After 24 February 2022, Polish-Ukrainian cooperation was determined by Russia's attack on Ukraine and the outbreak of the full-scale war. Since then, it has focused on providing humanitarian aid to Ukrainian partners, and assistance to refugees from Ukraine who, fleeing the war, found shelter in Poland. Government and local government administrations at all levels, and above all residents, social groups and non-governmental organisations, have been involved in aid activities. First of all, it was about providing care, shelter, hygiene products and food, and then preparing the education system to accept Ukrainian children, learning Polish, career counselling and assistance in finding a job. Local governments provided refugees with psychological

and linguistic assistance (e.g. interpreters at the border, at reception points, offices and schools), as well as the possibility for the free use of sports and cultural offers. Real help for refugees was, for example, the support of Polish officials in filling out documents related to the legalisation of the stay or granting aid benefits (Grabowska et al., 2023; Astramowicz-Leyk et al., 2023; Maciejewska-Mieszkowska, 2023).

3. Directions of paradiplomacy

Regarding the number of international partnerships, the Mazovian Voivodeship leads in Poland with 21 agreements, followed by the Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Lublin, Subcarpathian, and Silesian voivodeships (18 each). Others include the Lower Silesia, Łódź, Greater Poland, and West Pomeranian (16 each), Pomeranian (15), Lesser Poland (14), Lubusz (12), Opole (11), Warmian-Masurian (10), Świętokrzyskie (7), and Podlaskie (5) voivodeships. However, regions also engage in informal cooperation, which can be equally intense. Often, local governments collaborate before formalising partnerships, through agreements, letters of intent, or protocols.

Polish voivodeships currently engage in international activities with 38 countries. Ukraine is the top partner (15 voivodeships have agreements, while Podlaskie cooperates informally), followed by China and France (13 agreements each), Germany (12), Italy (11), and Sweden (nine). Among Poland's neighbours, Slovakia and the Czech Republic rank high, while Lithuania (three agreements) and Belarus (one) have fewer ties. Russia is absent from this ranking, as in 2022, following its aggression against Ukraine, Polish local governments severed ties with Russian regions and cities in solidarity with Ukraine.

Table 1. Countries with whose territorial units the voivodeships have signed cooperation agreements

Lower Silesia	China, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Georgia, South Korea, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine
Kuyavia-Pomerania	Austria, China, Croatia, Estonia, France, Greece, Georgia, Spain, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, UK, Italy
Lublin	Austria, Belgium, China, France, Spain, Netherlands, Norway, Ukraine, USA, Hungary, Italy
Lubusz	China, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Greece, Moldova, Germany, Slovakia, Ukraine, Italy
Łódź	Austria, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Ukraine, Hungary, the UK, Italy
Lesser Poland	China, Croatia, France, Georgia, India, Iraq, Latvia, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine
Masovia	Belgium, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, India, Kazakhstan, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Germany, Ukraine, the USA, Hungary, Italy
Opole	Austria, China, the Czech Republic, France, Spain, Germany, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Italy
Subcarpathia	Austria, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, India, Germany, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary
Podlaskie	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, France, Italy
Pomerania	China, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine
Silesia	Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Spain, India, Japan, Germany, Slovakia, Ukraine, the USA, Hungary, the UK, the United Arab Emirates
Świętokrzyskie	Finland, Sweden, Ukraine, Hungary, Italy
Warmia-Masuria	China, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Italy
Greater Poland	Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, France, Netherlands, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Germany, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, the UK, Italy
West Pomerania	China, Croatia, Finland, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Germany, Sweden, Ukraine, Italy

Source: The authors.

With some countries, cooperation has been developing steadily for many years (e.g. Germany and Ukraine), while with others, cooperation is variable and more or less intensive in a given year (e.g. Italy and Spain). This depends, for example, on the change of authorities in local governments, as a result of which some may not be interested in further cooperation, and then it dies down, although the agreement is not formally terminated. Sometimes, however, we notice the opposite process, after another change of authorities, cooperation is activated, and having a signed document on cooperation makes it easier to resume it. Because in paradiplomacy, like state diplomacy, the role of personal contacts should be emphasised, not only in initiating cooperation, but above all in the will to continue it, especially after a change of government resulting from the electoral process. Generally, in recent years, the number of relations between Polish voivodeships and partners from West European countries has decreased slightly, while those with Ukraine, China and Romania have increased. Regional local governments, in addition to European and neighbourly cooperation, are increasingly willing to cooperate with regions outside the European continent. There are also geographically distant destinations, such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Korea and Japan.

Conclusion

At the level of the provinces in Poland, there is regional government, which is equipped with the ability to direct and manage a fundamental part of public affairs and perform public tasks of a provincial nature. The provincial government, as the creator of sustainable regional development, determines the development strategy of the province, and foreign cooperation (paradiplomacy) is linked to the assumptions and conditions specified in this strategy and serves to achieve the goals indicated in it.

The importance of the economic dimension of the paradiplomacy of provinces is growing, and they are trying to create conditions for: the internationalisation of local enterprises, searching for new markets and partners for economic exchange, attracting external investors to the region, the development of innovation and new technologies, an increase in employment, and the development of tourism. Additional tools in this field are provided by EU programmes, which promote all activities aimed at supporting the economy and development. Regional authorities use foreign contacts primarily to initiate and coordinate the economic cooperation of entities in the province, the effect of which will be an increase in innovation and competitiveness.

The conducted analysis confirms that paradiplomacy can serve as an effective instrument supporting the system of regional development management, which was the main research problem addressed in this article.

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PARADIPLOMATIJOS VAIDMUO REGIONINIO VYSTYMOSI PROCESUOSE: LENKIJOS VAIVADIJOS PAVYZDŽIAI

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas Lenkijos vaivadijų tarptautinis bendradarbiavimas (paradiplomacija), kaip darniojo regioninio vystymosi valdymo sistemos dalis. Autorių teigimu, paradiplomacija – tai ne tik viešųjų užduočių vykdymo, bet ir regionų socialinio, ekonominio bei kultūrinio vystymosi skatinimo priemonė. Pateikiamas šios veiklos teisinis pagrindas ir strateginiai dokumentai, apibrėžiamos geografinės bendradarbiavimo kryptys, apimančios ir ne Europos regionus. Lenkijos provincijų lygmeniu veikia regioninė valdžia, turinti galią valdyti ir tvarkyti esminę dalį viešųjų reikalų bei atlikti provincijos pobūdžio viešąsias užduotis. Provincijos valdžia, kaip tvaraus regioninio vystymosi kūrėja, nustato provincijos plėtros strategiją, o užsienio bendradarbiavimas (paradiplomacija) susietas su šioje strategijoje nurodytomis prielaidomis bei sąlygomis, leidžia siekti joje nurodytų tikslų. Auga provincijų paradiplomijos ekonominio aspekto svarba, nes stengiamasi sudaryti sąlygas: vietos įmonių internacionalizacijai, naujų pardavimo rinkų ir ekonominių mainų partnerių paieškai, išorės investuotojų pritraukimui į regioną, inovacijų ir naujų technologijų plėtrai, užimtumo didinimui ir turizmo plėtrai. Čia, kaip papildomos priemonės, vykdomos ES programos, skatinančios ekonomiką ir plėtrą, remiamą veiklą. Regioninės valdžios institucijos užsienio ryšius pirmiausia pasiūlo siekdamas inicijuoti ir koordinuoti provincijos subjektų ekonominį bendradarbiavimą, tai kilselėtų jos inovacijų ir konkurencingumo lygį.

Pateikiami Pamaro ir Liublino vaivadijų pavyzdžiai, iliustruojantys, kaip praktiškai įgyvendinamos plėtros strategijos ir užsienio bendradarbiavimo prioritetai. Aptariami konkretūs projektai, tokie kaip „NLAB Lubelskie – Nevada Acceleration Bridge“ ar partnerystė su Norvegija žaliosios ekonomikos kontekste. Ypač pabrėžiami ryšiai su Ukraina: nuo demokratinių reformų palaikymo iki humanitarinės pagalbos nuo 2022 metų karo pradžios.

Straipsnyje parodoma, kad Ukrainos, Kinijos ir Prancūzijos regionai yra dažniausi partneriai, tuo tarpu bendradarbiavimas su Rusija visiškai nutrauktas. Galiausiai pabrėžiamas ekonominis paradiplomacijos aspektas, skatinant regionų verslų tarptautiškumą, inovacijas ir investicijų pritraukimą.

RAKTINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *regionų užsienio bendradarbiavimas (paradiplomacija), regioninė plėtra, geografinės bendradarbiavimo kryptys*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: F55, R58, H77.

Received: 2025-04-10

Revised: 2025-04-28

Accepted: 2025-05-20