

Daniela SZYMAŃSKA, Hanna MICHNIEWICZ
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

**DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF
MUNICIPALITIES IN THE KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE
PROVINCE**

Domestic and international cooperation seems to be one of the most essential factors in the subordination of the development of territorial units to the executive power of municipalities. This concerns not only economic development and the stimulation of local economic activity, but also cooperation in cultural, environmental and cultural heritage protection issues, as well as the promotion of the given region and its qualities, among other things. The system change in 1989 created many possibilities for partnership between municipalities. This partnership functions within the framework of legally-specified associations, unions or informal exchanges. Territorial municipalities may create communal unions and associations, draw up contracts according to civil law (or agreements) and join different international associations (Niewiadomski 1992, Malarski 2001).

The aim of this paper is to show different types (domestic and foreign) and forms of cooperation between the territorial municipalities of towns and communes from the Kujawsko-Pomorskie area and municipalities in other countries and regions. This paper does not deal with all of the questions concerning the international cooperation of towns and territorial municipalities, the efficiency of cooperation, legal questions, the cooperation of universities and colleges in the regions, or the creation of a functional-spatial cooperation network of local municipalities and its material and non-material dimensions (see i.e. Furmankiewicz 2001). Some other questions have also been omitted. Special attention has been given to the number, dynamics and directions of the connections of the municipal units in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province (voivodship) with other parts of the world and the rest of Poland.

The Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province was formed on 1 January 1999 from three former provinces (Bydgoszcz, Toruń and Włocławek) with different levels of socio-economic development. The Bydgoszcz Province was the most developed of these: in spite of the different administrative partitions from 1945, it had never lost its status of being a separate province. Therefore, it seems that this factor also manifests itself in the enterprise and initiative of its territorial municipalities. We should also mention here that the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province is differentiated both socially and economically.

With regard to the social aspect of the new province, the population of the former Bydgoszcz and Toruń provinces is better-educated and more innovative, younger (and therefore more creative) than that of the former Włocławek Province. The economic potential of these two provinces is also considerably higher than that of the latter.

In connection with the above-mentioned facts, the authors have assumed that the socio-economic situation of the former provinces given above which make up the present Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province is reflected in the number and dynamics of the connections of their territorial municipalities with other municipalities in Poland and abroad. The spreading of municipal connections can be examined in the context of the diffusion of innovation that is taking place from richer, more progressive and innovative regions to less affluent ones with a slower rate of change.

We have analysed authorities at all levels in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province (province, district-poviat's starosty, town office, commune office). Data concerning domestic and international cooperation has been obtained from the Province Office in Bydgoszcz, as well as the Voivodship Marshal's Office in Toruń. It has been complemented by data collected directly in municipal and communal offices and by data from the web pages of these units.

When examining the domestic cooperation of the municipalities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province, we have to point out that it is mainly based on multilateral cooperation networks of local municipalities (memberships of associations and unions of districts/poviats, towns and communes). A considerable revival of different types of cooperation took place after the system change in 1989: all of the contracts concerning domestic cooperation were signed after 1990.

The district village mayors of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province signed

an agreement in 1990 to join the Union of Polish Districts. 47 communes out of the 144 in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province cooperate domestically in the Union of Rural Communes of the Polish Republic, the 'Partnership for the Environment' foundation, the Association of Wielkopolska Communes and Districts and in the Association of 'Polish Gothic Castle' Communes, among others.

A certain spatial differentiation can be noticed: communes situated in the central and northern part of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province show a stronger engagement in different forms of cooperation. This also concerns communes situated in the direct neighbourhood of the bigger towns in the region (Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Włocławek, Inowrocław and Grudziądz). This factor undoubtedly has a tendency to make the activity of the communes more dynamic concerning cooperation, participation in different types of programme and projects which aim to improve the economic, social and cultural functioning of these municipal units, among other things. The rapid suburbanisation process is resulting in the inflow of urban population to these areas and this is leading to demands concerning the quality of the natural environment, the availability of basic services, and so on.

It should be stressed that the communes of the former Toruń Province show a stronger degree of engagement in domestic inter-regional and local cooperation. They make up over 47% of the domestic partnerships in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province, while the communes of the former Bydgoszcz Province make up 37.5% of these. This gives an agreement per municipal unit coefficient of 0.7 for the former (70% of municipal units in this area take part in domestic cooperation), while the latter shows a coefficient of 0.5 (less than 50% of municipal units take part in cooperation). Communes from the former Włocławek Province have the lowest levels of cooperation: only 30% of the communes actively cooperate with other municipalities in Poland (see Table 1, Fig. 1).

The bigger towns in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province belong to many societies and associations: among others, the Union of Polish Metropolises, the Union of Polish Municipalities, the Union of Municipalities Situated on the Vistula, the Society of Healthy Polish Municipalities, the Chapter of the Oldest Towns and Resorts in Poland; 30% of the towns in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province (i.e. 16 towns out of a total number of 52) take part in such forms of cooperation.

Table 1. Domestic and international cooperation of municipalities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province from 1962 to 2002 (categorised according to former provincial boundaries)

Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province	Number of municipalities	Agreements					
		international			domestic		
		number	%	*	number	%	*
bydgoskie	62	48	57	0.70	30	37.5	0.5
toruńskie	59	33	39	0.60	38	47.5	0.7
włocławskie	44	3	4	0.07	12	15.0	0.3
Total	165	84	100	2.00	80	100.0	0.4

* Number of agreements per municipalities.

Source: authors' calculations based on data from the Voivodship Office in Bydgoszcz and the Voivodship Marshal's Office in Toruń.

Due to its historical past (affiliations with two invaders), as well as its socio-economic and physical-geographical non-homogeneity, the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province is characterised by a considerably lower degree of integration of local municipalities than other regions in Poland. For example, the activity of communes in southern Poland who work together in local societies and associations is well-known. The Union of Upper Silesian communes is an example of this.

The international cooperation of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province shows a somewhat different picture. It takes place at several administrative levels: the voivodship, poviats and communes (both urban and rural). According to the voivodship authorities, some of the basic aims of international cooperation are *'the creation of a positive image of the province and Poland at an international level, the creation of conditions for the economic development of the province, the improvement of the competitiveness of firms and the initiation of contacts between institutions and organisations.'* (Department of International Cooperation and Promotion in the Voivodship Marshal's Office in Toruń).

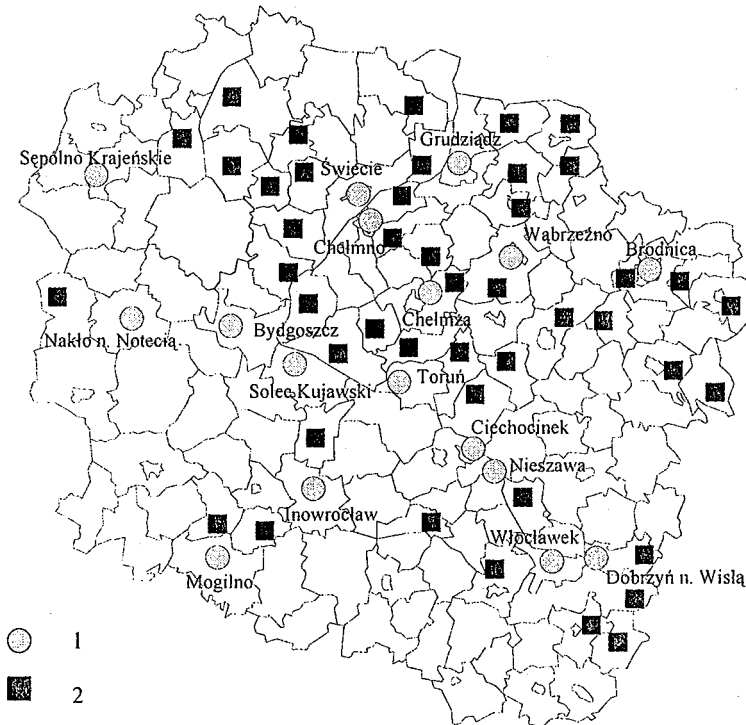


Fig.1. The towns and communes of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province involved in domestic cooperation

1 – towns, 2 – communes

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Toruń and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

When taken all together, the territorial municipalities of the province (poviats, towns and communes) had established partnerships with 84 foreign partners from 23 different countries in Europe, North America and Asia by 2002. We should add 29 official agreements and treaties concerning international regional cooperation between regions signed by the voivod and the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Toruń (this figure includes agreements signed by the former provinces) to this list. Many of these are extensions of the international partnerships of the former Bydgoszcz, Toruń and Włocławek provinces. Appropriate agreements have

been mainly signed with regions in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in Scandinavia and France (see Table 2, Fig. 2, Fig 3).

Regarding the international cooperation of territorial municipalities (poviats, towns and communes), 84 agreements have been signed, as mentioned above, with foreign partners (Fig. 4, Fig. 5). Communes and towns show a greater degree of activity in international cooperation, while poviats are less active: perhaps this is due to the fact that they were only reintroduced on 1st January 1999. Among the 22 poviats, only 4 cooperate at an international level. These are Tuchola, Nakło, Toruń and Grudziądz (three agreements have been signed with municipalities in Germany and one with a municipality in Lithuania, see Fig. 6). Out of a total number of 84 different international municipal unit partnerships, over 57% come from the former Bydgoszcz Province (i.e. 77% of its municipal units cooperate internationally), 39% from the former Toruń Province (i.e. 56% of its municipal units cooperate internationally) and only 4% from the former Włocławek Province (i.e. 7% of its municipal units cooperate internationally, see table 1, fig. 6). Here we should note the low activity of rural communes: out of the 92 rural communes, only 12 have signed agreements with foreign partners. These are mainly in contact with small foreign localities and communes, mostly from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands (informal contacts play a significant role here).

Germany is predominant among the partners' countries of origin (24 partners, or 28.6% of the total), followed by the Netherlands (9 partners), Denmark (6 partners), France, the USA, Great Britain. Lithuania and Russia (3-4 partners each). The remaining 13 countries make up 20.4% of the total number of partners. Most of the international contracts were signed in the 90s. However, the bigger towns of the region (Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Grudziądz and Włocławek) have cooperated with partner towns for considerably longer (Fig. 4 and Fig 5).

When analysing the above-mentioned numbers, we may note that towns and communes situated in the territory of the former Bydgoszcz Province show a higher degree of activity with regard to international municipal cooperation. Furthermore, the former province's favourable socio-economic situation and its long undisturbed existence (beginning in 1945) with Bydgoszcz as its main city has been a key factor in this. Taking advantage of its administrative position, the former Bydgoszcz Province signed international trade and cultural contracts.

Table 2. International agreements and treaties between regions signed by the voivod and marshals of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province (including agreements signed by the former provinces)

Year of signature	Region/country	Basis of cooperation	Province/ Voivodship
1991	Champagne-Ardennes, Marne / France	cooperation report	Toruńskie
1993	Yogeva / Estonia	agreement	Włocławskie
1995	Marche / Italy	agreement	Włocławskie
1995	Sonderjylland / Denmark	agreement	Toruńskie
1995	Western Region / Greece	cooperation report	Toruńskie
1996	Veneto / Italy	treaty	Toruńskie and Bydgoskie
1996	Frederiksborg / Denmark	letter of intent	Bydgoskie
1996	Värmland / Sweden	letter of intent	Bydgoskie
1996	Kedainiai District / Lithuania	letter of intent	Toruńskie
1996	Kysuce, Čadča / Slovakia	letter of intent	Toruńskie
1997	Frederiksborg / Denmark	letter of intent	Bydgoskie
1997	Frederiksborg / Denmark	letter of intent	Bydgoskie
1997	Ivano-Frankovskiy District / Ukraine	agreement	Włocławskie
1997	Mogilev District / Bielarus	agreement	Włocławskie
1998	AGIFAM / France	agreement	Bydgoskie
1999	Veneto / Italy	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
1999	Värmland, Ostergöland, Sörmland / Sweden	letter of intent	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
1999	Marche / Italy	agreement	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
1999	Sonderjylland / Denmark	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
1999	Midi-Pyrénées / France	letter of intent	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2000	Kedainiai / Lithuania	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2000	Jogeva / Estonia	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2000	Kozani / Greece	letter of intent	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2001	Smolensk District / Russia	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2001	Smolensk District / Russia	letter of intent	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2001	Saratov District / Russia	memorandum	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2002	Novgorod District / Russia	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie
2002	Midi-Pyrénées / France	treaty	Kujawsko-Pomorskie

Source: prepared on the basis of data from the Voivodship Office in Bydgoszcz and the Voivodship Marshal's Office in Toruń.

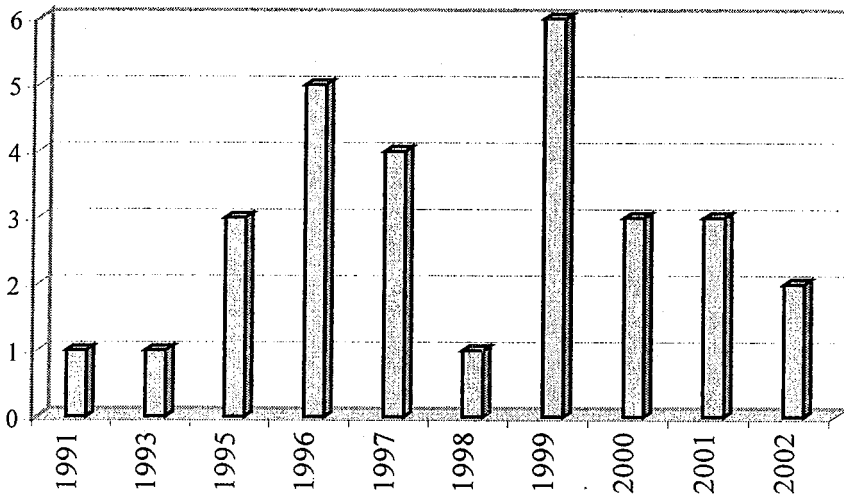


Fig. 2. Number of international agreements and treaties signed by voivodship authorities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Toruń and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

The authorities in Bydgoszcz (they have been linked to the Italian town of Reggio Emilia from 1962 onwards and with the town of Kragujevac in the former Yugoslavia from 1971), in Toruń (they have been linked to Philadelphia, USA, since 1977 and Göttingen in Germany since 1978) and in Tuchola (they have had contact with Lubtheen in Germany since 1971) have the longest-running international contacts. It is worth mentioning that the partnership agreements do not always concern municipalities of a similar size. For example, Bydgoszcz, with 380 thousand inhabitants, has agreements with smaller towns with 130-300 thousand inhabitants. Toulouse, with 400 thousand inhabitants, is an exception here. Toruń has close contacts with Philadelphia (1.5 million inhabitants), while the Tuchola poviat (48 thousand inhabitants, of which 14 thousand inhabitants live in Tuchola) cooperates with Hannover (half a million inhabitants).

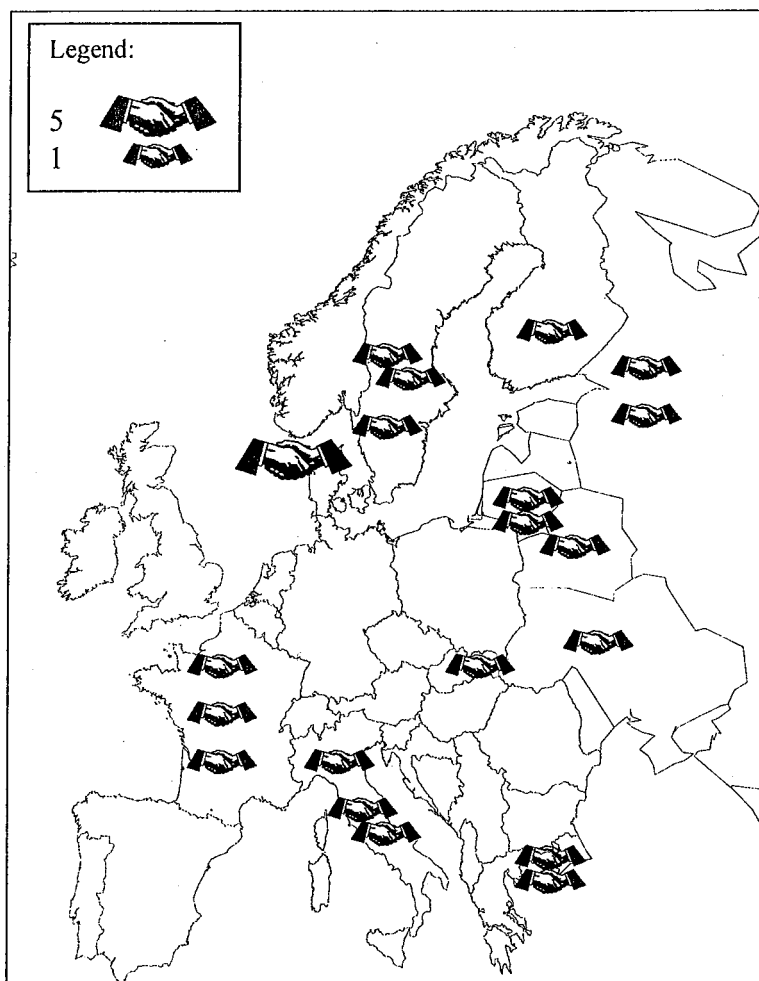


Fig. 3. Partners that the voivodship authorities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region has signed agreements and treaties with (1991-2002)

5; 1 – number of international agreements

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Torun and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

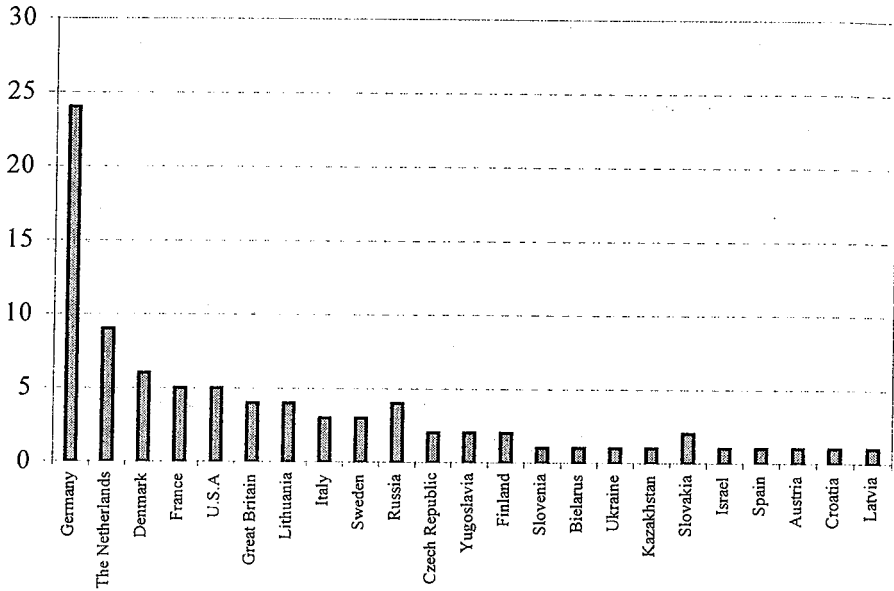


Fig. 4. The origin of partners of local government units (districts-poviats, towns and communes) in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province from 1962 to 2001

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Torun and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

The range of different partnerships of the territorial municipalities raises, among other things, questions connected with sharing of information and experiences concerning environmental protection, supporting the development of relationships between universities and scientific research centres, the sharing of information and experiences concerning economic activity (supporting contacts between representatives and organisations of small and medium-sized firms).

Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, the Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Toruń stated that *'with regard to the improvement of competitiveness, over the last two years the province has supported the organisation of 7 foreign trade missions in which 55 firms from the region have taken part. The missions, commercial contacts and the contracts resulting from them are expanding the market for products from the region, creating new cooperative connections, and, as a result, is creating new jobs and reducing unemployment'*.

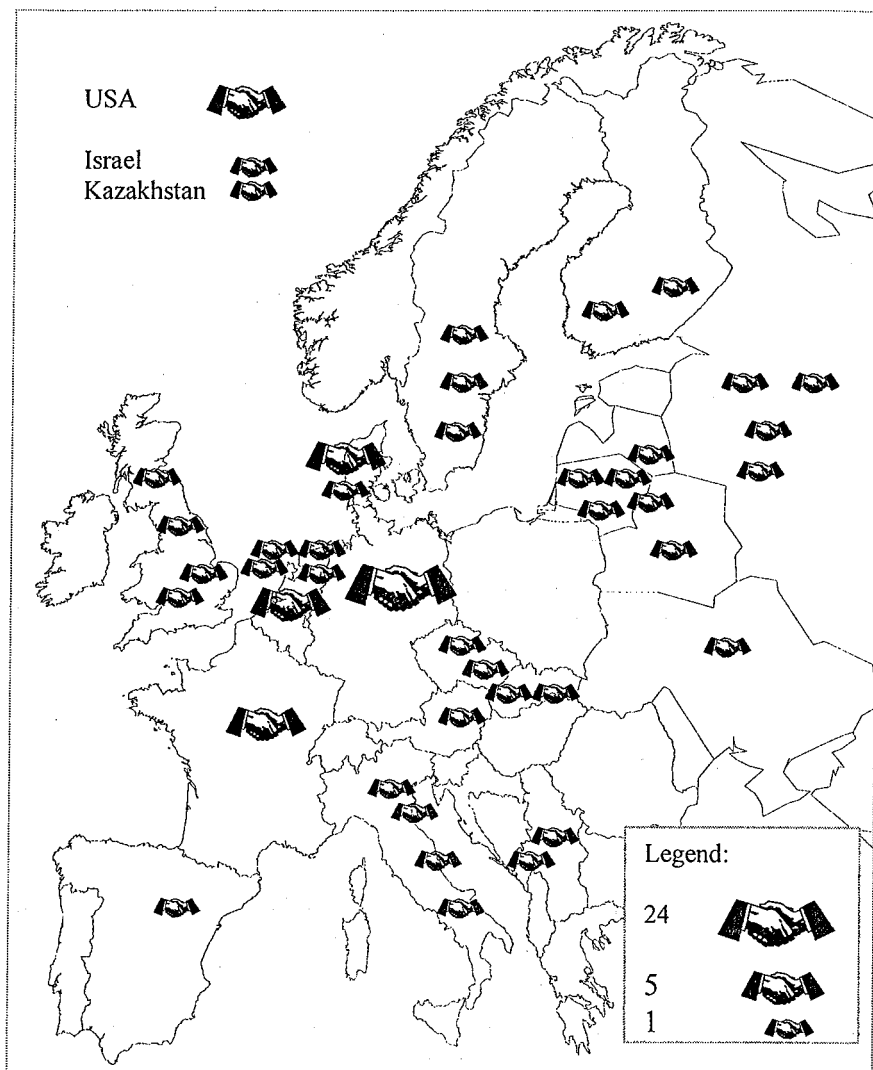


Fig. 5. International cooperation of the municipalities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province in the period 1962-2002

24;5;1 – number of international agreements

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Torun and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

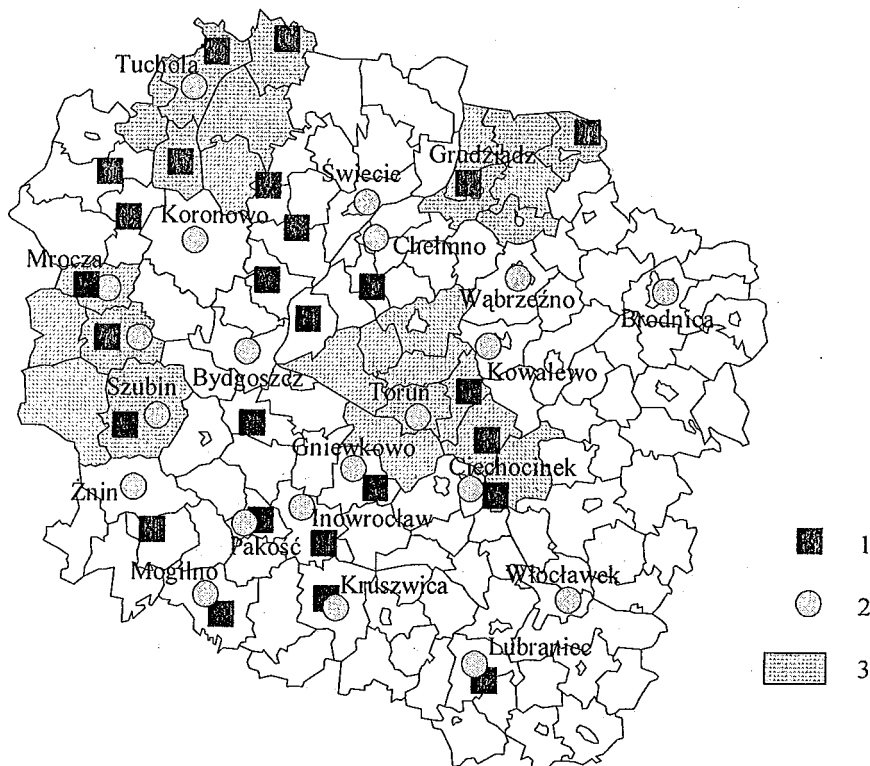


Fig. 6. Districts (poviats), towns and communes of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province cooperated with foreign partners

1 – town, 2 – commune, 3 – powiat

Source: prepared on the basis of data from Department of International Cooperation and Promotion, Voivodeship Marshal's Office in Torun and Voivodeship Office in Bydgoszcz.

In summary, we must note the differentiation of the activity of municipalities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region with regard to cooperation. Larger territorial units (town halls, poviats and village mayors' offices) are showing a stronger degree of engagement in the establishment of formal inter-regional and international contacts. The phenomenon of diffusion of innovation is also noticeable. It may be noticed that the bigger towns of the region are joining the international or domestic connection network first, at

It also seems that the international cooperation of the territorial municipalities in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province may play a significant role in integration processes with European Union countries, while the dynamics, and the number of different forms, of cooperation will increase at the moment when Poland joins the structure of the European Union. The influence of integration processes on the development of towns in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region can already be felt. Bilateral cooperation between the towns in the region with towns from Western Europe and North America plays an important role in this. Although the character of this cooperation is different, nevertheless, in many cases it brings particular advantages for municipal development and, as Parysek emphasises, this form of cooperation is very fruitful (Parysek 1997, 2002).

References

- Furmankiewicz M., 2002, *Funkcjonalno-przestrzenne sieci współpracy samorządów lokalnych*, *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne* 1(8), p. 5-24.
- Malarski S., 2001, *Formy i środki prawne współpracy zagranicznej społeczności lokalnych i samorządów terytorialnych*, *Śląsk Opolski* 2 (44), p. 96-103.
- Niewiadomski Z., 1992, *Ustrój gminy. Gminne i ponadgminne instytucje samorządu terytorialnego*, [in:] Piekara A., Niewiadomski Z. (Eds.), *Samorząd terytorialny i rozwój lokalny*, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Centrum Studiów Samorządu Terytorialnego i Rozwoju Lokalnego, Warszawa, p. 155-189.
- Parysek J., 1997, *Podstawy gospodarki lokalnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań.
- Parysek J., 2002, *Wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne uwarunkowania transformacji* [in:] Słodczyk J. (Ed.), *Przemiany bazy ekonomicznej i struktury przestrzennej miast*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, Opole, p. 21-32.

Daniela Szymańska, Hanna Michniewicz
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
ul. Danielewskiego 6
87-100 Toruń, Poland
email: dani@geo.uni.torun.pl

