

## **The role of EU funds in Poland's regional and local development in light of international experiences**

Poland has been the biggest beneficiary of EU policies (Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy) and the experience gained in our country can be of importance both theoretically and for practical policy suggestions. Previous studies do not give a clear picture of effects that the funds coming from the European Union have for the processes of regional and local development. In particular, the following questions have not, as yet, received firm answers:

- do the regions and local units grow faster due to the inflow of the EU funds?
- are the differences between the territorial units diminish or increase due to the inflow of the EU funds?
- which local conditions should be met if these funds were used efficiently possible?
- what are the relationships between the various projects and activities undertaken within the frameworks of different, independent policies carried by the European Union?

Field studies to be carried out within the project will aim at indicating the internal conditions that most favor prodevelopmental use of the financial means coming from the EU. These studies will also indicate to what extent these measures have contributed to the development of the municipalities under study and to improvement of the municipal budgets.

The basis of the research will be a database developed specifically for this project, which will consist of information about the inflow of EU funds to municipalities and counties within individual EU programs, data from questionnaires sent to municipalities on the use of EU funds and their local effects, statistics available at the CSO and information from other research project, as well as data collected at several selected municipalities within the depth of field studies (case studies).

The results of the planned research will become an important contribution to the current research related to fundamental issues of regional development and regional policy, especially that part which is conducted in conjunction with Cohesion Policy and which is co-funded by this policy. These results can be used in reforms currently under discussion already mentioned the most important Community policies, which in this study for the first time in the EU will be examined in the joint, comprehensive approach indicating their mutually impact they have on the territorial systems.