

## **Popularised scientific summary of the project**

For Georgia, regaining its independence in 1991 was a crucial moment. Freshly regained sovereignty was the beginning of a long transformation process, which had both, positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, there was the abandonment of the centrally controlled economy model, which, for years, has been responsible for economically and socially undermining the whole Eastern bloc region. On the other hand, the specificity and strength of the new conditions as well as the pace of the introduced changes meant that the transformation process was a shock for Georgia.

The collapse of unprofitable, governmentally subsidised industries together with separatist tendencies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the power-struggle of political clans, led the state to the brink of bankruptcy. Numerous armed conflicts, increasing rates of crime, corruption and unemployment resulted in deepening levels of poverty and, consequently, high emigration rate. Just like in the other post-communist states that were undergoing a systemic transformation at the turn of the 20th century, the rapid changes exposed strong regional disparities, a phenomenon that only has deepened in the following years. Adopted by the authorities, based on western models, model of regional policy development has been confronted with harsh, Georgian reality – unstable internal situation and numerous barriers effectively inhibiting reorganisation and development processes.

It is important to note that the diversity of Georgian regions and the existence of development disparities between them is influenced not only by economy, politics and natural environment, but also by factors specific to the Caucasus region, such as history, culture and ethnicity. The main objective of the study is therefore to assess the scale of diversification of the level and dynamics of social and economic development of Georgian regions and determinants of this development during systemic transformation.

The main reason for choosing this topic is the continuing difficult social and economic situation in the country, the problem of deepening regional disproportions resulting in worsened quality of life and the depopulation of peripheral regions. The choice was also influenced by the fact that Georgia itself is an interesting object of research, mainly due to its strategic location in the Caucasus region, in terms of transport, energy, politics and military. Georgia is increasingly becoming a subject of popular science publications and a tourist destination for Poles. Due to its political aspirations (willingness to join the EU and NATO), its strategic location and the growing number of connections with Poland, it seems necessary to look at it not only as at a country of beautiful views and smiling people, but also, from a scientific point of view - through the prism of real economic problems and barriers to development. This is particularly important also because of the possibility of sharing Polish experience in the field of transformation processes, and thus helping a country struggling with a difficult social and economic situation in shaping its vision of development.