

European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region **and EU macro-regional approach –** **the analysis of ten years** **of the strategy implementation**

Marta Szulc, *University of Szczecin (Poland)*

e-mail: szulcmv@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9928-305X

Abstract

In 2009, the *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* was created in the Baltic Sea Region. This strategy is based on the concept of a macro-regional approach that was initiated in it. The theory supporting the concept is the theory of multi-level governance (MLG). The article analyses the process of implementation of this strategy and the macro-regional approach created in it. The analysis is related to 2019's 10th anniversary of the creation of the strategy and the macro-regional approach, which was transformed into a concept implemented also in other macro-regions of the European Union.

Keywords: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, macro-regional approach, theory of the multi-level governance (MLG), implementation process, macro-regions of the EU, European Union

Strategia Unii Europejskiej dla Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego i podejście makroregionalne Unii Europejskiej - analiza 10 lat wdrażania strategii

Streszczenie

W 2009 roku opracowano *Strategię Unii Europejskiej dla Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego*. Strategia ta opiera się na koncepcji podejścia makroregionalnego, która została w niej zainicjowana. Teorią wspierającą tę koncepcję jest teoria wielopoziomowego zarządzania (MLG). W artykule przeanalizowano proces wdrażania tej strategii i stworzone w niej podejście makroregionalne. Analiza związana jest z 10. rocznicą powstania strategii i podejścia makroregionalnego, które zostało przekształcone w koncepcję wdrożoną również w innych makroregionach Unii Europejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Strategia Unii Europejskiej dla Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego, podejście makroregionalne, teoria wielopoziomowego zarządzania (MLG), proces wdrażania, makroregiony UE, Unia Europejska

The year 2019 marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* (EUSBSR).¹ This strategy was preceded by unique consultations at local, regional, national and transnational level as well as interlevel consultations, with Baltic non-governmental, governmental and interregional organisations. Such broad consultations allowed the creation of the first macro-regional strategy, which, at the same time, was based on a system of multi-level governance. EUSBSR's unique product was the creation of the concept of a macro-regional approach, which became a model also implemented in other macro-regions of the European Union.

The main objective of this article is to examine the process of EUSBSR implementation, including the development of the macro-regional concept. EUSBSR, as the first macro-regional strategy, became a space for testing many solutions aimed at improving cooperation in macro-regions of the European Union and developing a new model of the EU governance.

The following research questions were posed at the beginning of the research:

- Is the EU macro-regional approach a developing concept?
- Is the EUSBSR an added value?
- Is the implementation of the EUSBSR so far effective?

Asking such key questions is extremely important, especially after 10 years of implementing a concept that had aspirations to be a new way of organising the European Union.

The article is based on the examination of the thematic scholar literature and on the analysis of documents of EU institutions and actors of the BSR's macro-regional policy. The most attention was devoted to the analysis of documents, which affected the limited number of literature cited. Analysis of EU documents, in particular the analysis of reports on the implementation process, is aimed at evaluating the process and answering research questions. The review and analysis of the current scholar literature and the analysis of its content is extremely important for the presentation of comprehensive conclusions. It is worth noting, that despite 10 years of implementation of the EUSBSR it is not yet possible to measure the quantitative results.

The dual role of the multi-level governance in Baltic Sea Region research is also worth mentioning. On the one hand, it is a theoretical concept that provides a basis for research, and on the other hand, it is a management method that has been established in the EUSBSR. This article refers to the considerations of Krzysztof Tomaszewski (2013) in this area and follows the author's interpretation of the issue and the coexistence of these two approaches to multi-level governance.

Macro-regional approach

An attempt to define the concept of macro-region was made in 2009 in "Nordregio" publication (Dubois et al. 2009: p.17–20) by Alexandre Dubois, Sigrid Hedin, Peter Schmitt and Jose Sterling. In their research, they started from the definition of the word "region",

¹ See more: <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>; https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/baltic-sea/library/

noting that the concept of region is now used both in relation to administrative units and functional areas. The paper notes that since it is so difficult to grasp the definition of a region, there are some similar difficulties in the definition of a region with the following prepositions: macro, micro, meso, sub-regional (Dubois et al. 2009; p.17).

The researcher Björn Hettne (1996) noted that regions may be more or less regionalised. The same parameters may also be applied to the macro-region. The level of regionalisation, according to Hettne, is determined by following parameters:

- geographical closure – regions may be more or less geographically limited;
- social relations in the region – these are the evidence of the stability of the region;
- structured cooperation in any field, e.g. culture, economy, politics and membership of an organisation;
- common values and public communication facilitating the creation of civil society;
- regional identity and actors' capacity, legitimacy and structure to take decisions (Hettne 1996; Dubois et al. 2009; p.17).

It has been noted that macro-regions need to negotiate new institutional arrangements as they offer a new scale of territorial governance. The introduction of new management methods is necessary to fill the organisational vacuum that emerges when a new macro-region is created, as was the case with the BSR. Erik Swyngedouw (1997; p.156) noted that the introduction of such a new scale in a multi-level political system could be highly contested not only in terms of the content of the new scale, but also in terms of the struggle between existing weights and different scales. It is appropriate to consider a macro-region as a specific interface between existing scales (i.e. in the case of the BSR, between regions, countries and the EU). Jürgen Ossenbrügge (2003) pointed out that a viable macro-region can be used as a channel for policy implementation, but its maintenance and functioning can consume a lot of resources (Dubois et al. 2009; p.17-20).

In its *Communication COM(2009) 248/3* concerning the *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*, the European Commission defined a macro-region as "an area covering a number of administrative regions but with sufficient issues in common to justify a single strategic approach. Other areas in the European Union are beginning to self-identify as macro-regions and the approach adopted in this strategy will offer important lessons as to the potential of a macro-regional approach" (European Commission 2009). The document implies that macro-regional approach "provides the EU with an innovative policy instrument, which could serve as a good example of efforts to achieve common EU objectives and a more effective coordination of territorial and sectoral policies based on shared territorial challenges" (European Commission 2009).

The European Committee of Regions (CoR), drawing conclusions from the Forum *Europe's macro-regions: Integration through territorial co-operation* (Brussels, 13.04.2010), noted that a macro-region can be an innovative form of territorial cooperation at interregional and supranational level that enhances the coherence and coordination of policies in different sectors, rationalising the use of financial resources and giving greater weight to local and regional authorities based on the principles of multi-level governance, and broadly involving civil society organisations. In the same document, the CoR also

stated that the macro-region is not another institutional level at multi-level governance (MLG) of the EU, but a network, an operational method or rather a joint action involving different European, national, regional and local actors as well as different policies and funding programmes (European Committee of the Regions 2011).

The 2012 European Commission statement² implied that "the macro-regional approach offers an integrated framework for challenges too broad for the national level but too specific for the EU-27" (European Commission 2012: p. 3). The same document also stated that innovative approaches to make better use of available resources and procedures are crucial in a situation of tight public budgets.

The document, in which attempts were made to formalise the concept of the macro-region and macro-regional approach is the *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the added value of macro-regional strategies of 27 June 2013*. It states that the macro-regional concept arose from a wish to develop a common response to the phenomenon of degradation of the Baltic Sea environment, as well as a desire to undertake coordinated actions in response to the challenges and opportunities created by this region. This document suggests that the objective of the macro-regional approach is to respond in a coordinated way to problems that are easier to solve jointly than separately. This approach removes barriers for development and unlocks the potential of the regions concerned. The objective of the macro-regional strategies is to place problems in the context of multilateral cooperation and to go beyond the current borders of the EU in order to work on an equal footing with neighbours. Such an approach encourages participants not only to go beyond national borders, but also to overcome barriers to more strategic and creative thinking about available opportunities (European Commission 2013).

MLG in macro-regional approach

The Multi-Level Governance theory has been the theory supporting the macro-regional approach from the very beginning. It has been present in the research discourse for many years (see, for example: Hooghe 1996; Marks, Hooghe 2001; Marks, Hooghe, Blank 1996). The reflections of researchers focused on countries in creating the European Union (Marks, Hooghe, Blank 1996: p.342) have led to the research on MLG. The concept of including entities from many levels of governance (subnational, national, and supranational) in the process of creating policy (Marks, Hooghe 2001: p. 2) gave rise to the creation of a macro-regional approach.

It also appears in documents concerning the governance of the European Union.³ Such interpenetration of the theory of multi-level governance with its practical application is undoubtedly a research challenge. Researchers are already dealing with the

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, COM(2012) 128 final, Brussels.

³ For example: *European Governance – A white paper*, COM (2001) 428, 12.10.2001, Brussels.

critical analysis of this theoretical model (e.g. Tomaszewski 2013). Janusz Ruskowski (e.g. Ruskowski 2010: p. 262–278) devotes a great attention to this issue. Thanks to the EU macro-regions, the subject of multi-level governance in the EU is still essential, and its analysis enters the next levels of research and methodological advancement.

Janusz Ruskowski's statement (Ruskowski 2012: p. 36; 2013: p. 29) that MLG theory explains the construction of multi-level governance in the European Union is an appropriate one. He also notes that apart from conventional levels (local, regional, national, supra-national, supra-supranational), MLG also noticed fuzzy levels (e.g. subnational-supranational or national-supranational) (Ruskowski 2013: p. 29–30, 41). During the analysis of the EUSBSR creation process, this multi-level character of the macro-regional approach is particularly visible, and MLG gains a practical dimension in this process (see more broadly: Szulc 2013).

When analysing the application of MLG in a macro-regional approach, the research by Stefan Gänzle, who often draws attention to the importance of entities from different levels of management, cannot be omitted (e.g. Gänzle 2018: p. 339). In one of his articles (Gänzle 2017: p. 407–420), he considers the dependence on increase between multi-level governance and the rank of Baltic cooperation. In his article, he stated that the use of MLG in a macro-regional approach created a new quality (new scales of intervention, new actor constellations, and variable geometries of governance).⁴ Gänzle also pointed out that the macro-regional approach supported by the MLG allows both institutional and non-institutional actors to achieve common political objectives.

As it was previously noted, the MLG theory has also been critically analysed. One of the MLG critics is Krzysztof Tomaszewski. In his in-depth critical analysis (Tomaszewski 2013) of the MLG theoretical model, however, he does not criticise the MLG concept as a whole. His criticism touches upon MLG as a theory too detailed to apply it to study processes other than those occurring in the EU. The author of this article is convinced that this is a challenge for other researchers to try to respond to this criticism by presenting the possibilities of its application in other geographical areas and in other political conditions. It is worth noting, however, that Tomaszewski sees the positive sides of MLG as a way of governing the EU and the fact that using it will make it easier to meet the challenges facing the EU. The analysis of MLG in macro-regions is worth comparing with the considerations on the role of the EU as an international actor. For example, Beata Piskorska noticed that "it is assumed that the European Union certainly lost its attractiveness and prestige as a result of recent transformations that affected it within the system, but also due to the dynamics of the international environment" (Piskorska 2019: p. 31). It is worth considering whether macro-regions, through the effective cooperation, can strengthen the EU's global role. The research on macro-regional strategies may be an attempt at polemics with Tomaszewski and show the application of the MLG in practice. This analysis is another level of research on a multi-level approach. The involvement, competences and scope of tasks at particular levels (EU, Member States, macro-regional and regional-local) of governance are presented in *Table 1. Distribution of competences and scope of tasks in the EUSBSR governance*. The table identifies the specific

⁴ The author of this article agrees with this thesis (more broadly: Szulc 2019).

units and institutions responsible for the EUSBSR at each level. Thanks to the analysis of the EU documents, their tasks, competences and activities are presented concisely. Information in the table clearly indicates that all these levels work together to achieve common benefits. Similar observations are also made by M. Witkowska, who, when analysing the levels of cooperation in the EU, aptly pointed out that, for example, the European Commission does not have a purely auxiliary function towards the states (Witkowska 2013; p.122–138).

Table 1: Distribution of competences and scope of tasks in the EUSBSR governance.

	Management level	Responsible unit/insitution	Scope of tasks, competences, activities
1	The EU	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (European Commission)	- general coordination, - monitoring and reporting to the Council in close cooperation with other EC services on issues falling within their remit.
		Interministerial working group	- ensuring consistent, broad support for the strategy, - ensuring link between strategy, policies and funding sources
		Commission delegations in the region	- communication with the EUSBSR activities
		European Commission	- facilitates work on aligning funding with the strategy, - communication on the strategy through a website and a bimonthly newsletter with the latest information, -drawing up reports on the implementation process.
		The EUSBSR expert group within the INTER-ACT programme	- seeking operational solutions to identify challenges that have implications for the practical management of the programme, - support programmes to identify their role in implementing the strategy and identify operational responsibilities, challenges and management capacities.
		Annual forum	- presenting the strategy and its achievements to a bigger community of the interested parties. The input from the annual forum takes the Commission's annual reports on implementation into account.
		The Council of the European Union	- is responsible for broader policy development
2	The EU Member State level	Experts in the EUSBSR group	- experts from each of the BSR States actively participating in the EC expert group

3	BSR level	National Contact Points	- helping to implement the strategy at the national level. Within this process, the strategy has contributed to strengthening the cooperation mechanisms for the Baltic Sea Region in the participating countries.
		Priority area coordinators	- facilitating the achievement of the objectives set out in the action plan; - coordinating and monitoring the development of the activities and flagship initiatives; - facilitating the involvement and cooperation of the interested parties from across the macro-region and leading political discussions and policy development in the region, - project leaders should strive to achieve measurable results and identify opportunities for policy development.
		Leaders of horizontal activities	- playing a key role in ensuring the cross-cutting and cross-sectoral linkages of the strategy as a whole; - should be in constant contact with the priority area coordinators as well as other interested parties.
		Programme managers in the member states	- modifying their national and regional programmes to include references to the strategy; - adopting additional selection criteria to insert the EUSBSR into their intervention logic.
4	Regional and local level	Group of experts of CBSS–Baltic 21, BDF, HELCOM–VASAB	- is responsible for implementing the various projects and activities listed in the action plan.
		International institutions such as the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Baltic Sea States	- highlighting the strategy in their political agendas, organising joint events and participating in flagship initiatives.
		Euroregions, regions, cities, communes/provinces	- showing a strong commitment; - are leaders in priority areas, horizontal activities and/or flagship initiatives

Source: Szulc 2019; p. 169–171; European Commission 2011.

Analysing the table, we can observe a broad inclusion of the Baltic, regional and local levels in the work on implementing the EUSBSR. The number and the nature of tasks entrusted for the implementation at levels other than EU and national indicates a governance gap that this activity has filled. The data presented in this way indicate that the use of MLG in macro-regional strategies is feasible and that the governance of macro-regions by means of this model is an added value for them.

Analysis of the EUSBSR implementation

In the original *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* (EUSBSR, version of 2009) it was stated that in the absence of new institutions to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the EUSBSR, this role should be performed by the European Commission. In practice, this solution has proved to be quite interesting and effective.

The first review of the implementation of the EUSBSR, and consequently the creation of a macro-regional approach in the BSR, has been included in the following documents:

- European Commission's Interim Report on the *Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* of 2010 (hereinafter: Interim Report);
- Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *on the Implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)*, COM(2011) 381 final, of 22 June 2011 (hereinafter: *Commission Report on the implementation of the Strategy*);
- Commission Staff Working Paper *on the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*, 13.09.2011, SEC(2011) 1071 final.

The basis for the review was the Commission's Report on the implementation of the Strategy. It was the result of the Council's invitation of 26 October 2009 to present this document to the Council.

Demonstrating progress in achieving the EUSBSR's objectives in this report is quite difficult. The main reason is the lack of a single financial tool and the multiplicity of actors implementing the strategy. There is no quantitative assessment in the report. Only some information on the beginning of the EUSBSR's functioning is provided. The report on the implementation of the strategy is based, inter alia, on the Interim Report. It consisted of the main document and five annexes: summary of implementation, alignment of funding, organisation of work, cooperation with partners outside the EU, implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy in the Baltic (see: European Commission 2010).

In this document, the summary of the 15 priority areas noted that the workflow within the priorities differed significantly. In some areas, the cooperation was easy. It was agreed that: "The ease with which the Priority Area Coordinators have been able to identify the relevant networks and Flagship Project Leaders seems to a large extent to have depended on the maturity of regional cooperation within the area." (European Commission 2010). In the Priority Areas 11, 12 (tourism) and 13, new cooperation networks were established quite quickly. However, many coordinators, including the ones from Priority Areas 1, 8 and 12 (education), noted in their implementation reports that building networks was hard work. "This challenge has been most strongly felt in Priority Area 14 on Maritime Accident Response Capacity, where the process of involving participants for meetings and leads for Flagship Projects has been more difficult than expected." (European Commission 2010). Therefore, attention was drawn to the need to develop support for practical networking tools.

The most important element of the Interim Report was the recognition of the creation of new macro-regional networks in areas previously dominated by national approaches. As an example, the work done in Priority Area 13 on Sea Surveillance was described in the report. In addition to the new macro-regional steering group, which included national authorities for the first time, the individual flagship initiatives also contribute to the better regional integration. "Flagship Project 13.5 on promoting maritime training, for instance, has already established wider cooperation between universities and maritime authorities in the region." (European Commission 2010). Other identified areas, where cooperation was previously limited, are tourism, education and the single market.

The first EUSBSR review was concluded with an update of the strategy's objectives. An important element of the update was the addition of indicators and their targets to each of the priority objectives. By adding indicators, it will be possible to make a more measurable evaluation of the EUSBSR. Most of them are expected to be achieved by the end of 2020 (European Commission 2012).

The first EUSBSR review in its assumptions was to be the first attempt to summarise the functioning of the strategy. It was also an attempt to identify problems related to implementation of EUSBSR and to notice the possibility of solving these problems. In the first review, only a partial qualitative assessment of the implementation of the strategy was possible. Full assessment of the Baltic Sea's function as the macro-region is possible if there are deep links between the markets of individual states in this region and there will be full coordination of activities related to the environment, and its inhabitants will clearly identify with it. Nevertheless, despite the increasing coordination, the 2011 review is the most thorough and detailed EUSBSR review to date.

The macro-regional concept has also attracted interest from other areas of the EU, which have started to identify themselves as macro-regions and implement macro-regional strategies for their territories. To date, four EU macro-regional strategies have been developed: 2010 – *European Union Strategy for the Danube Region* (EUSDR), 2014 – *European Union Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region* (EUSAIR), 2015 – *European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region* (EUSAR). Subsequent analyses of the implementation of the strategy contain analyses of all macro-regional strategies and compare them with each other.

In December 2016, the European Commission published the *Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, COM (2016) 805*. This document presents the results of the implementation process and challenges facing the four macro-regional strategies. There was noted that the EUSBSR created new cooperation networks in the BSR and strengthened cooperation between existing networks. Multi-level governance and closer cooperation between regional actors resulted in synergies. The report points out that the update of the 2015 action plan has also had a positive effect (see: European Commission 2016).

Another document under analysis is the *Council Conclusions on the implementation of EU Macro-Regional Strategies* of 25 April 2017. In this document, the Council of the European Union confirmed that the EU macro-regional strategies constitute

a unique, integrated framework, which supports meeting common challenges facing macro-regions and contributes to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. It also pointed out that all strategies face many challenges and can be further developed in terms of governance, results, financing, communication and deepening cooperation. At the same time, it called on the regions and countries covered by the strategies to establish, together with the EC, appropriate indicators that will allow better monitoring of macro-regional strategies. It also asked for better public visibility of the results of macro-regional strategies. It also asked the European Commission to present another report on the implementation of the strategy by the end of 2018 (Council of the European Union 2017).

The aforementioned report was published in January 2019. It analyses all macro-regional strategies of the EU and devotes relatively little attention to EUSBSR. The report is complemented by the *Commission Staff Working Document* accompanying the Commission's report. It is more extensive than the report, and describes in more detailed way the state of the EUSBSR implementation. It discusses the results of the most important macro-regional projects and the state of the individual priority areas. An important element of the draft are the identified challenges that the EUSBSR is facing. Among the challenges there are: strengthening political commitment and leadership, in particular the greater involvement of the ministerial level of the states participating in the strategy; refining the scope of the strategy by narrowing it down to areas that bring the best results; simplifying the management, because the existing model was considered too time-consuming; further work on ways of financing the strategy, including those outside the EU; strengthening the communication on the strategy, especially in national languages.

The abovementioned reports describe the process and the progress in implementing the strategy. Unfortunately, despite 10 years of the implementation the quantitative analyzes have not been presented. Knowledge of the quantitative effects of the strategy will allow for a complete assessment of the implementation process.

Conclusions

For many researchers, the *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* seemed to be too artificial, theoretical and unrealistic to be put into practice. Many have criticised such elements as: lack of a defined financing of the strategy or multi-level management. Nevertheless, for 10 years, in subsequent analyses and reviews, concerning exclusively the EUSBSR, as well as in joint reviews of EU macro-regional strategies, new projects are discussed and the synergy effect in many fields is visible. The EUSBSR, despite much criticism, is still developing and in the BSR, there is an enormous commitment to its implementation. Moreover, the macro-regional approach developed alongside the EUSBSR is also developing in next macro-regions.

The challenge, which the EUSBSR has been facing since 2009, is to improve the condition of the Baltic environment. In addition, a number of challenges have been clarified in policy-making through operational measures. As in the case of the EUSAIR

and the EUSDR, the BSR will have to face an increase in the number of migrants, which requires intensified cooperation with all the countries of the region (Council of the European Union 2017).

An undoubted advantage of macro-regional policy, in the case of the EUSBSR, is the updating of the action plan. Thanks to its updates, the EUSBSR is not a "dead" document, detached from the changing reality. The changes in the action plan make it possible for the EUSBSR to adapt to the unstable European reality.

EU macro-regional strategies provide a unique, integrated framework that helps to address common challenges faced by macro-regions and contributes to economic, social and territorial cohesion. The Council of the European Union also noted that all strategies face many challenges and can be further developed in terms of governance, performance, funding, communication and deepening cooperation. At the same time, it called on the regions and countries covered by the strategies to establish, together with the EC, appropriate indicators that will allow better monitoring of macro-regional strategies. It also asked for better public visibility of the results of macro-regional strategies (Council of the European Union 2017).

For example, Slovenia is an interesting case demonstrating the benefits for the EU related to the development of the macro-regional approach. It participates in three macro-regional strategies: the EUSDR, the EUSAIR and the EUSAR. Thanks to its experience and knowledge, Slovenia creates a synergy effect between these strategies. Andreja Jerina, the national coordinator at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Slovenia, in the article *Added-value of the inter-macro-regional strategy cooperation and coordination* stated that "joint efforts require appropriate resources [...] This is why the national parliaments should also be involved. They have political strength in setting up a system supporting implementation of jointly (inter-governmentally) agreed (macro-) regional projects. National parliaments play significant role in clarifying added value of such initiatives. They can ensure that (macro-) regional projects are recognised by financial institutions/instruments and thus be treated favourably when allocating funding. By the establishment of such a system they would pave needed preconditions for implementing collective (macro-) regional answers to common challenges of larger territories, be it infrastructure, increasing migration and demographic pressure, climate change or any other issue that cannot be addressed by a single state or region." (Jerina 2016: p. 20–22). These words once again demonstrate the importance of every element of multi-level cooperation. At the same time, the Slovenian experience shows another possibility to develop the macro-regional concept – the concept of the *Europe of macro-regions*.

As the above analyses demonstrate, the macro-regional approach developed in the EUSBSR has become an effective tool of the EU to influence the BSR. At the same time, some general features and theoretical elements of the concept have been identified, so that it can also be applied to other European macro-regions. The analysis of the strategies implemented demonstrates that in each case, a macro-regional approach adds value and supports the achievement of the EU objectives.

Marta Szulc – Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of Szczecin, author of the book *Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego. Podejście makroregionalne i wielopoziomowe* (2019). Research interests: Baltic Sea Region, European Union, youth policy.

Marta Szulc – doktor, adiunkt na Uniwersytecie Szczecińskim, autorka *Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego. Podejście makroregionalne i wielopoziomowe* (2019). Zainteresowania badawcze: Region Morza Bałtyckiego, Unia Europejska, polityka młodzieżowa.

➔ References

- COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2017), Council Conclusions on the implementation of EU Macro-Regional Strategies, 8461/17, 25 April 2017, Brussels.
- DUBOIS Alexandre, HEDIN Sigrid, SCHMITT Peter, STERLING Jose (2009), *EU macro-regions and macro-regional strategies – A scoping study*, "Nordregio Electronic Working Paper", no.4.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2001), *European Governance – A white paper*, COM (2001) 428, OJ C 287, 12.10.2001, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the *European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*, COM (2009) 248/3, 05.06.2009, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2010), Report "The implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region. 2007-2013", https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/reports/2010/report-the-implementation-of-the-eu-strategy-for-the-baltic-sea-region (04.10.2010).
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2011), Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the *Implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)*, COM(2011) 381 final, 22.06.2011, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2012), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, COM(2012) 128 final, 23.03.2012, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2013), Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the added value of macro-regional strategies, COM (2013) 468 final, 27.06.2013, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2016), Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, COM (2016) 805, 16.12.2016, Brussels.
- EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (2011), Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on 'A strategy for the North Sea-Channel area' (own-initiative opinion), OJ 2011/C 15/06, 18.01.2011
- GÄNZLE Stefan (2017), *The European Union's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR): improving multilevel governance in Baltic Sea cooperation?*, "Journal of Baltic Studies", vol. 48 (4).
- GÄNZLE Stefan (2018), *'Experimental Union' and Baltic Sea cooperation: the case of the European Union's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)*, "Regional Studies, Regional Science", no. 5:1.

- HETTNE Björn (1996), *Globalization, the new regionalism and East Asia*, United Nations University, Shonan Global Seminar.
- HOOGHE Liesbet (ed.) (1996), *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi level Governance*, Oxford.
- HOOGHE Liesbet, MARKS Gary, BLANK Kermit (1996), *European Integration since the 80: State-Centric v. Multi-level Governance*, "Journal of Common of Market Studies", vol. 34, no. 3.
- HOOGHE Liesbet, MARKS Gary (2001), *Multi-level governance and European Integration*, Lanham.
- JERINA Andreja (2016), *Added-value of the inter-macroregional strategy cooperation and coordination*, in: Baiba Liepa (ed.), *Macro-regional strategies in changing times*, Vienna.
- OSSENBRÜGGE Jürgen (2003), *Wirtschaftsgeographie und Governance. Die (regional-)politische Einbettung entgrenzter wirtschaftlicher Prozesse*, „Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie“, Jg. 47, Heft 3/4, p. 159-176. doi: 10.1515/zfw.2003.0014
- PISKORSKA Beata (2019), *Is the European Union still an attractive international actor? Challenges for the global role of the EU*, "Przegląd Europejski", vol.2019, no.3.
- RUSZKOWSKI Janusz (2010), *Ponadnarodowość w systemie politycznym Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa.
- RUSZKOWSKI Janusz (2012), *Teorie specjalistyczne w studiach europejskich*, in: Janusz Ruszkowski, Luiza Wojnicz (eds), *Teorie w studiach europejskich*, Szczecin-Warszawa.
- RUSZKOWSKI Janusz (2013), *Struktura wielopoziomowego zarządzania w Unii Europejskiej*, in: Janusz Ruszkowski, Luiza Wojnicz (eds.), *Multi-level governance w Unii Europejskiej*, Szczecin-Warszawa
- SWYNGEDOUW Erik (1997), *Neither Global nor Local. 'Glocalization' and the politics of scale*, in: K. Cox (ed.), *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the power of the local*, New York.
- SZULC Marta (2013), *Strategia UE dla Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego jako próba stworzenia makroregionu Morza Bałtyckiego*, in: M. Chorośnicki (ed.), *Nowe Strategie na nowy wiek- granice i możliwości integracji regionalnych i globalnych*, Kraków.
- SZULC Marta (2019), *Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego. Podejście makroregionalne i wielopoziomowe*, Toruń.
- TOMASZEWSKI Krzysztof (2013), *Unia Europejska w poszukiwaniu skutecznego mechanizmu zarządzania. Analiza krytyczna modelu teoretycznego multi-level governance*, Toruń.
- WITKOWSKA Marta (2013), *Podejście transnarodowe w badaniach nad procesami politycznymi zachodzącymi w Unii Europejskiej*, „Studia Politologiczne”, no. 27.