

Rafał RIEDEL (ed.)

**Śląsk – 10 lat członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej  
[Silesia – 10 Years of EU Membership]**Racibórz – Wrocław: O-to.pl 2014, 295 pages  
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This book is divided in four parts. The first one may be translated as The Development of Silesia and the Process of European Integration. The first paper written by the editor underlines the specific position of Poland and of the Silesian Voivodeship because they belong to big beneficiaries of the cohesion policy of the EU. The author also warns of irrational projects as we could record in southern Europe and Ireland. The paper written by Jarosław Jańczak is very interesting. It gives us the opportunity to see how two pairs of bordering towns are getting closer and closer thanks to several bilateral projects which were financed by European funds. The choice of these towns cannot wonder, for they were divided in two parts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These towns are Český Těšín/Cieszyn and Zgorzelec/Görlitz. They show us examples of very good bilateral relationship at this juncture. Their inhabitants meet in shops, during cultural events etc. It must be mentioned that the language and common history played key role. At least 20 % of dwellers of Český Těšín declare their Polish nationality. The third as well as fourth paper is rather of economic nature and focuses on the Silesian Voivodeship as beneficiary of European cohesion policy. It must be concluded that this policy vastly helped to restore this region which was seen as „black or dirty region” due to coal mining industry. New sectors of industry were either introduced or renewed. It cannot be forgotten to state that towns and villages shine in new elegance thanks to European cohesion programs.

The second part discusses Silesian identity – its roots, changes and current development in united Europe. This section contains seven academic papers. This fact proves the importance of this theme. Having read the first text written by Rafał Riedel I must contradict his statement on page 77 where he claims that the Silesian nation include 173,000 people. The author has utterly forgotten about Silesians who live in the Czech Republic and declared their Silesian nationality in the population census.<sup>1</sup> His statement is, therefore, misleading, even if he provides data from the Silesian and Opole Voivodeship.<sup>2</sup> The second

1 According to the census conducted in 2011 12,231 inhabitants of the Czech Republic declared their Silesian nationality. The vast majority of them lived in the Moravian-Silesian Region (11,317) but at least tens of them dwelt in other regions of the Czech Republic. ([2 See footnote 20 on page 77 in the reviewed book.](https://vdb.czso.cz/sldbvo/#!stranka=podle-tematu&tu=30561&th=&vseuzemi=null&v=&vo=H4slAAAAAAAAAFvzloG1ulhBMCuxLFGvtCQzR88jsTjDN7GAlf3WwcNiCreZGZjcGLhy8hNT3BKTS_KLPBk4SzKKUosz8nNSKgrsHRhAgKecA0gKADF3CQNnaLBrUIBjkKNvcSFDHQMDhhqGCqCiYA__cLCiEgZGvxlGdg9_Fz__EMeCEgY2b38XZ89gllvLxTHEP8wx2NEFJM4ZHOIY5u_t7-MJ1OIP5IdEBkT5OwU5RgH5IUB9fo4ePq4ulDtZSxhYw1yDolzXstJzEvX88wrSU1PLRJ6tGDJ98Z2CyYGRk8G1rLEnNLUiiLgAYQ6v9LcpNSitjVTZbmnPOhmAjq44D8QlDDwAK10C_KF2coe4ugU6uPtWMLA4eni6hcSEAZ0Fk-wj4ulgaVBQKiud1AFAPcW8qZgAQAA&void=), uploaded 7 April 2015.</a></p>
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paper of this part may be found as preface for following papers. It shows various regional organizations which attempt to strengthen the Silesian identity at different levels – Silesian dialect, history, culture, the Silesian Autonomy Movement (Ruch Autonomii Śląska) was not omitted as well. The example of the new exhibition of the Silesian Museum in Katowice confirms the brisance of Silesian question. The codification of the Silesian dialect depicts next difficulties of the Silesian identity. There is not doubt that language belongs to one of basic characteristics of a nation. If we compare political landscape of the Czech part of Silesia and the Polish one, a key element of political spokesman of a nation group misses in the Czech Republic. It is a political formation which is represented by the Silesian Autonomy Movement. Agnieszka Toroń-Kowalska states that its outcome in the election to the Sejmik of the Silesian Voivodeship<sup>3</sup> in 2010 demonstrates a turning point in the Silesian mentality because it is for the first time when a typical regional party gained three seats in the Silesian Sejmik with its official seat in Katowice. The success of Silesian idea was proved in 2014 when they reached four seats. Nevertheless, they did not become a member of ruling coalition. This fact would encourage Silesians in their efforts. Tadeusz Siwek, a scholar at the University of Ostrava, compares the Silesian identity on both sides of common border. He uses historical and statistical data to conclude that the Silesian identity in Poland has a chance to survive for a longer period of time compared with the Silesian part in the Czech Republic. The last chapter within this section deals with the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. This voivodeship experienced distinct history compared with the Silesian Voivodeship and for that reason there is lower regional identification. Despite diverse activities which should have supported the lower-Silesian identity these actions have not lead to the fulfillment of this aim. People are not „enrooted” in this voivodeship. Having read all papers concerning regional identity I must admit that typical comparative papers miss in this part and it is a pity when they are seven in sum.

The third part titled Silesian Exemplification includes four papers. The first one is written by Nikola Janusek-Krysińska based on research in local newspapers - concretely Nowa Trybuna Opolska from the Opole Voivodeship and Dziennik Zachodni, which is issued in the Silesian Voivodeship. This chapter is analytical as well comparative. She dealt with image of the EU in the above mentioned newspapers. The author has chosen editions from 2003 to 2013 but with time interval two years (2003, 2005...) and analyzed hundreds of articles. It is evident that Janusek-Krysińska precisely elaborated her research method. The text is enriched by tables and graphs which summarize partial research outcomes. Even if it is very good scientific article the reviewer has two comments. Categorization of articles positive, negative and neutral is very subjective and it was not explained which and why the article is either positive, or negative or neutral. The second comment concerns use of abbreviations – it is usual that after first mention of the abbreviation the acronym is used in the rest of the text. The second article is a case study conducted at the secondary school No.2 in Racibórz. It follows three words from the title – frights, worries and hopes. In my point of view it is important to use various teaching methods when a teacher wants to explain advantages and disadvantages of the EU membership. The method which was chosen by Ludmiła Nowacka is similar to Janusek-Krysińska's – monitoring of pupils' opinions in two

3 Regional parliament of each voivodeship in Poland.

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school years – 2002/2003 and 2013/2014. The selection is evident – school year before and after accession to the EU. The author wants to find out if classes and projects on European topics had positive effect on their opinions on the EU integration and if teaching methods were effective to change the mind of pupils. The outcome is presented in one chart whose layout is not good. Two last texts focus on migration from the Silesian and the Opole Voivodeship. If I should summarize both texts, they deal with economic, sociological and demographic aspects of this wide-spread phenomenon in Poland and especially in these two voivodeships. It is obvious that these voivodeships are threatened by depopulation due to higher rate of unemployment which causes the migration of workers.

Texts in the last part try to balance a decade of the EU membership in Silesia. Tomasz Słupik deals with several topics. He perceives the problem of depopulation but in a different way than texts on migration. He is aware of problems connected with municipal budgets. The less people live in the town, the less money may the town hall invest on schools, medical care etc. Nevertheless, he highlights very good educational possibilities at universities in Silesia which may attract students to stay there after passing their degrees. Another aspect of the attraction of Silesia are good transport possibilities for commuters which are not at high level at present. Finally, we can read the first text in Czech. It was written by Zdeněk Jirásek who was mayor of Opava and vice chancellor of the Silesian University in Opava. He summarizes similar key topics as Słupik – transport, economics and education but he compares them with the situation in the Polish part of Silesia. The last text is written by political scientists from the Silesian University in Opava, Petr Hlaváček and Lukáš Vomlela, and discusses the problem of regional political elites in the Moravian-Silesian Region. The reader will find information about political situation in this region, elections and coalitions.

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