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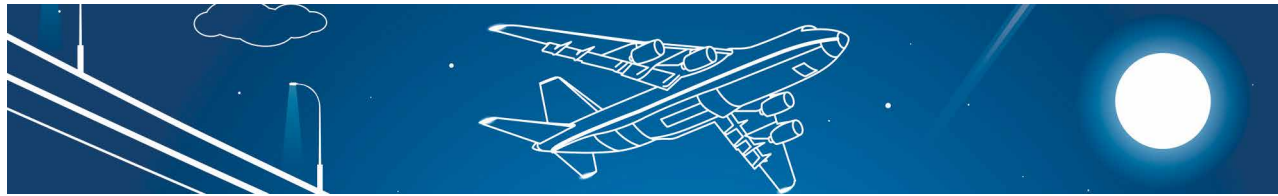
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WHAT MAKES A CITY *SMART?*

Even if we live in a small town, we identify with the nearest large urban center and are interested in its development. This topic has become important, since more than 3.5 billion people already live in cities, and by 2030 city residents will constitute 60% of the world's population. The trend is extremely dynamic and transforms the reality that surrounds us.



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According to United Nations forecasts, the population of cities will almost have doubled by 2050. Therefore, it is not surprising that the 2016 Quito Declaration emphasized the importance and role of cities in the context of demographic processes, economic activities, social and cultural interactions, as well as the effects of environmental and humanitarian processes. Today, this reality mainly develops in cities, and this process results in challenges related to sustainable housing, infrastructure, security, basic health services, education as well as social rights, decent work, and, last but not least, protection of natural resources.

To face these challenges, the concept of smart city was created, but unfortunately it is sometimes overused as an *idée fixe* for city management. Some columnists and feature writers dealing with the issues of civilization and the influence of technology on social life claim that each city is a story of its own, and therefore, not even highly advanced technology can replace the sensitivity to identity contexts, economic potential, or the energy inherent in social activity. However, technological advances represent an opportunity for growth, improved quality of life, and savings to our time, which we can allocate to private purposes, as well as an almost unlimited opportunity to improve the process of city management. Thus, it seems that living in a smart city is a good thing after all, as long as managers keep up with the technological innovations. It is not technologies that decide about the “smartness” of a given city, but the innovation of ideas in their creation, co-management, and governance. Creation refers in this context to contributing to the city’s development by all groups involved in this process, co-management means social

participation and joint responsibility for the space we live in, and governance is the political responsibility for the decisions made. Smart cities should focus on innovative solutions allowing for the development of modern cities through qualitative and quantitative improvements of their productivity. This efficiency mainly applies to the city’s administrators. In this context, a city is smart when decision-makers and people involved in its creation ensure maximum comfort for its residents with the lowest possible consumption of natural resources available to the urban area. In other words, it is important to develop the advantages that have arisen through a historical process and that pass as endogenous wealth assigned to a specific place. Obviously, a range of urban functions is essential for sustainable development. Those which are for some reason insufficient have to be strengthened, but recognizing the distinctive features and basing the development strategy on them usually brings very good results.

Katowice is a fine example of this philosophy. For over two decades, the city has been quite consistently implementing the process of socio-economic transformation from a center of heavy mining and metallurgical industry. From the past characterized by immense degradation of the natural environment, the city has embarked on an environmentally friendly path, which has also translated into constantly improving living conditions for residents and economy, which is now focused on new technologies and modern services. Today, Katowice is one of the five most important business service centers in Poland. It is the foundation of the local economy and offers modern jobs to nearly 30,000 people. However, the lack of new goals and challenges would

mean stagnation. Because of their experiences in the past, Silesians are deeply aware of this truth. Hence the focus on innovation and modern industries, such as gaming. In all of Europe, Katowice, together with the GZM Metropolis (Polish: Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia), comprising the Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, is a unique conglomerate of intellectual potential, infrastructure for industry, and a specific work ethos. On this foundation, it is possible to effectively support emerging industries, develop new technologies, and create a modern economic ecosystem. Katowice owes the success of its development policy not only to its economic growth, but also to its international recognition and esteem. At the end of 2018, Katowice hosted the UN Climate Change Conference COP24. In 2019, the World Anti-Doping Conference was organized there. In 2021, the city hosted the Internet Governance Forum, an intergovernmental consultative initiative on the effective and safe use of the Internet. In June 2022, Katowice will in turn become the venue of the most important meeting of politicians, experts, and activists dealing with urban policy, which is organized every two years by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Katowice has gained the recognition of the international community thanks to the effective transformation and consistent revitalization of post-industrial areas. Following this path, the city now intends to move on to the next stage, i.e., to create a new technology district, a project that sets a new development trend. While the process certainly has not been completed, it is clear that available resources have been used for that purpose and skillfully transformed into network visibility. This recognition carries a significant potential.