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**REPORT ON “URBAN POST-COVID RECOVERY:
BETWEEN THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICAL
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It is hard to disagree with the statement that municipal self-governments face the difficult task of meeting the collective needs of local communities. The effective and efficient implementation of this task is additionally complicated by numerous crises that condition the functioning of not only municipal self-government administrations, but also the social (non-governmental) and private (commercial) actors cooperating at the urban level. The pandemic crisis caused by the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is the crisis that has undeniably determined and continues to determine the activity of those governments. Therefore the aim of the event “Urban Post-COVID Recovery: Between Theoretical Assumptions and Practical Solutions” was to illustrate the conditions, mechanisms and results of the response of municipal self-governments of the Visegrad Group countries to the challenges related to the post-pandemic crisis and post-pandemic recovery. In line with the adopted assumption, the challenges of various provenance connected with many different, although closely related, areas of urban policy were the subject of the deliberations and discussions that took place during the event.

“Urban Post-COVID Recovery: Between Theoretical Assumptions and Practical Solutions” was an event organised within the framework of the international research project “Urban Post-COVID Recovery in the V4 Countries” implemented at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Wrocław in the years 2022–2025 with the financial support of the International Visegrad Fund (Strategic Grant, no. 22220018).

The two-day conference was a forum not only for the presentation of research results, but also for the exchange of experiences, opinions and observations of practitioners representing the public sector (primarily municipal self-governments), social (non-governmental organisations) and private (local business environment). The event took place at the Academy of Applied Sciences Angelus Silesius in Wałbrzych, which is a project partner and member of the project consortium.

The event consisted of three parts. The Academic Workshop with the participation of academics presenting leading Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian universities and

practitioners presenting speeches devoted to the issue of the post-COVID recovery in V4 countries—Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary—was the first part. Although the spectrum of the issues discussed was wide, they were united by the search for a model for the most effective and efficient response to the threats related to the post-pandemic recovery. Part two was the Round Table Debate with the participation of academics and practitioners representing the municipal self-governments, social and private sectors dealing with the issue of post-COVID recovery in V4 countries. Participants of this part shared their experiences related to the “fight” with the COVID-19 pandemic and, at the same time, formulated postulates related to counteracting its destructive consequences during the post-pandemic period. Issues related to ensuring an appropriate level of financing, changes in organisational structures and reorienting thinking about inter-sectoral cooperation at the urban level were raised. The third part was the Young Practitioners Forum. It took the form of workshops with the participation of students interested in post-COVID recovery in V4 countries. Participants of this part learned the intricacies of conducting urban policies in the conditions of the post-pandemic crisis, with particular emphasis on the mechanisms of strategic and operational management. It is worth mentioning that each of these parts aroused great interest among the gathered audience, as evidenced by the lively discussion, comments, remarks and questions.

The event was held under the honorary patronage of the President of Wałbrzych Dr Roman Szełemej, the Member of Parliament of the Republic of Poland Dr Sylwia Bielawska, the Chairman of the Wałbrzych City Council Krzysztof Kalinowski, the President of the Foundation for the Development of Social Economy Zenon Matuszko and the CEO of InWałbrzych Arkadiusz Grudzień. “Urban Post-COVID Recovery: Between Theoretical Assumptions and Practical Solutions” was the third event of the international research project “Urban Post-COVID Recovery in the V4 Countries”. In case of the previous two events, the third one was open, attended not only by scientists, but also by practitioners, students, PhD students and representatives of local media.

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