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INTRODUCTION

Wprowadzenie

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The special situation related to the global SARS-COV-2 pandemic has affected many spheres of everyday life, including mobility and the functioning of transport modes. For this reason, the Editorial Board of the Transport Geography Papers of Polish Geological Society decided to launch the first special issue, which was entirely devoted to the issues of the relationship between epidemics and transport. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter and the dynamics of the epidemic processes, a fast review and publication path was adopted so that the prepared articles would not lose their relevance.

This issue contains eight contributing articles dealing with the functioning of various modes of transport in the initial stage of the development of the global epidemic. The articles will form the basis for further research in this direction. The articles were prepared by authors representing seven academic centers, including one foreign. In the order in which the articles appear in the issue, these are KTI Insti-

tute for Transport Sciences in Budapest (Hungary) and from Poland: Jagiellonian University in Kraków, WSB University in Wrocław, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk, University of Gdańsk and the University of Opole.

The first two articles by Vilmos Oszter and Jakub Taczanowski deal with the impact of the SARS-COV-2 epidemic on the functioning of railway connections. The first of the authors analyzed the situation in five countries (Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Romania), and the second discussed the importance of the epidemic in maintaining international and long-distance connections in Poland and Italy. Both articles show significant reductions in connections and a decline in demand for transport.

In the next article, Edyta Pijet-Migoń presented the phenomenon of an empty sky in the first weeks of the pandemic, i.e. almost complete suspension of air

connections. As with international air connections, air traffic has practically stopped. This was mainly due to the restrictions related to the movement between regions and countries in individual European countries.

Ariel Ciechański, in an article devoted to the functioning of bus transport in the era of the coronavirus pandemic, illustrated the phenomenon on the example of the Beskid Niski and Bieszczady poviats in Poland. In the case of areas with a limited supply of transport services, the suspension or limitation of transport is particularly acute for residents, because it practically excludes them from moving beyond their place of residence.

In the next article, Tomasz Wiskulski presented the topic of the relationship between the epidemic and tourism, which is a branch of the economy particularly affected by the effects of transport restrictions. Tourism is hit hard by the global epidemic. Tourists, fearing coronavirus infection, give up traditional leisure destinations, especially foreign ones.

Jakub Taczanowski and Arkadiusz Kołoś in the next article analyzed the differences in the functioning of regional rail services in Poland and Italy. The impact of the epidemic on regional rail services was slightly different in the two countries. The number of canceled rail connections in Italy was generally

greater than in Poland, but the authors emphasize that the differences in both cases also result from the way in which these services are organized.

In the next article, the authors from the University of Gdańsk (M. Tarkowski, K. Puzdrakiewicz, J. Jacewska, and M. Połom) analyzed changes in regions and local mobility patterns on the basis of data collected from Google Maps. The article presents, among other changes in travel time resulting from traffic restrictions in the era of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mateusz Smolarski in the last article of this issue of the journal described the limitations of regional rail transport on the example of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship in Poland. As with the previous articles on rail services, there were also significant traffic restrictions in this case.

A special issue of the journal illustrates the scale of changes in traffic, daily mobility on various scales, from local to international, in all modes of transport. The articles published in this issue will provide a good basis for further research in the future, in particular comparative research, but also on transport policies in the event of a global epidemic.

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