

REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS AND AGRICULTURE IN THE NEW BUDGET PERSPECTIVE 2013-2020

***Abstract.** The aim of the study is to identify the factors which affect the socioeconomic development of rural areas and agriculture, taking into account the Community policy on agriculture and rural development. It was concluded that success can be achieved by making better use of endogenous resources of rural areas. Support within the framework of the new financial perspective, development of human resources, expansion of infrastructure or supporting regional specialisation of rural areas must be accompanied by implementation of uniform standards of access to the basic public services and resources, unified across the EU and regions.*

***Key words.** Rural areas, agriculture, European Union.*

Introduction. The objectives of regional policy in Poland in the 1980s were identified with those of agricultural policy and studies in regional policy dealt with such problems as adapting the structure of production to the natural and economic conditions of various regions, creating equal opportunities for farmers in terms of income that they earn, trends in specialisation of farms, location of food industry, difficult regions and methods of solving problems (Brodziński 2011, p. 36-37).

Affiliation with the European Union has given the policy of regionalisation of agriculture and food economy a new dimension – that of regional policy. It is noteworthy that the fundamental guidelines of a new policy in regards to rural areas point to the necessity of eliminating differences (in terms of the income earned and the standard of living) between different countries of the Community, as well as between different regions and social groups. The Community's internal policy is focused on regionalism, interpreted as a policy of respecting the cultural and natural diversity of areas which make up larger entities, with competitiveness being the driving force behind development.

The essence of a region's competitiveness lies in making use of its specific competitive advantages, which have their source in natural factors or historic processes of resource accumulation. It must be borne in mind that the role of resources that a region has changes over time and whole packages of actions become decisive development factors.

It seems important now, on the threshold of the new financial perspective of the EU for the period 2014-2020, to identify the factors which affect the socioeconomic development of rural areas and agriculture, taking into account a region's specific traits.

Shape and scope of rural development policy

Switching from competition of resources to competition of regions, which has been promoted in the EU policy during the programming period of 2007-2013, has favoured the development of human capital (including innovative potential, high educational position, ability to cooperate, organisational skills, ability of social systems to regenerate and develop human potential). Speaking of a region's competitiveness requires referring to a ranking of the sources of competitive advantages, based mainly on such goals of actions as stability and durability. Low-ranking benefits, such as using cheap labour or cheap materials in rural areas, are frequently copied by other regions, while high-ranking benefits are not easy to achieve. Economic practice indicates that an area may stand out against other units if it can provide unique products or services and perform such actions which can provide steady progress regardless of the condition of the entire economy.

In this approach, a policy of rural development – regardless of the level of socioeconomic development of the region – aims to improve the economic competitiveness of an entire area by developing mechanisms to make the development sustainable and permanent. Therefore, one may claim that it combines special care of the social living conditions of the population with a possible intervention aimed at boosting development processes. A combination of market and intervention-related mechanisms of regional development is the basis of many specific concepts which explain the relationships between conditions, factors and effects of development (Kudłacz 1999, p. 22 and ff.).

This paper is being prepared at a time of debate regarding the shape and scope of policy on rural areas and agriculture in the planning and financial perspective 2014-2020, mainly the amounts allocated for implementation of two policies which are of key importance for rural Poland, i.e. The Common Agricultural Policy and

Cohesion Policy. The final decisions on the objectives and instruments of common agricultural policy and cohesion policy as well as obtainable amounts of money have not yet been taken. However, it is noteworthy that the euro crisis has increased the pressure on reducing European spending¹, and, according to J. Lewandowski, Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget, there have never been such a tough climate for budget discussions and negotiations², which will probably result in a smaller budget for 2014-2020 than that proposed by the European Commission.

Rural areas in the new EU financial and planning perspective

It is too early for an in-depth evaluation of the results of the policy of rural development carried out by the EU in the 2007-2013 perspective, or the final shape of the policy for the years 2014-2020. One thing seems clear: that rural development after 2013, both in Poland and in other post-communist countries, will still depend on the availability of funds from the CAP and CP budget and on the effectiveness of utilisation of the funds by beneficiaries.

Preparations for the new financial and planning perspective help to intensify the discussion in which – according to M. Słodowa-Hełpa (2012, p. 212) – it is important to answer a few important questions:

- Have the changes implemented in the current planning and financial perspective 2007-2013 resulted in an improvement in the effectiveness of utilisation of funds allocated for financing rural development?
- How can those areas be aided in the next perspective 2014-2020? Will the modifications translate into changes for the better?
- Is it possible, with growing globalisation, to further implement the current European model of the development of rural areas and agriculture?
- How to integrate different actions targeted to rural areas and agriculture, to improve coordination of community policies aiding development of rural areas and to avoid a negative outcome of implementing those policies?

¹Cf. *Unijne państwa chcą miliardowych cięć w budżecie UE*, PAP, <http://www.wnp.pl/wiadomosci/161265.html> (28.11.2012).

²Commissioner J. Lewandowski about Europe's revival, http://ec.europa.eu/polska/news/120202_lewandowski_pl.htm (02.12.2012).

When seeking an answer to the first of the questions one may point out that a greater emphasis has been laid in the current programming period 2007–2013 than before on implementation of a coherent policy and strategy of rural area development and on stronger coordination of actions in this field. This was made possible by the implementation of national strategic plans, developed on the Community's strategic guidelines³. Additionally, in order to strengthen the grassroots initiative, sharing good practices and mobilisation of communities in rural areas, some resources have been allocated for axis 4 (Leader). The scope of implementation of the Leader axis is associated with the actions defined within the other priority axes, which are common to the Member States. In order to ensure a sustainable approach to development, EU member states are obliged to distribute funds for development of rural areas among the thematic axes mentioned above, in established proportions.

Considering the fact that member states can decide on their own policy of rural development independently⁴, such an approach would have the following results:

- not all EU countries could afford to pursue their own policies,
- a number of issues related to rural areas development, e.g. in environmental protection, cannot be restricted to a national or regional range,
- the policy of rural development is linked in many ways to other areas of EU policies.

As experience shows, the diversity of fund spending rules translates itself into heavy administrative burden for beneficiaries, member states and the EC, which prevents the entities concerned from fully achieving the benefits arising from EU programmes.

An analysis of the possibilities of supporting rural areas in the new programming period should refer to the draft multi-year financial framework 2014-2020, presented by the European Commission (EC) on 29 June 2011. It was adopted in the draft that the common agricultural policy and the cohesion policy will remain

³The principles of rural development for the years 2007–2013, as well as the instruments that can be used by member states and regions, were outlined in the regulation of the Council (EC) No. 1698 of 2005, according to which the policy focuses on three thematic axes: economic, environmental and social.

⁴There are different models of coordination of distribution of funds for the development of rural areas. However, it is difficult to claim that any national solution should be imposed as a model for other countries.

the priority spheres financed by the EU (Piotrowska 2011). New regulations are supposed to simplify the way the funds operate, to unify the legal grounds of different dimensions of cohesion policy, to implement the principle of awarding high efficiency of member states in the distribution of funds to allocate them to projects which are important to the development of regions and member states. The EC wants to focus more on the effects of the cohesion policy and therefore it proposed changes in the methods of its creation and implementation. The “Europe 2020” strategy was used as the grounds for selecting 11 fields, also referred to as thematic objectives, which will be subsidised by EU funds. In terms of agriculture and rural areas, these include:

- improvement of the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises, the agricultural sector as well as fisheries and aquaculture,
- supporting switching to low-emission economy in all sectors,
- promotion of adapting to the changing climate, risk management and prevention,
- environmental protection and supporting effectiveness of resource utilisation.

When it comes to the second part of the above question, whether modifications in the new financial perspective 2014-2020 will translate themselves into changes for the better, it should be pointed out that the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013, which is being implemented in Poland, is an important source of financing investments aimed at improving the competitiveness of farms and processing plants, to create jobs in rural areas, to develop methods of farming which are environmentally friendly as well as to preserve culture and the rural landscape. The experience gathered during the implementation of the programme indicates the need to analyse the demarcation line between operational programmes of the cohesion policy, the common agricultural policy and the common fisheries policy. It is still a problem that the sectoral approach continues to dominate over a spatial one and there is no intersectoral integration in areas which could help achieve the effect of synergy. It also happens that competitiveness is presented as being opposed to cohesion, with the former being the preferred one (Kierunki rozwoju ..., 2010, s. 90). Along with the negative examples, there are a number of enterprises aimed at benefitting rural areas,

which – by improving the territorial cohesion in the intra- and inter-regional dimension – are at the same time beneficial to the competitiveness of Poland or individual provinces⁵. There is also the problem of how to provide equal opportunities for projects aimed at stimulating rural development within the cohesion policy. It is very frequent that projects proposed by potential beneficiaries from big cities and from rural areas have the same scope, and the selection criteria favour large-scale projects, with higher values of indexes which are taken into account. It is noteworthy to mention the need for compromise between effectiveness and cohesion. As a study by K. Zawalińska (2009) shows, although there is a balance between pro-effectiveness and pro-opportunity actions on the national level, the differences at the province levels are quite large, especially so in rural areas.

In the discussion on the possibility of further implementation of the current model of the development of rural areas and agriculture with progressing globalisation, one should strongly emphasise the growing global challenges, mainly those related to demography, climate, energy, as well as those arising from the economic slowdown. The current actions related to the new, effective approach to development of rural areas on the global level (OECD, World Bank), as well as the European and national ones, feature the need to integrate policies on the development of those areas and flexible multi-tier management with an appropriate territorial approach, based on inner potentials. It is noteworthy that the EC proposes mainly what is referred to as Regional Smart Specialization (Kocela 2011).

Internal factors which affect the regional development of Poland, and contemporary global challenges (mainly the recession caused by the financial crisis, demographic processes and climatic changes) justify the need to take into account more broadly a new paradigm of regional policy – knowledge and innovation as key factors of development and funneling activity to the consolidation of the endogenous potential of all regions to increase their competitiveness, thereby generating growth on the national level.

⁵For example, improving access to the Internet

When seeking ways to integrate different actions aimed at integrating different actions targeted at rural areas and agriculture, and ones that facilitate coordination of community policies, one can assume that intervention aimed at supporting development processes in regions should include different types of rural areas and should be diverse, not only depending on the functions performed and the degree of their development, but also depending on their positions relative to urban areas. A cross-sectional approach to the development of rural areas arises from the need to take into account their diversity and it is targeted, on the one hand, on the optimum utilisation of the development potential of the most developed rural areas and increasing the absorption potential of the growth factors. On the other hand, this approach should result in special treatment of rural areas with poorer access to public services (peripheral rural areas, with low touristic attractiveness or with dominating low-production farms). Rural areas should be perceived in a functional sense, not only through the agricultural activities performed there. More comprehensive utilisation of endogenous resources of rural areas in the national and regional development processes can be effected through their integration with cities, consolidation of absorption of external development processes (supporting human resource development, expanding the right infrastructure, supporting enterprise location), supporting territorial specialisation and ensuring uniform standards of access to basic services and public goods.

Determinants of rural area development in the new financial perspective

It should be a goal of regional policy to facilitate partnership cooperation between towns (authorities, organisations, entrepreneurs) and rural communities. Towns should not be places which provide services to rural populations, but they should also develop conditions for creating jobs outside agriculture (*Rozwój regionalny ... 2009*, s. 143-144).

The need to intensify actions aimed at reaching the balance between the development of rural and urban areas was expressed during the Congress of Rural Communes by M. Bresso, Head of the Committee of the Regions. The Congress attendees approved the idea that in designing actions for towns, the regional policy

should take into account specific features of their surroundings as well as the development of rural areas and small towns. Regional or local specialisations are consolidated with modern tools, such as support for clusters and initiatives in favour of the construction of transport infrastructure which connects rural areas and urban centres. Investment in transport infrastructure should be accompanied by support provided to ICT investments, since the development of ICT infrastructure boosts economic and social cohesion. Such actions in ICT infrastructure development should be accompanied by education and training activities, propagating the use of modern information technology in education, administrative services, business and culture-related activities, etc.

A cross-sectional approach to the development of rural areas is justified by the need to take into account the diversity of these areas. This also applies to treating in a special way the rural areas with poorer access to the public services which provide development opportunities.

Endogenous resources of rural areas should be utilised better in the processes of national and regional development, mainly by consolidation of the absorption of external funds, allocated to the development of human resources, expansion of the right infrastructure, support for location of enterprises, regional specialisation and providing unified standards of access to basic public services.

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ИННОВАЦИОННЫЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ В ЗЕМЛЕДЕЛИИ КРЫМА

Анотація. У статті розглядаються практичні напрями інноваційного розвитку землекористування Криму, визначені перспективні об'єми виробництва і землевіддачі.

Ключові слова: інноваційний розвиток, землекористування, ефективність використання земель.

Постановка проблеми. Неотъемлемой составляющей развития и повышения эффективности аграрного сектора является технический прогресс, обусловленный достижениями науки. Внедрение инновационных технологий усиливает эффективное развитие сельского хозяйства и повышает