

# **REGIONAL TOURISM POLICY AND THE USE OF EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS IN TOURISM ECONOMY ON THE EXAMPLE OF SELECTED POLISH REGIONS**

**Aleksander Panasiuk**

**University of Szczecin, Poland**

**ABSTRACT:** The paper concerns issues of developing tourism policy at the regional level. There are presented European Union funds which were allocated for the subjects of tourism economy in Polish regions in the financial perspective 2007-2013. EU funds for tourism economy were the basis for the implementation of regional and local strategies for tourism development. The empirical part deals with research results of the state of using EU funds by tourism economy entities, i.e. local authorities and tourism enterprises. The main aim of the paper is to present the scope of support from EU funds for tourism economy in selected Polish regions. According to the formulated hypothesis, EU funds are means of regional tourism policy and they also shape the state of development of regional and local tourism economy. The research will result in recommendations concerning regional tourism policy in the EU financial perspective 2014-2020. Keywords: regional policy, tourism economy, tourism policy, EU funds

## INTRODUCTION

The main part in the implementation of the tourist function at the regional level belongs to local authorities. Thanks to legal regulations, they become the subjects of tourism policy and receive a number of means which shape functioning of regional tourism economy. In Poland, regional authorities are in charge of regional tourism policy and they are responsible for determining regional strategy for tourism development. The key means of regional authorities activity are European funds which through regional operational programmes affect certain fields of the social and economic life in the region, including tourism. The main aim of the paper is to present the scope of support for tourism economy from EU funds in the selected regions of Poland. According to the

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**Aleksander Panasiuk** is professor in Faculty of Management and Service Economics, Tourism Management Department, at the University of Szczecin, Poland. Author's email: [aleksander.panasiuk@wzieu.pl](mailto:aleksander.panasiuk@wzieu.pl).

formulated hypothesis, EU funds are means of regional tourism policy and they also shape the state of development of regional and local tourism economy. There were shown the possibilities of the regional authorities to be not only the subject of the regional tourism policy, but also the active subject of tourism economy. The research methods used in the paper are as follow: (in the theoretical part which relates to the issues of the regional tourism policy and EU resources) - the analysis of literature and observations; (in the empirical part) - demoscropy research based on the presentation of the results of questionnaires done in municipalities in two Polish regions, and mathematical and statistical methods. The research will result in recommendations concerning regional tourism policy in the EU financial perspective 2014-2020.

### *Tourism economy*

The whole sphere of activities, facilities and resources designed to meet the needs created by tourists is called tourism economy. It is "... a set of various economic and social functions, directly or indirectly developed to meet the growing demand for tourist services" (Gaworecki 2003, p.161). This definition emphasizes the complexity of the tourism economy and its close relationship with the process of the tourist consumption (Kornak & Rapacz 2001, p.11). In the systematic approach tourism economy is defined as a system of interdependencies that may arise between institutions and organizations that are involved in a process of meeting the needs expressed by tourists (Nowakowska, 1988). This system includes all measures to meet tourism demand, from changing natural environment to the needs of tourism up to the creation of conditions for tourism development (Gołembski 2002, p.135). Tourism economy manifests itself in all areas of management: the production of goods and services, their distribution, exchange and consumption; it is also found in most sectors of the national economy, which operations more or less influence directly or indirectly meeting the tourist demand.

In the classic approach tourism economy consists of direct and indirect tourism economy. The criterion of assigning entities' activities to each of the groups is the degree of activity's indispensability for servicing of tourism movement and the importance of an activity to tourism for a given entity. The development and changes in the sphere of tourism caused the additional division of tourism economy into usual and complementary. Direct tourism economy (the tourism industry) includes activity of only those subjects which functioning results from meeting the needs reported by tourists (Leiper, 1979, p. 390-407). Usual tourism economy covers above

all: hospitality, catering, passenger transportation, travel agencies, companies that operate tourist attractions and tourism information. Complementary tourism economy covers activities in the production of goods and services, companies among other producing sport equipment, trade of products aimed at the tourism market, activities of cultural-entertaining and sport-recreational facilities. The significant scope of activities concerns functions conducted by local authorities and activities of tourism organizations. Indirect tourism economy is the activity of these organizations which respond to the needs expressed by different groups of people (tourists, inhabitants of tourist regions) and that do not create typical and characteristic tourist products (Page, Connell, 2008, p.53), e.g. in the field of banking and insurance sector, trade, post and telecommunication, public utilities.

From the point of further dissertation, it is necessary to narrow down to direct usual tourism economy since these subjects are potential beneficiaries of EU resources for tourism economy. Among the mentioned types of tourism economy activities, there are tourism enterprises which through their services create an offer in the tourist field. A tourism enterprise can be characterized as a purposefully organized, economically independent and distinguished in technically service, spatial and legal respect team of people, material and financial resources, appointed to conduct a certain business activity (through providing tourist services) in the scope of meeting the needs (existential) of travelling people (and not only) in the sphere of tourism and in a way that allows the enterprise to maximize its benefits (Rapacz, 1994, p.19). Therefore, it is an organizational unit conducting a business activity based on chargeable providing of services for participants of various types and kinds of tourism (Rapacz, 1998, p. 15). Among the entities providing tourist services are:

- hospitality enterprises - subjects providing accommodation services, catering and other related,
- travel agencies - subjects organizing and being agents in selling ready tourist offers.
- tourist carriers - subjects representing passenger transportation industry,
- catering enterprises - subjects operating directly on the tourism market or which activity focuses on providing services to tourist regions inhabitants and, at the same time, tourists,
- tour leaders,
- tour guides,
- tourism information entities,
- entities dealing with offers in terms of tourist attractions.

*Regional tourism policy*

The condition for the effective operation of tourism economy subjects at the regional level is the development of the cooperation system between:

- a) bodies conducting business activity (tourism enterprises),
- b) voivodeship authorities,
- c) organizations and tourism industry associations, including economic authorities,
- d) regional tourism organization (Panasiuk, 2008a, p.25).

A country and its authorities play the regulatory role in the processes of tourism economy (Pender, Sharpley, 2008, p.270). Tourism policy is an activity which determines economic, political, social and cultural objectives connected with tourism development, achieving versatile positive effects which result from the existence of demand and supply, trying to meet the social needs in terms of tourism and specifying essential means to do that (Wodejko, 1998, p.170). The strategy for carrying out economic politics should be based on creating and protecting conditions, so that the mechanism of automatic adjustment of supply to demand through prices, that is market, works. However, it requires the protection of property law and the settlement of disputes over contracts and also the existence of many independent producers, well-informed and well-protected customers, free price formation, free entrance and exit from the given market. Creating such conditions require many regulations and public institutions.

According to the division of tasks of public administration at the national and regional level, the primary institution responsible for tourism policy at the regional level in Poland is voivodeship authorities (the voivodeship board and the voivodeship assembly). The basic objectives of tourism policy are:

- fulfilling the tourism needs of a society,
- reasonable use of tourist attractions and labour and capital resources in the sphere of tourism economy,
- development of the optimal size and structure of tourism movement,
- coordination of tourism development which takes into account its various features and links with other areas of economy (Kurek, 2007, p.388).

Regional authorities are a tourism economy entity which is, on the one hand, a sub-system of national government and, on the other hand, a type of civil society organization

(Miszczyk, Miszczyk, Żuk, 2007, p.29). From the point of regional tourism economy, regional authorities through their activities protect functioning of this economy.

A cooperation platform for voivodeship authorities and entrepreneurs and tourism organizations in voivodeship is - the regional tourism organization. This is the most advanced form of cooperation between all entities interested in tourism development in the spatial aspect. In practice, it creates a direct support for the voivodeship authorities in the implementation of tourism policy.

### *Instruments of regional tourism policy*

Activities conducted by the voivodeship authorities result from regulations in three basic legal acts: tourism act (Act, 1997), voivodeship government act (Act, 1998), Polish Tourism Organization act (Act, 1999). The activities of voivodeship authorities under the regulations of the aforementioned legal acts related to tourism are as follows:

1. Formulating of a strategy for tourism development.
2. Current tourism policy:
  - influences on tourism development,
  - improvement of competitiveness of tourism products,
  - natural environment protection,
  - culture,
  - monuments protection,
  - land planning in the area of tourism,
  - consumers rights protection,
  - acquisition of funds for tourism development,
  - cooperation with tourism industry,
  - cooperation on creating tourist offers,
  - Euroregional cooperation on tourism,
  - tourism promotion,
  - regional tourism information system,
3. Tasks assigned by the national government:
  - keeping record of regulatory activities of tourism operators and middlemen,
  - classifying hospitality facilities into the particular type and category,
  - issuing of the authorization to give training for candidates for tour leaders and tour guides,
  - giving language qualifications and issuing of ID badges for tour leaders and tour guides.

Voivodeship authorities' activities are crucial in creating regional tourism products that combine services of individual providers of direct tourism economy and para-tourist services in the tourist region. By specifying location of tourism in the structure of the regional economy, particularly through the creation of the tourism development strategy, cooperation and integration of tourism sector, there is a possibility of

activating economy at this level and creating new workplaces (Rapacz, 2006, p.296-299).

Activities of voivodeship authorities, thus creating regional tourism policy, lead to the diversity of particular voivodeships in terms of political style and its actual influence on tourism economy development. Voivodeship authorities use both active and passive instruments of tourism policy affecting directly the level of tourism economy development. Some authorities limit themselves solely to using passive administrative instruments, e.g. tasks assigned from the scope of government administration operations, means a reluctant, conservative or only declarative attitude to tourism economy development. In consequence, it determines the low level of tourism economy development. Such activities of voivodeship authorities result from the conviction that an attractive tourist area is a sufficient base for retaining a position in the tourism market. Passive instruments maintain the state of tourism economy at the same level, however, they do not develop economy and in the long term they lead to limiting the role of an area as a tourist destination. The steady and progressive development of tourism economy is guaranteed by activating of authorities into protourist initiatives with the use of active instruments. The principal premise for these activities being successful is an active cooperation between institutions (appointing and cooperating with regional tourism organization, supporting cluster structures), the involvement in investment through one's own resources and EU funds and the influence on creating local and regional tourism products.

#### *Tourism policy as a way of influencing the tourism industry*

The key task of the regional tourism policy should be constituted by actions directed to direct providers of tourism services that determine the actual income arising from servicing tourism movement, i.e. to the tourism industry. The scope of the government policy in relation to the tourism industry is a derivative of a general economic policy. Tourism economy entities are beneficiaries of the policy, similarly as other entrepreneurs in the market. Among the tasks addressed in relation to tourism enterprises, one can distinguish following aspects:

- encouragement of the development of tourism infrastructure,
- creation of conditions for the modernization of the material base of tourism,
- stimulating actions that improve efficiency of tourism enterprises,
- state aid (including grants),
- institutional support and investment.

The role of tourism in the development of the whole country is determined by key strategic documents (Kozak, 2009, p. 210-212).

The most important government document in Poland is *Directions for Tourism Development until 2015*. The basic premise of this document is to treat tourism as a field closely connected with numerous development processes and their formation in a way that is consistent with other objectives of socio-economic development of the country. The document was supposed to encourage the creation of a strong foundation of tourism economy. It also indicates actions, which require involvement of all stakeholders of tourism development, for example, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs, industry organizations, the scientific community.

The main goal of *Directions* is to create legal, institutional, financial and human resources conditions for tourism development that would promote socio-economic development of Poland and increase the competitiveness of regions and the whole country, while simultaneously preserving cultural and natural values. Priority areas for strengthening growth and harmonious development of tourism have been identified, namely:

1. Highly competitive tourism product,
2. Development of human resources for tourism development,
3. Marketing support.
4. Shaping the tourism space.

The analysis of Polish tourism economy carried out in the document proves that the implementation of *Directions* can contribute to the development of Polish tourist offer. However, the participation of entrepreneurs that created that offer was omitted and this problem was left to local authorities.

The foundation of tourism economy is tourism industry entities. The original version of the document prepared in 2005-2008 (*Strategy*, 2005) had an additional fifth priority area - *Institutional support*, which included direct reference to the tourism industry. In the end, when *Directions* was accepted in 2008, the scope of cooperation between government bodies and large tourism enterprises, domestic and foreign tycoons was not included (Panaszuk, 2008b, p. 123-127).

Therefore, a document in force, which is *Directions*, almost completely omits the role of the tourism industry. Direct providers of tourist services are marginalized in the provisions, even though their activity determines how the expectations of consumers (tourists) are met. The fact that tourism reception area is shaped by tourist values, the state of tourism infrastructure and local government's actions should be taken into account. It should be also noted that service providers, i.e. tourism industry entities, have a decisive role in satisfying tourist that come to a destination place. Among strategic objectives and actions, municipal authorities have a privileged position in the *Directions*. This is also reflected in granting financial support for implementing these strategic

objectives and actions. The authorities' task should be mainly to create conditions for the operation of tourism economy, especially including tourism economy entities. Current practice shows that the funds for tourism development are consumed by municipal authorities and are created in cooperation with local government and the tourism industry and organizations. Only a narrow range of the EU and budget funds for tourism reach the direct tourism economy.

Even though institutionalized forms of cooperation between local government and the industry are created in regional tourist areas, the sheer participation of these entities in tourism organization does not ensure strong enough cooperation in the field of creating comprehensive area-based tourist offers. One should strive to achieve unilateral and equal participation of both supply-sides in market activities and the regulations behind their financing.

The problem of not recognizing the need to cooperate with the tourist industry also applies to another vital strategic document, which is *Marketing Strategy for Poland in Tourism Sector for 2008 – 2015, and later for 2012-2020*, which was developed and implemented by Polish Tourism Organization.

#### *European Union funds in tourism economy on an example of the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship*

Despite the relatively extensive experience related to obtaining financing for tourism economy projects through EU funds which goes back to pre-accession period of the 90s, and funds for forming Polish Tourism Organization, but also the involvement of regions and municipalities in creating a framework for international cooperation in the tourism industry and financing tourism projects, there is a lack of systematization of activities in this aspect. Above all, it pertains the engagement of tourism economy entities in obtaining funds, training personnel and the amount of obtained, spent and successfully settled funds. Additionally, it is hard to evaluate how EU funds contribute to the development of regional tourism economy, what influence they have on the tourist attractiveness of areas, to what extent they influence the level of tourist movement and the growth of income in the inbound tourism industry (foreign and domestic), and finally how they affect regional economy, labour market and the quality of life of inhabitants from tourist areas.

The main source of contributions from European funds to tourism economy during the financial perspective 2007-2013 was regional operational programmes. Voivodeship executive boards are institutions that manage ROP. For example, local authorities and tourism organizations from the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship could obtain sup-

port for tourism investment from priority axis 5 “Tourism, culture and revitalization”. Tourism economy measures and sub-measures enumerated in priority axis 5 are: the tourism infrastructure, the development of culture, the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, bicycle paths, promotion, the protection and valorisation of natural heritage, revitalization and the JESSICA initiative. Moreover, tourist investment projects which beneficiaries were local authorities and tourism organizations could obtain financing in the framework of priority axis 6 “The development of metropolitan function”. In this axis, the following measures concerning metropolitan area were allocated: tourist infrastructure, increase of cultural attractiveness, bicycle paths, integrated public transport system, intelligent transport systems, and revitalization. Tourism enterprises could have applied for financial support from priority axis 1 “Economy-Innovations-Technologies”, where they obtained financing for: projects that increase competitiveness, the improvement of innovation in SME sector, making specialized advisory aid more accessible and foreign promotion.

Other programmes that support tourism economy and should be listed are:

1. The Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 (development of agritourism, tourist information, promotion of tourism).
2. The European Territorial Cooperation – mainly INTERREG IV A: Poland (the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship), Mecklenburg – Vorpommern / Brandenburg (shared cross-border tourist products, tourism infrastructure, water tourism, investments in order to develop tourist offer and improve the quality of the existing tourism infrastructure (cycle, water, horse, nature and cultural tourism)).
3. South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme in the period 2007-2013 – the programme’s main objective was to strengthen the sustainable development of the South Baltic area through joint actions designed to increase competitiveness and enhance integration among people and institutions.
4. The Human Capital Operational Programme financed by European Social Fund. Following areas were financed: training, courses, studies and other forms of raising general and professional qualifications, but also research and analyses related to tourism economy (both for employees of tourism enterprises, local authorities and tourism organizations).
5. Other forms, for example, those arising from the activity of Zachodniopomorskie Regional Loan Guarantee Fund, “Fundusz Mikro” and Regional Loan Programme Pomeranus.

Local authorities in the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship base their actions mainly on the *Strategy for Tourism Development in the Zachodniopo-*

*morskie Voivodeship until 2015 (Strategy)*. The structure of that document is based on a concept of country-wide *Directions for Tourism Development until 2015*. Its scope of interest is a continuation of a previous document that was binding until 2006 but also includes new tasks. The suggested system of project financing is mainly based on a possibility of obtaining resources from EU funds. As in the whole country, EU funds for tourism objectives were dedicated first of all to local authority bodies.

*The scope of engagement of tourism economy entities in applying for European Union funds between 2007 and 2013 in selected regions of Poland*

An analysis of EU funds use was conducted using demoscropy research, i.e. a personal interview, in the tourism economy of municipalities in the Zachodniopomorskie and the Lubuskie voivodeships. The first stage of the research encompassed all municipalities in both voivodeships and it involved investigating the use of EU funds for tourism objectives. During the second stage, 31 municipalities (15% of all) were chosen on the basis of these two following criteria:

- the volume of applications for EU funds for socio-economic development of municipality in the financial perspectives 2004-2006 and 2007-2013,
- recognisability of a municipality as a tourist destination.

Survey research was conducted on representatives of municipal authorities in June 2012. The scope of the research included both municipalities as local authorities and also projects undertaken by them.

For EU's financial perspective 2007-2013, all of 31 municipalities applied for and obtained funds for tasks related to tourism economy. Whereas in the previous EU perspective only 2/3 of analysed municipalities applied for funds for tourism. On average, there were only 5 projects proposed per municipality. If we assume that the responses to questions pertained 2007-2011 it means that, on average, each of the analysed municipalities applied for EU funds for tourism objectives once a year. The efficiency of actions aimed at receiving funds for tourism economy was 58%, i.e. considerably more than a half of the projects obtained financing. Although one municipality applied for funds for tourism objectives 14 times and it obtained financing 10 times.

Applying for EU funds, application procedures, finance and settlement conditions of projects are high barriers for self-government authorities. Following barriers were considered the most significant for municipalities:

- the need to provide own contribution (55% of municipalities consider it as a considerable barrier)
- rules on reimbursement of expenses incurred (48% of municipalities),

- preparation of extensive documentation (45% of municipalities).

The structure of Regional Operational Programmes is one of the additional issues connected with EU financing of tourism projects, as they are the main source of EU funds for tourism objectives. More than a half (52%) of application was sent to ROPs, which are managed by voivodeship authorities. Tourism-related objectives are linked to cultural tasks. Hence, a significant amount of resources, including higher allocation of funds, was used for culture-related activities (e.g. revitalization of cultural monuments, cultural facilities operations). Admittedly, cultural activities often facilitate the development of tourism; however 67% of municipal authorities see such a solution as unprofitable for tourism economy from the point of view of accessibility to resources.

Municipalities recognized the following as main benefits related to implementation of EU tasks in tourism economy area:

- the quality of life of inhabitants (96% of municipalities),
- the quality of tourism infrastructure (96% of municipalities),
- the touristic image of a municipality (96% of municipalities),
- the volume of tourism movement (71% of municipalities).

Other benefits that can be connected with influencing the tourism industry, among others, are:

- an increase of competitiveness of tourism economy,
- an increase of entrepreneurship in tourism economy entities,
- an increase of income of tourism economy entities,
- a possibility to create tourism product chains, including cross-border ones,
- the creation of new forms of tourism,
- the creation of new tourist offers.
- The abovementioned benefits enable local authorities to implement direct and indirect objectives related to the development of tourism economy. The implementation is also possible, to a slight extent, thanks to cooperation with entities that directly provide tourist services.

The analysis of the state of engagement of tourism entrepreneurs from both regions in applying for EU funds is a supplement to the research on the use of EU funds by municipalities. The primary premise of the research is to establish to what extent a municipal authority commits oneself to cooperation with tourism economy entities in terms of obtaining financing for tourism development. Primary research among entrepreneurs in the tourism industry was conducted between December 2012 and January 2013. The scope of research included the volume of applications and the state of using EU funds in the financial perspective 2007-2013. An invitation to fill in a survey was sent to more than 270 entrepreneurs. There were 38 responses collected (i.e. about 14%), out of which 29% of responses (11) came

from the Lubuskie voivodeship and the remaining 27 (71%) from the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship. The analysed tourism economy entities were most commonly micro-enterprises (64%) and small enterprises (29%). Most often the respondents were engaged in activities related to tourist attractions maintenance (15), hospitality (6) and travel agencies operations (4).

The research showed that only to small extent were tourism enterprises encouraged to undertake actions aimed at obtaining EU funds for tourism objectives. Only around 18% of enterprises have received an incentive from municipal authorities, which are potential direct partners for implementation of tourism projects. The level of activity among tourism enterprises in terms of applying for funds is around 26%, while 8 out of 9 enterprises that have applied were granted funds. In comparison to the analysed local authority institutions, the level of activity of analysed enterprises was significantly lower, as all researched municipalities from both voivodeships applied for EU funds for tourism development between 2007 and 2013. Among the reason behind the lack of activity in terms of applying for EU funds for development, tourism enterprises most often pointed to bureaucracy (63%), not fulfilling the aid criteria (36%) or no need for support from EU funds (16%).

Finding the reasons of low interest in possibilities of obtaining subsidies from EU funds among tourism enterprises was an essential area of the research. The following major obstacles to applying for funds were indicated: a complicated procedure (63%), the need to provide own contribution (42%), the shortage of properly trained personnel (26%), no willingness from local authorities to cooperate with entrepreneurs (17%) and the need to conduct possible public procurement procedures (17%).

Research findings prove that tourism enterprises apply for EU funds considerably less often than local authorities. Additionally, the local government did not create foundations for cooperation in terms of obtaining and expending EU funds for tourism economy development, despite the functions it has in tourism economy.

*The evaluation of actions of regional tourism policy entities in terms of EU funds use.*

Local authorities have a decisive role in implementing tourist function at the regional and local levels. Direct tourism economy entities, especially tourism entrepreneurs, conduct activities within the scope of providing tourist services. Cooperation between local authorities and tourism industry entities is a base for tourism economy operations, and thus implementation of synergy effects. The use of EU funds is

an active instrument of local authorities actions that enables a comprehensive development of tourism economy. Activities within that scope should be undertaken both independently by local authorities, but also in cooperation with tourism organizations and enterprises.

Comprehensive research showed that the main beneficiaries of EU funds for tourism economy are local authorities [Panasiuk 2014]. Whereas tourism entrepreneurs mainly benefit from a dedicated support for business entities from SME sector.

From entrepreneurs' point of view, it appears that during the financial perspective 2007-2013 the activity of municipal authorities was limited to carrying out initiatives related to EU financing of tourism projects independently, without a will to cooperate with tourism entrepreneurs. Hence, the cooperation in terms of development of local tourism products was rather limited and the development needs of tourism entrepreneurs were almost not seen.

#### *Recommendations for the tourism development strategy in financial perspective 2014-2020*

The issue of changes in terms of facilitating awarding EU funds that were suggested by tourism enterprises' representatives should be taken into consideration during the next EU's financial perspective. According to research, above all it is essential to introduce changes in the application settlement procedure (47% of recommendations), streamline the application structure (45%), reduce delays in reimbursement of expenditures (42%) and provide conceptual support from a financing institution (37%).

Looking at the issue in a broader perspective, we should comment on the government strategic documents on a comprehensive development of tourism economy in which spatial aspects are emphasized. The priority areas of reinforcing the dynamics and harmonization of tourism development defined in *Directions for Tourism Development until 2015* encompass, as previously stated: the development of tourism products, human resource development, marketing support and the development of the tourist space. The main premise of this document was to approach tourism as a field strictly connected with numerous development processes and to shape it in tune with other socio-economic development objectives of the country. The implementation of the document's principles was supposed to support building strong foundations for tourism economy, increase the competitiveness of Polish tourist offer on the domestic and international markets, and use tourism as an important factor that would support entrepreneurship. However, the referred strategic document practically did not point to particular actions connected with using EU funds for the development

of a typical direct tourism economy. It is expected that, for the upcoming EU financial perspective, a government department responsible for tourism will prepare a new document for the period until 2022, which will be then accepted by the government. Such document should explicitly point out what the strategic activities of the country in terms of tourism economic are, where funds from European Union's support should be allocated to. The following main areas of support should be listed:

- the development of passenger transport system that would focus on the needs of tourist movement (especially rail and air transport), although these activities are outside of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism's competences, but the ministry should cooperate with the ministry responsible for infrastructure,
- impact on the development of the tourist space, including the development of tourist facilities that would extend the tourist season and create new forms of tourism,
- actions directly aimed at tourism entrepreneurs and the development of tourist offer,
- actions aimed at tourist demand that would be mainly connected with social tourism and financing tourism of social groups (seniors, children and teenagers, disabled people); mobilisation of some social groups would increase the volume of use of tourist base and directly influence the results of the tourism industry.

The most crucial aspect of EU support for tourism economy pertains to the regional level. The basic source of financing is regional operational programmes. Available data show that in the next financial perspective there will not be any actions directly dedicated to tourism economy in the programmes. Additionally, financial support will be limited to about 50% of planned costs of tourism projects. It means that the beneficiaries will have to obtain larger own contribution for tourism projects. Such change will probably reduce the number of applications for tourism economy objectives filed by local authorities. Lack of clear emphasis of support for tourism objectives does not mean that tourism economy entities will be excluded from EU financing. However, it will be harder to indicate priorities related to the development of tourism economy in operational programmes. The issue of coexistence of tourism and culture will also become marginal. In previous financial perspectives, it limited the possibility of obtaining funds for strictly tourist objectives. The main scope of financing will, among others, include innovations and so called creative industries. It seems that there should be some mechanism functioning in this aspect and first of all there should be some special actions directed to direct tourism economy entities that were marginalized in the previous financial perspectives.

At the microeconomic level, strategies are developed by tourism enterprises. They have the most specified and market scope, as they are a concrete action plans, and they formulate main objectives and response policy. Conducted analyses show that only to small extent were tourism entrepreneurs the beneficiaries of EU funds for their market activities. They were not also perceived as partners to cooperate with in terms of activities undertaken by local authorities. It seems that indicated EU financing priorities in the new financial perspective should favour entrepreneurs. Hence, local authority bodies that want to obtain financing through EU funds will more eagerly cooperate with direct tourism economy entities in order to realize joint tourism projects. Thus a broader implementation is to be expected in terms of public-private partnership in tourism economy. Therefore, an important issue that need model solutions is enabling access to financing of activities within the scope of the development of tourism economy by as large range of entities that created it as possible. Thus, entities that will have a possibility to apply for EU funds in terms of tourism projects should include:

- tourism enterprises,
- local authority bodies,
- tourism organizations,

Projects realized in cooperation by the abovementioned entities should constituted a special area of EU support. Then, EU funds will directly determine the development of tourism enterprises, as well as the whole local and regional tourism economy.

## CONCLUSION

A synthetic summary of presented considerations show that the basis for the development of regional tourism economy is developing a tourism policy through making active instruments (economic, institutional) more prevalent than passive instruments (administrative and especially declarative) in the structure of local authorities' actions. This should be done while retaining essential range of obligatory activities that stem from the provisions of self-government law and the Tourism Services Act. Comprehensive cooperation is the base for effective operations of tourism economy. European Union funds managed by voivodeship government as part of ROP constitute an active formula for implementing regional tourism policy, which unfortunately is not completely effective.

Obtaining financing from EU funds should result in raising the tourist attractiveness level of areas. The scope of actions carried out in tourism economy, both in case of local authorities and tourism en-

terprises, determine the development of regional and local tourism economies of the two analysed regions.

It will be possible to propose actions necessary to change the structure of regional operational programmes and the tourism development strategy to authorities managing EU funds thanks to the conducted diagnosis of the tourism enterprises' engagement in applying for EU funds and the evaluation of EU funds use in tourism economy. One of the important problems is the issue of expanding the availability of EU funds for business entities (tourism enterprises – hospitality sector, transport sector, travel agencies and other entities responsible for available offer at tourist destinations). Higher percentage of tourism entrepreneurs that use EU funds should ensure a more dynamic development of tourist offer, tourism development and have a real influence on economic growth of regions, the labour market and the quality of life of inhabitants.

It should be emphasized that tourism economy contributes to socio-economic development of the country. Only active cooperation between local authorities, tourism organizations and tourism enterprises can result in expected effects that would be in line with implementation of provisions in strategic documents. The conducted research can be the basis for determining the objectives for the development of tourist areas and it should be the foundation for shaping actions for regional tourism policy for the next EU financing perspective, i.e. 2014-2020.

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