



Young Researchers and the Problems of Polish Rural Areas

editors Katarzyna Zajda, Sylwia Michalska

Jakub Hadyński, PhD

Department of Economics and Social Sciences
Poznan University of Life Sciences

THE REGIONAL ASPECTS OF RURAL AREAS COMPETITIVENESS IN THE EU

Introduction

This article deals with the issue of regional competitiveness of rural areas. The competitiveness of rural areas constitutes the growing area of science interest. It also gathers the growing attention of the development policy, which relates to the effects of socio-economic and political changes. These observations were used to set research objectives.

The main aim of this study was to identify the competitive rural areas at the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) level 2 of European Union (EU) regions based on rural characteristics as well as on the Regional Index of Competitiveness (RCI), which was designated by Directorate-General Joint Research Center together with Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy. Moreover, some other development indexes were used to indicate the level of regional competitiveness. EUROSTAT statistical data, covering 2007–2013 period, along with the American Harvard Business School (Porter 2003, Porter, Ketels, Miller, Bryden 2004) studies of rural areas competitiveness were used.

The scope of research included the classification of European Union regions at NUTS level 2 to enable statistical comparisons, the determination of characteristics of rural regions and the use of Regional Index of Competitiveness (RCI) to measure the competitiveness of designated regions.

The rural areas in the economic development

Until recently, rural development was closely related to agriculture and constituted traditional economic activities. Historically, agricultural policy was seen as synonymous with rural development policy. Although developed countries still

perceive agriculture as important factor in shaping land-use, its economic importance is declining (OECD 2003). The role of rural areas of the national economy varies and is determined by the level of a country's economic development. Rural areas on the lower level of economic development are directly related to farming and are subordinated to a primary goal of ensuring food security in the country. Having reached the stage of food security, a further increase in productivity can be noticed. It depends on the level of internal competitiveness and on the ability to sell surpluses in foreign markets. The next step of development is linked with the boost of economic growth and the prosperity of society which direct the attention to the non-productive functions of agriculture. Thus, rural development is gaining importance and further economic development is related with the separation of agricultural and non-agricultural objectives of rural development.

Rural development constitutes a very important policy area of the European Union (EU). This is due to the fact that in the 28 EU member states more than 56% of the population is living in rural areas, which occupy 91% of the territory. Meanwhile, in rural areas, the average level of income per capita is lower than in cities. People are less qualified, businesses are less competitive and service sector is less developed. On the other hand, rural areas have a lot to offer, they are used as a commodity supplier, a place for rest and recreation as well as they allow to meet aesthetic and climate needs. The enhancement of rural development policy has therefore become an overall EU priority.

The European Union has an active rural development policy in order to enable these territories to overcome their structural handicaps as well as to unlock their potential. In this regard, individual EU Member States could implement and operate completely independent rural development policies. However, this approach works poorly in practice. Not all EU countries would be able to afford the policy they need. Moreover, many of the issues raised in the context of rural development policy require cross-border solutions e.g. pollution as the preservation of the environment has become both European and international objective. In addition, rural development policy has links to a number of other policies set at EU level. The Common Agricultural Policy Reform Agenda 2000 increased the importance of rural development, including sectoral policy. Rural development, in accordance with the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategy, is designated to promote the creation of new jobs and economic growth in rural areas in a sustainable way.

Therefore, the EU has a common rural development policy, which however gives individual Member States and regions a significant control. This policy is partially funded from the EU budget, and partially from national or regional budgets of individual Member States. The basic rules for the rural development policy for the period 2007–2020, as well as the policy measures available to Member States and regions, are set in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.

According to the assumptions set in Art. 4 of Regulation 1698/2005 (DU (EC) 2005 L 277) the activities offered under the Rural Development Programme

2007–2013 were related to three areas, namely economic, environmental and territorial as well as grouped under 4 axes to point out the priority directions of EU rural support:

- Axis 1. (economic): The improvement of agricultural and forestry sector competitiveness.
- Axis 2. (environmental): The improvement of the environment of rural areas.
- Axis 3. (social): The Quality of life in rural areas and the diversification of the rural economy.
- Axis 4. LEADER.

In order to ensure a balanced approach, Member States and regions were obliged to distribute their rural development funding between all three thematic axes. Furthermore, one of the requirements stated that a part of the funding must support projects based on experiences gained from the implementation of the Community Initiative LEADER. The LEADER approach to rural development involves highly individual projects designed and executed by local partnerships to address specific local needs. In the period 2007–2013, a great emphasis on the implementation of a coherent strategy for rural development in the EU was put. In this context, the national strategic plans, which were based on the strategic guidelines of the EU were implemented. It was assumed that this approach should help (EC 2015):

- to identify the areas where the use of EU support for rural development adds the most value at EU level;
- to make the link with the main EU priorities (for example, those set out under the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas);
- to ensure consistency with other EU policies, in particular those for economic cohesion and the environment;
- to assist the implementation of the new market-oriented CAP and the necessary restructuring it will entail in the old and new Member States.

The competitiveness of rural areas

The increase of the competitiveness is the development success indicator of rural development. The issue of competitiveness is understood as an attempt to gain an advantage with respect to other participants in the market and is driven by both supply and demand. Nowadays, rural development has become more closely associated with the competitiveness. The process of rural areas competitiveness increase is very complex and multi-layered. This issue rises some questions, what determines the competitiveness of rural areas and what factors influence it?

Rural competitiveness depends on the specific characteristics of the region, which is affected by natural conditions, historical context and socio-economic

phenomena. The competitiveness of the area, including its nature, dynamics and forms are determined by many factors. These factors can be classified in different ways. The basic division is related to their origin and relate to exogenous and endogenous factors consisting of issues such as: economic growth (including the creation of new jobs and the real income increase), the preservation of the environment, the improvement of living conditions in rural areas, the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage (Wilkin 2000). Endogenous factors are all own resources of the area. These are internal factors that can be affected to some extent by the area (their number, potential). Their origins can be found in the economic and social potential, they also relate to the spatial qualities, the availability of resources and the activity of the administrative authorities, organizations and local institutions. They often have a specific character corresponding to a region and produced by him. Exogenous factors are associated with the development of the national economy and have macroeconomic character. This means that they are external to the area, and that in spite of their impact on the economic situation and the choice of endogenous factors, the region has no ability to influence the direction and strength of their interactions (Korenik 2003). The examples of such factors are the phenomenon of globalization, the EU integration process, macroeconomic fluctuations, political changes (e.g. the decentralization of the state), the changes of economic situation, the objectives and scope of intraregional policy applied by the State, the competitiveness of the surrounding regions etc. Furthermore, another factor affecting the development of rural areas is a mechanism that determines the endogenous response, the ability to respond to macro-environment changes, as the effect of an exogenous factor, or adaptability abilities, adapting socio-economic structure to the changing conditions.

While developing the competitiveness of rural areas a multi-sectoral approach is being used, which involves a number of issues of demographic, economic, social and environmental impacts. At the same time, this process is changing rapidly, as it also includes new phenomena associated with change and adaptation, e.g. the issues of technology and ecology, economy and society (UNECE 2007).

The increase of the competitiveness of rural areas is related to the demographic and employment policies, job creation and prosperity. The competitiveness of rural areas also includes a sphere beyond economic issues, which are related to public goods such as clean environment, attractive landscapes and cultural heritage (OECD 2001). There are several factors that contribute to the competitiveness in relation to private enterprises in rural areas. They include: the ethos of the economy, a low crime rate, a high ecological quality, the low price of land, low and stable wages and the weak role of trade unions (Stawasz, Stawasz, 1995). The important issues of the competitiveness of rural areas are related to the processes of migration and mobility of people. These are the factors determining the inflow or outflow of people (also in terms of migration timescales), as the main factor for which and through which the development occurs.

Nowadays, another important group of development factors are modern technical and technological solutions, including communication. They address differences and eliminate a distinct boundary linking the residence with the workplace and occurring relationships, they also result in a high growth and the high quality of life. Rapidly changing technologies and the increasing importance and the effects of globalization make the education and skills necessary actions to ensure their livelihoods and the competitiveness of the economy, including the rural economy.

In spite of the factors of rural areas development the attention should also be drawn to other factors characterizing areas with the high rate of economic growth. Their observation leads to the conclusion that these areas are usually characterized by one of the three features:

- specific natural resources, including an attractive landscape, a clean natural environment,
- urban neighborhood,
- the network of retail and financial services/nodes (individual growth centers scattered throughout the country),
- the functioning of the economic centers, e.g. in the form of a large company,
- a well-functioning of local authorities.

Noteworthy is also the important role of public authorities in creating development and the emergence of new opportunities for stimulating rural areas development. One such factor is the creation and development of endogenous resources based on public funds. This argument is undoubtedly important for the consideration of external factors. The initialization of development based on external funds is encouraging development of rural areas, while more advanced projects (e.g. relating to the implementation of the LEADER) need to have adequate resources factors, such as properly educated staff and technological resources.

It can be assumed that the competitiveness of rural areas depends on taking into account at least four basic assumptions (Giessen, Böcher 2008):

- rural areas are diversified in terms of regional characteristics and existing problems,
- the use of the strengths and the ability to overcome the weaknesses of the region determines its development potential,
- each region has its own individual strengths that can serve as the basis for the future development,
- based on the analysis of human resources in the region one can recognize the strengths of the region and the possibilities for the future development.

The competitiveness factors of rural areas are in line with the factors of regional competitiveness, while the problems of rural areas of highly developed countries differ, but they still reveal some common features. The factors mentioned derive from the significant features of rural areas, which can be used to identify common characteristics and should guide the rural development policy (OECD 2001). This applies to areas related to the land factor, but also partly to the

work factor. This points at the fact that rural areas are experiencing problems with different socio-economic and environmental terms. The activities of overcoming rural problems are mainly related to the search for sources of income and job creation. An important issue to be solved is the question of how to transform natural resources, social capital, human and material, and financial resources into the desired development effects, as well as how to transform threats into opportunities and strengths into the forces driving growth. Moreover, possibilities in this area tend to be bottom-up initiatives, which is an innovative approach to the development of the territory. They prefer the new solutions and ideas and innovative approaches, including creative adaptation solutions that have worked in other areas, directly supporting the development and contributing to positive change in rural areas. The intervention of public authorities plays important role in this process as it allows for the activation of local resources, the socio-economic development, including local governments, businesses, community organizations and residents, which is done through the financial support of joint operations. These initiatives are mainly innovation, which includes different directions related to, inter alia, the diversification of the local economy, multifunctional rural development, stimulating learning processes, including self-study, the development of the interaction between the local and global levels. These activities may also include the process of change of mentality, the promotion of technology transfer, the adaptation of the administrative and financial framework, to strengthen networking, research and experiences, to explore the ways of closer integration and internal cohesion.

Results

In view of the considerations set out above, the competitiveness of rural areas is becoming an increasingly important socio-economic and political issue. There is still a question to be raised, how to shape the competitiveness of rural areas in the EU? This issue can be perceived from different perspectives, taking into account different indicators, data or various territorial units. Thus, spatial analyzes consider different levels of administrative division existing in the Member States. These analyzes may apply to the local level (LAU 1) in accordance with the system of rural areas designation determined by the United Nations (UN 2010). The competitiveness of the higher levels of territorial division is less frequently considered. Therefore, the competitiveness of rural areas of EU regions at NUTS level 2¹ was analyzed in this study. The overview of the characteristics of the NUTS

¹ Designation of research subject i.e. EU regions at NUTS level 2. For this purpose, 273 territorial units, based on statistical data, were identified. The errors associated with agglomeration effects were eliminated and metaregions were identified, including Inner London (UK11) of Outer

2 regions was undertaken in order to distinguish specific features that point to their rural character. The following features have been taken into account:

- predominantly rural area, which is important in terms of area coverage (group I),
- the above average (over 50%) share of the population living in predominantly rural areas and the number of people working in predominantly rural areas to the total number of employment exceeds 30% (group II).

The next step included the identification of regions that had an identified set of features. For further analysis, the following regions were taken into consideration (Table 1).

Table 1. The type of rural region

I type of regions (group I)
<p>EU regions at NUTS 2 level (2010) Regions 100% predominantly rural areas: Burgenland (A), Prov.Luxembourg (B), Severozapaden, Jihozapad, Stredni Morava, Niederbayern, Nordjylland, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, Itä-Suomi, Pohjois-Suomi, Åland, Poitou-Charentes, Limousin, Corse, Guyane, Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki, Dytiki Makedonia, Ionia Nisia, Sterea Ellada, Peloponnisos, Voreio Aigaiο, Notio Aigaiο, Nyugat-Dunantul, Border, Midland and Western, Provincia Autonoma Bolzano/Bozen, Molise, Basilicata, Opolskie, Algarve, Alentejo, Norra Mellansverige, Mellersta Norrland,</p> <p>Regions 75–100% predominantly rural areas: Trier, Salzburg, Wielkopolskie, Del-Alfold, Länsi-Suomi, Kärnten, Calabria, Kozep-Dunantul, Podkarpackie, Highlands and Islands, Sardegna, Thessalia, Kentriki Makedonia, Eesti, Vzhodna Slovenija, Kassel, Lubelskie, Tirol, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Midi-Pyrénées, Lodzkie, Sjælland, Abruzzo, Centro (P), Southern and Eastern,</p> <p>Regions 50–75% predominantly rural areas: Prov.Liège, Bretagne, Toscana, Sud-Est, Vest, Nord-Est, Lorraine, Malopolskie, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Midtjylland, Lazio, Piemonte, Schwaben, Mazowieckie, Pays deLaLoire, Leipzig, Vychodne Slovensko, Swietokrzyskie, Aquitaine, Warminsko-Mazurskie, Galicia, Stredne Slovensko, Nord-Vest, Marche, Thüringen, Unterfranken, Niederösterreich, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Languedoc-Roussillon, Latvija, Aragón, Franche-Comté, Oberösterreich, Eszak-Alfold, Lietuva, Sud - Muntenia, Yugozapaden, Centre, Severen tsentralen, East Wales, Norte, Prov. Namur, Centru, Basse-Normandie, Småland med öarna, Del-Dunantul, West Wales and The Valleys, Auvergne, Picardie, Zapadne Slovensko, Dytiki Ellada, Oberpfalz, Syddanmark, Mittelfranken, Bourgogne, Steiermark, Vorarlberg, Podlaskie, Sud-Vest Oltenia,</p>

London (UKI2) (East and North East, South, West and North West) and the Brussels Capital (BE10) of Vlaams Brabant (BE24) and Brabant Wallon (BE31). This was associated with a high employment rate in Inner London (UKI1), the residents of Outer London (UKI2); similar to Brussels' occupancy, the residents of neighbouring provinces (Halle-Vilvoorde, Leuven, Nivelles). Due to the procedure 268 units were identified for further analysis.

Table 1 (cont.)

II type of regions (group II)
<p>Regions where over 30% population is working in predominantly rural areas: Severoiztochen, Lüneburg, Koblenz, Champagne-Ardenne, Jihovýchod,</p> <p>Regions, where over 50% population is living in predominantly rural areas: Övre Norrland</p>

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

The research procedure allowed for the distribution of rural regions at NUTS level 2 in the EU. On this basis, it can also be indicated where rural regions of high and low competitiveness are located in the EU (measured with the use of RCI, designated by DG Joint Research Center together with DG Regional and Urban Policy). The method of determining the indicator is based on the identification of the key factors to be able to provide a general, but also synthetic picture of regional competitiveness. The values obtained for each unit were grouped, including assigning them numbers corresponding to the values of the partial characteristics of individual indicators. Therefore, this process allowed for the identification of two basic types of regions. Therefore, given mentioned parameters 123 units were qualified as rural regions NUTS level 2 (Figure 1) and divided into 2 groups. Rural regions in terms of area coverage occupied by predominantly rural areas take up 33 regions of which 100% are predominantly rural areas, 25 regions with areas (predominantly rural) up to 75–99% of the surface. 59 regions, where the predominantly rural areas occupy up to 50–74% of the area (in total 117 regions).

With reference to the above average (50% or more) share of the population living in predominantly rural areas 1 region was identified SE33 Övre Norrland. As the final criterion of the number of people working in predominantly rural areas to the total number of employment exceeds 30% was considered, 5 regions were qualified.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of rural NUTS level 2 regions in the EU according to the adopted criteria. Rural regions are located peripherally and mainly in the Nordic countries and in the south of the Balkan Peninsula (regions in Greece), the Iberian Peninsula (regions in Portugal and Spain) and the Italian peninsula (regions in Italy), as well as in Ireland and Scotland. Regions where 50–75% take up rural areas exist mainly in the eastern part of the EU and in the south-west of France. They are characterized by diversified level of development, in comparison with both other rural regions as well as across all regions of the European Union.

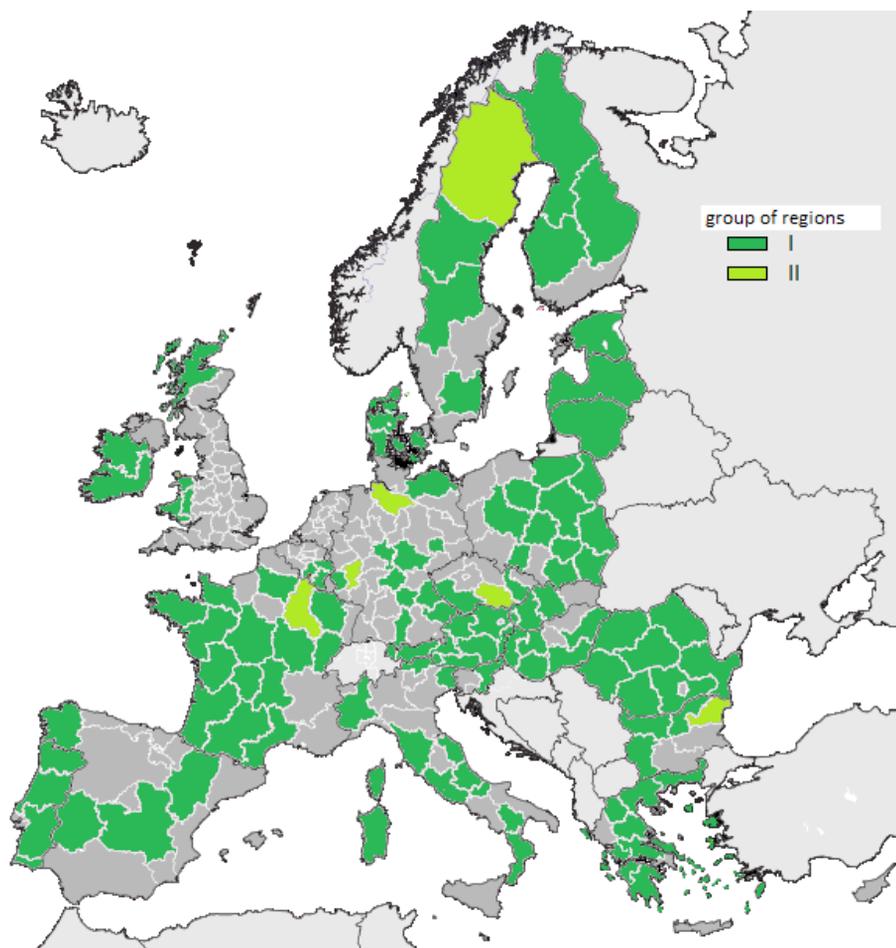


Figure. 1. Rural areas identified on the basis of the adopted criteria include 123 regions

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

GDP (gross domestic product) is the output indicator of a country or a region. It reflects the total value of all goods and services produced in a given area without intermediate consumption. By expressing GDP in PPS (purchasing power parity) the differences in price levels between countries are eliminated. Calculations per capita allow for the comparison of GDP per capita in PPS which is the key variable for determining the eligibility of NUTS level 2 regions, within the framework of the EU cohesion policy.

In this context, the majority of regions (45) are rural, those where GDP is between 75,00–99,99% of the average GDP in the EU countries (including 16 with

100% of the predominantly rural areas). In general, the most of the rural regions belong to the areas in which GDP is lower than the EU average (23 regions produce from 50.00% to 74.99% of GDP and below 49.99% there are 22). In 33 analyzed regions, the GDP was higher than or equal to the average GDP level across the EU (in 26 regions, the GDP was in the range from 100.00% to 124.99%, 6 was in the range from 125.00% to 149.99%, and 1 region above 150.00% of the average of the EU GDP). Table 2 shows the main characteristics of the analyzed rural regions in the EU, depending on the level of GDP.

Table 2. The characteristics of rural regions and the GDP

Rural regions NUTS level 2	150,00<	125,00–149,99	100,00–124,99	75,00–99,99	50,00–74,99	<49,99
100% predominantly rural area		2	6	16	7	2
75–99,99% predominantly rural area	1	2	3	8	7	4
50–74,99% predominantly rural area		2	16	18	8	15
Over 30% population is working in predominantly rural areas				3	1	1
Over 50% population is living in predominantly rural areas			1			
Total	1	6	25	45	23	22

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

The regions with the lowest values of competitiveness index are peripheral in the Central and Eastern Europe. The regions characterized by the lowest competitiveness level are located in Romania and the northern Bulgaria. The relatively low competitiveness level was also recorded in the eastern part of the EU (Hungary, Slovakia), as well as in the south of Portugal, and in the eastern part of the Community, mainly in the Czech Republic and Poland.

Conclusions

The issue of competitiveness represents an important area for modern economics and becomes the meaningful priority of the EU policy. The imperative/necessity of increasing competitiveness applies to both the economic and the pub-

lic spheres. The activities of public authority shape the competitiveness process in all spheres of development, including social, economic and environmental one. Since the end of the twentieth century the EU attention has been drawn to the issue of competitiveness of rural areas. Currently, this theme becomes increasingly important, as further proposals of policy reforms in Member States prove it. The review of documents concerning development plans of the Community after 2013 indicate that the importance of this policy direction continues to increase. Both the Europe 2020 strategy and the overall objectives of the CAP shall support the long-term strategic objectives of EU policies on competitiveness of rural areas in the period 2014–2020. The main objectives of support in this area include: the increase of the competitiveness of agriculture, the assurance of the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action; and the achievement of a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

Furthermore, the policy will be implemented through national and/or regional rural development programmes (RDP) in the future. The 2013 reform leaves in place many of the key features of rural development policy from 2007–2013.

The attention has been drawn to the need for change in the future policies that apply to strategic approach to constructing RDPs, strengthening the content of rural development measures (KE 2015). This also relates to simplifying rules and/or reducing the related administrative burden where possible; and linking rural development policy more closely to the other European Structural and Investment funds.

Member States will have to build their RDPs based upon at least four of the **six common EU priorities (KE 2015)**:

1. Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
2. Enhancing the viability/competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
3. Promoting food chain organization, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
4. Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
5. Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Moreover, each rural development priority identifies more detailed areas of intervention (“focus areas”). Within their RDPs, Member States/regions set quantified targets against these focus areas, on the basis of an analysis of the needs of the territory covered by the RDP. They then set out which measures they will use to achieve these targets and how much funding they will allocate to each meas-

ure. Funding is drawn partly from the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** and partly from national/regional and sometimes private sources. The implementation and impact of the policy is monitored and evaluated in detail (KE 2015).

Summing up, one can draw conclusions on the situation in rural areas:

- they are considerably diversified in terms of competitiveness and development,
- they are located peripherally with respect to the center of the European Union, but they predominate in the eastern and northern parts,
- the highest quality of life and the best life conditions exist in the regions of the Nordic countries,
- moving from north to south of the EU, in geographical terms, the quality of life decreases and living conditions deteriorate in rural areas,
- the least competitive regions are the ones in which a low level of GDP was reported. This results in a significant polarization of the EU in terms of the territorial dimension.

References

- Annoni P., Kozovska K. (2010), *EU Regional Competitiveness Index 2010*, European Commission, Joint Research Centre Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen, Luxembourg.
- DU (EC) 2005 L 277, COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No. 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
- EC (2015), http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/index_en.htm
- Eurostat (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010), <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>
- Giessen L., Böcher M. (2008), *Integrated Rural Development Policy in Germany and its Potentials for new Modes of Forest Governance*, Institut für Wald-, Umwelt- und Ressourcenpolitik Universität für Bodenkultur, Wien.
- Korenik S. (2003), *Dysproporcje w rozwoju regionów Polski – wybrane aspekty*, Wydawnictwo AE, Wrocław.
- OECD (2001), *Territorial Outlook*, OECD (2001), Reference to Chapter 9: Rural Trends and Policy Issues, http://www.oecd.org/findDocument/0,2350,en_2649_34419_1_119699_1_1_37429_00.htm, Paris.
- OECD (2003), *The Future of Rural Policy: From Sectoral to Place-Based Policies in Rural Areas*, OECD, Paris.
- Porter M. E. (2003), *The economic performance of regions*, “Regional Studies”, August/October, Vol. 37, Issue 6–7, p. 549–578.
- Porter M.E., Ketels C.H., Miller K., Bryden R.T. (2004), *Competitiveness in Rural U.S. Regions: Learning and Research Agenda*, Institute for Strategy Competitiveness, Harvard Business School D.C. Economic Development Administration, Washington.
- Stawasz D., Stawasz K. (1995), *Problemy rozwoju małych przedsiębiorstw na terenach słabo zurbanizowanych (na przykładzie województwa radomskiego)*, [in:] *Uwarunkowania rozwoju*

-
- sektora MSP w krajach Centralnej i Wschodniej Europy*, Piasecki B. (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź.
- UNECE (2007), *Rural Households' Livelihood and Well-Being Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income*, United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The World Bank, Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), New York and Geneva.
- Wilkin J. (2000), *Problematyka rolnictwa i obszarów wiejskich, EU – Monitoring III* (Ekspertyza), Fundacja Fridericha Eberta, Warszawa.

The aim of this publication is to look at the problems of Polish rural areas from the perspective of the young generation of researchers, to show what problems they are interested in and what study methods and techniques they use to describe the phenomena occurring in Polish villages. The results of their studies were also presented to underscore the importance of these phenomena for the development of knowledge concerning the dynamic transformations in Polish rural areas. The Authors represent different fields of study (sociology, ethnography, economy and geography) from renowned academic centres such as University of Lodz, Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development, Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN) in Warsaw, Life Science University of Poznan, Technical University in Warsaw, Institute of Urban Development in Krakow, and Maria Grzegorzewska University. What they have in common is interest in the problems of rural areas and their residents. They focus on the new model of rural development, very often identified with concepts such as multifunctional and sustainable development, on social innovation, the subject of transformations in rural residents' social roles, including rural women serving public roles, as well as on the strategies of coping with the reality used by residents of marginalized villages. The articles introduce the Readers to selected problems of development of Polish rural areas and help them to understand their complexity.



WYDAWNICTWO
UNIwersytetu
ŁÓDZKIEGO

www.wydawnictwo.uni.lodz.pl
e-mail: ksiegarnia@uni.lodz.pl
tel. (42) 665 58 63, faks (42) 665 58

ISBN 978-83-7969-842-4



9 788379 698424