

SPATIAL DIFFERENCES IN ABSORPTION OF 2007-2015 EU FUNDING FOR UTILIZATION OF CULTURAL ASSETS IN NORTHERN POLAND

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The utilization of the European Union financial resources by territorial self-government units in Northern Poland fosters the process of reconstruction and management of cultural heritage assets and their adaptation to the realization of social and economic tasks and functions. The aim of the paper is to present the ways of spending EU financial resources earmarked for the purposes related to cultural assets in rural areas of Northern Poland against a background of the remaining spatial categories (the voivodship in its entirety, the metropolitan area of the voivodship, towns with district rights, counties) encompassing three voivodships: Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie. The survey was conducted over the period 2007-2015 using the SIMIK Database of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland. The analysis conducted in the paper allowed us to conclude that projects which were carried out in rural areas constituted approximately 20 % of the overall expenditure on "cultural" projects in the region. Both in the voivodship as a whole as well as in rural areas, in all voivodships the chief purposes encompassed cultural objects and assets as well as sport and tourism infrastructure. On the other hand, tourism product, promotion and information were much less frequently co-financed from EU Fund in Northern Poland in the years 2007-2015.

Keywords: cultural assets, EU structural funds, Northern Poland, rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

The potential of cultural assets in Northern Poland is very rich and highly differentiated. This is an effect of rich history, changes in the extent of country borders, transformation in the ethnic and national structure as well as migration streams which have come into existence in this region. That is why in the areas of the voivodships of Northern Poland, including Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodships, as is the case of Lower Silesia¹, there is much evidence confirming multiculturalism of this area. Many cultural heritage objects and cultural assets in this region are located in rural areas.

Preservation of cultural assets inherent in the existing "witnesses" of the past is facilitated by the implementation of new tasks in the particular objects, which is very important from the point of view of the functioning of local communities². Thus, cultural potential is utilized for socio-economic purposes, and new enterprises and jobs being created in these areas are of special importance³. In particular, the renewal of cultural heritage resources fosters the development of tourism branch. This specially applies to the development of tourism products; however, it also leads to the customization of historic buildings and sites to the realization of catering and accommodation functions. Thus, restored cultural heritage objects play an important part in the rural milieu by contributing to the growth of the region's competitiveness. Hence the importance of the use of the EU financial assistance for culture-related purposes; on the one hand, this directly affects the state of preservation of cultural heritage objects, and, on the other hand, it fosters the development of pro-development actions in the local milieu. The aim of this study is to examine the ways of spending the EU funds allocated for the purposes related to cultural heritage assets in rural areas in Northern Poland and to present the beneficiaries of "cultural" European Funds located in the countryside against a background of entities from the remaining spatial categories of the region. To achieve the main goal, the following research questions were asked:

¹ Powęska H., 2017, Absorption 2007-2013(2015) EU funding for utilization of cultural assets in Dolnośląskie province by spatial categories with special reference to rural areas, *The Scientific SERiA Annals* (in Polish: *Roczniki Naukowe Stowarzyszenia Ekonomistów Rolnictwa i Agrobiznesu*), V.19, z. 3, pp. 238-243.

² Murzyn-Kupisz M., 2013, The socio-economic impact of built heritage projects conducted by private investors, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Elsevier, Vol.14, Is. 2, pp.156-162.

³ Thorsby D., 2001, *Economics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press.

- What was the diversity of the value and level of the EU co-funding for cultural heritage projects depending on the spatial category and the voivodship?
- What were the differences between voivodships regarding the purposes of spending the EU "cultural" funds in rural areas?
- What were the objectives on which the EU funding was spent?

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTION

The EU Aid Funds play an important part in the development of rural areas in Central Europe⁴. European projects thematically related to culture were carried out under four Operational Programmes: Infrastructure and Environment, Human Capital, Innovative Economy, and Technical Assistance. The list of projects under consideration also comprises "cultural" projects carried out during the period 2007-2015 under Regional Operational Programmes, including the Regional Operational Programme for the Pomorskie Voivodship, Regional Operational Programme for the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship and Regional Operational Programme for the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship. The survey was conducted over the period 2007-2015. It covered three voivodships: Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie. The analysis was based on the SIMIK Database of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland⁵. On the 31st December 2015 there were 104,527 agreements registered in this database; they concerned the financing of projects from the EU Structural Funds allocated to Poland under all Operational Programmes in the years 2007-2013(2015)⁶. Of these, 1678 projects in a total amount of PLN 12.3 billion concerned culture-related issues.

In this paper, cultural assets are understood in the sense adopted in the Law of 15th February 1962⁷. These are tangible and intangible objects, which are a historical and cultural legacy of the region; at the same time, due to their specific character and peculiarity, they play the role of the bearers of aesthetic and artistic values. Of great importance are also such factors as landscape setting of cultural objects, their popularity, ways of promotion, spatial accessibility, forms of the access to these objects and functions performed by the particular objects.

The analysis conducted in the paper takes into consideration the following features of the projects: thematic scope, total value and the level of EU funding, as well as an area in which the project was implemented. On the basis of the thematic scope of the projects the following five categories were distinguished: revalorization of cultural heritage objects, creation and development of a new tourism product, sport and recreation infrastructure, promotion, and information. Based on the study of literature⁸ and taking into account the specific character of Northern Poland, the following spatial categories of the beneficiaries were distinguished: the voivodship in its entirety, the metropolitan area of the voivodship, towns with district rights, counties, rural communes and small towns, which are jointly considered as rural areas in this paper. A detailed substantive analysis relating to rural areas was conducted; it included the total value and the levels of the EU funding.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

In the years 2007-2015, the number of projects co-financed through the EU funds and related to cultural assets across Poland reached 1678 for a total amount of PLN 12.3 billion. Of these, in Northern Poland 294 agreements were implemented in a total amount of PLN 2.2 billion with the EU co-funding amounting to PLN 1.05 million. The EU co-funding for the implemented "cultural" projects totalled 47.2 %. In the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship 78 agreements were implemented for a total amount of PLN 715.2 million, with the EU funding of 51.2 %. The highest share of the EU financial resources in the implemented projects was recorded in the Pomorskie Voivodship (54.3 %). Of the total value of 93 implemented agreements in a total amount of PLN 671.8 million, PLN 365.1 million came from EU grants. The majority of projects were implemented in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship: 123 agreements. Their total value slightly exceeded PLN 808 million, while the EU co-funding totalled only 37.9 % for an amount of PLN 306 million. However, when we juxtapose these data with the number of population of the voivodships, it turns out that the leading region was the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship, where the total value of the EU "cultural" projects per one inhabitant amounted to PLN 472.5, while the EU co-funding totalled PLN 179.0. These parameters were much lower in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodships. The total value of the projects amounted to PLN 342.8 and PLN 291.1 respectively, while the value of the EU co-funding reached the levels of PLN 175.4 and PLN 158.2 respectively.

In all voivodships in Northern Poland, among five types of the spatial categories distinguished, the biggest beneficiaries of the EU Funds intended for culture were the towns functioning as capitals of these voivodships (Tab.1). In particular, a high dominance of the voivodship agglomerations was observed in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodships. In both cases the total value of the implemented projects as well as the share of the EU co-

⁴ Stawicki M., 2015, Use of rural development program funds in selected central European Countries, *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference: Rural Development*, Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Kaunas, p.6.; Wojewódzka-Wiewiórska A., 2017, The importance of the LEADER programme 2007 – 2013 in the rural areas development in Poland, *Research for Rural Development*, Vol. 2, s. 97-103.

⁵ The SIMIK database prepared by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development (Poland)

⁶ Under the N + 2 rule UE 2007-2013 Funds may be spent by the end of 2015

⁷ *Ustawa o ochronie dóbr kultury z dnia 15 lutego 1962.* (Act of February 15 concerning the protection of cultural assets). Dz.U. 1962. Poz. 48.

⁸ Rakowska J., 2013. Classifications of areas. Criteria, definitions, methods of delimitation. Methodology and statistics. (in Polish: Klasyfikacje obszarów - kryteria, definicje, metody delimitacji. Studium metodyczno-statystyczne), Warsaw.

financing for projects in capital cities of these voivodships exceeded 50 % of the overall amount of the financial means used for culture-related purposes (Table 1.). And the share of Szczecin in the utilization of the EU grants allocated for "cultural" purposes in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship totalled around 35 %.

The number of culture-related projects implemented in urban districts of Northern Poland was much lower. In the case of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodships, in the administrative units classified under this spatial category EU grants were utilized to a very small extent, which is confirmed by a nearly 2 or 3 % share of towns with district rights in the overall amount of funds utilized across voivodships. However, in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship urban districts used more than 30 % of all grants. When considering jointly urban districts and voivodship capitals as the areas with dominant urban functions, one must say that in all voivodships of Northern Poland the share of territorial self-government units with predominant urban functions totalled approximately 60 %, the highest one being in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship (68 %) and slightly lower in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodships (60 %).

During the period 2007-2015 rural communes and small towns located in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie Voivodships utilized around 21 % of the total value of culture-related projects; in the case of the former, the value of the EU co-funding was lower than the total value of the implemented projects and it totalled only 17 %. On the other hand, in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship the EU co-funding exceeded the overall value and it amounted to approximately 22 %. Much less EU financial resources were utilized for culture-related purposes in the communes and small towns in the Pomorskie Voivodship. The share of this spatial category amounted approximately to 14 % of the overall value of "cultural" projects implemented in this voivodship and totalled almost 19 % of the funding received from the European Union to support these projects. Rural districts that are beneficiaries of the EU grants realized "cultural" projects in an amount ranging from 14 % to 25 % of the overall value in the voivodship, and the share of the EU co-funding in all voivodships was higher than the value of implemented projects ranging from 11 to 28%.

Table 1. Total value and EU funding of projects related to cultural assets in Northern Poland by spatial categories of the beneficiaries

Voivodship	Spatial categories of the beneficiaries	Total value of "cultural" projects		EU Funding to "cultural" projects		% of the EU co-financing of the project in relation to the total value
		PLN	Share of the area in the voivodship in %	PLN	Share of the area in the voivodship in %	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kujawsko-pomorskie	rural communes and small towns	148 138 165,64	20,71	63 946 828,84	17,48	43,17
	counties	148 892 417,40	20,82	83 673 588,50	22,87	56,20
	towns with district rights	20 826 882,13	2,91	9 235 279,47	2,52	44,34
	the metropolitan area of the voivodship	397 318 261,66	55,56	209 031 223,03	57,13	52,61
	the voivodship in its entirety	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
	Total	715 175 726,83	100,00	365 886 919,84	100,00	51,16
Pomorskie	rural communes and small towns	96 539 180,80	14,37	67 707 083,14	18,55	70,13
	counties	169 389 369,78	25,21	104 516 782,44	28,63	61,70
	towns with district rights	7 869 229,02	1,17	5 973 513,58	1,64	75,91
	the metropolitan area of the voivodship	379 336 065,17	56,46	173 454 988,08	47,51	45,73
	the voivodship in its entirety	18 710 996,05	2,79	13 405 587,69	3,67	71,65
	Total	671 844 840,82	100,00	365 057 954,93	100,00	54,34
Zachodniopomorskie	rural communes and small towns	169 075 909,31	20,92	66 555 054,08	21,74	39,36
	counties	71 191 918,43	8,81	34 621 723,90	11,31	48,63
	towns with district rights	258 737 572,82	32,02	81 582 525,79	26,65	31,53
	the metropolitan area of the voivodship	291 689 935,85	36,09	106 748 975,59	34,88	36,60
	the voivodship in its entirety	17 456 970,73	2,16	16 564 630,33	5,41	94,89
	Total	808 152 307,14	100,00	306 072 909,69	100,00	37,87

Source: Author's elaboration based on the SIMIK data of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland

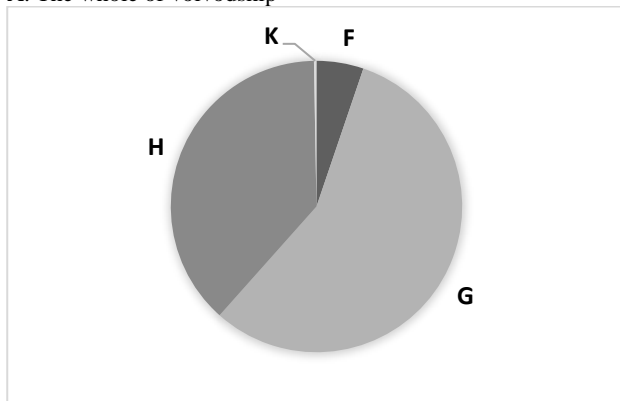
The fifth spatial category distinguished in the paper, namely the voivodship as a whole, includes projects which were realized in the entire voivodship and most often they focused on promotion and information. The share of these

beneficiaries was minimal and it ranged from 0 to 2 % in the total value of the projects as well as from 0 to 5 % in the EU co-funding.

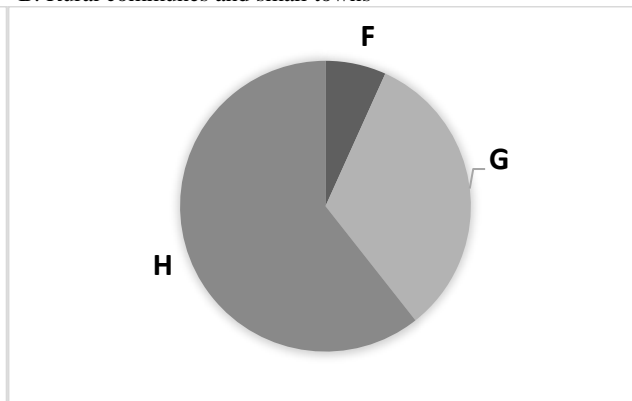
The dominance of the use of the EU Aid Funds by their beneficiaries in urban areas of Northern Poland is the result of many factors, including the dominance of the urban population over the rural population; the rate of urbanization in the voivodships of Northern Poland ranges from almost 60 % in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship through 64 % in the Pomorskie Voivodship to nearly 69 % in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship⁹. In addition, one should take into account the fact that the towns located in this region, besides functioning as typical urban centres, are also the centres with a long-standing tradition of being a hinterland for the neighbouring rural areas as trade, administrative and cultural centres¹⁰.

Kujawsko-pomorskie Voivodship

A. The whole of voivodship

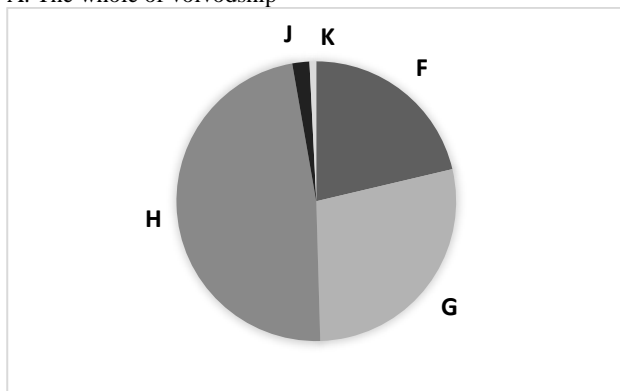


B. Rural communes and small towns

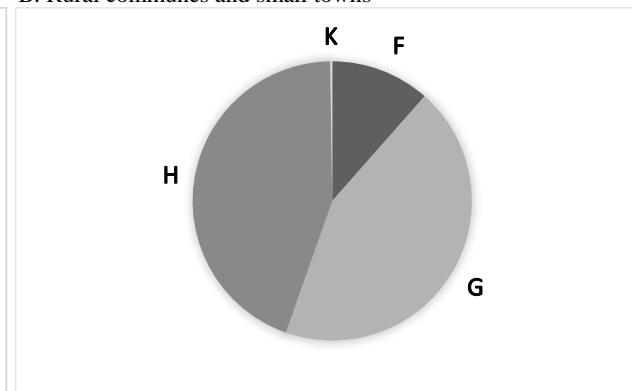


Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship

A. The whole of voivodship

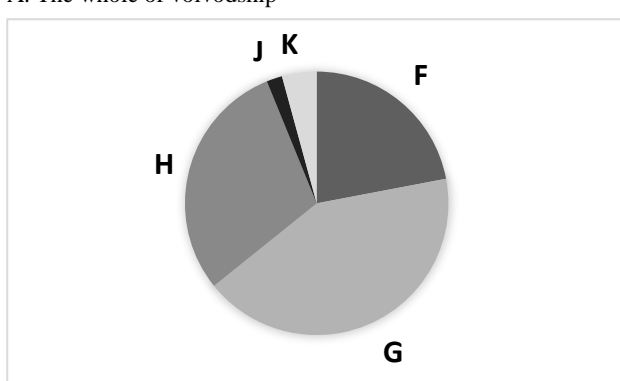


B. Rural communes and small towns

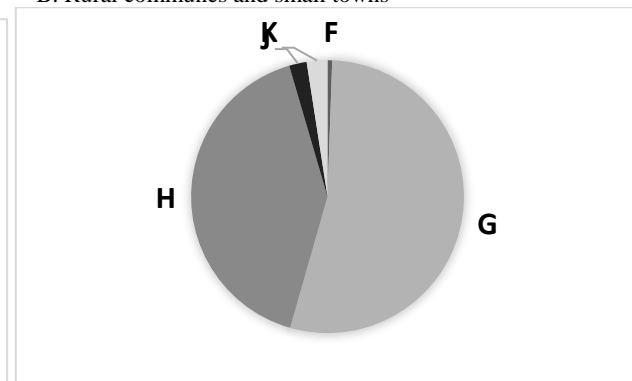


Pomorskie Voivodship

A. The whole of voivodship



B. Rural communes and small towns



G - revalorization of cultural heritage objects, F - creation and development of a new tourism product, H -sport and recreation infrastructure, J promotion, K information

Source: Author's elaboration based on the SIMIK data of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland

Figure 1. The structure of utilization of the EU funds for cultural assets in Poland in 2007–2013(15) in the voivodships of Northern Poland

⁹ Author's calculations based on *Statistical Yearbook of the Regions, Statistics Poland, Warsaw 2017*

¹⁰ Heffner K., 2016, *Obszary wiejskie i małe miasta: czy lokalne centra są potrzebne współczesnej wsi? (Small towns and rural areas. Do local centres needed by contemporary countryside?)*. Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach No 279. p. 11-22.

In Northern Poland regional differences were recorded regarding the level of the EU co-financing for the implemented "cultural" projects. The highest EU co-financing went to the entities located in the Pomorskie Voivodship, but this was the lowest absolute value of the EU financial resources used in this region. On the other hand, in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship, where the greatest absolute value of the projects was found, the lowest share of the EU funding was recorded. Thus, one may say that the EU co-funding for "cultural" projects was inversely proportional to own resources invested in culture in the particular voivodships.

Among five "cultural" projects distinguished in the paper, that is to say revalorization of cultural heritage objects, creation of a new tourism product, sport and recreation infrastructure, promotion and information, which were carried out in rural areas (communes and small towns) in Northern Poland in the years 2007-2015, of greatest importance were projects under which the first of the above-mentioned purposes was financed (Fig.1). Projects related to this subject had the highest share in the Pomorskie Voivodship. On the other hand, in the Zachodniopomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodships their share was lower than 50 %. When comparing the situation in this field in rural areas to expenditures for this purpose in the entire voivodships, it should be noted that in the Zachodniopomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodships beneficiaries from rural areas were proportionally more focused on the problem of revaluation than those in the entire voivodship. However, in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship the share of the projects relating to the revaluation of cultural heritage objects was lower in the rural areas than that across the whole voivodships.

In culture-related projects carried out in Northern Poland the purposes related to the development and preparation of sport and tourism infrastructure were equally important. This purpose was clearly dominant in rural areas in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship, and – as regards the voivodship scale – in the entire Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship. At the same time, it must be emphasized that in all three voivodships the share of infrastructure spending was higher than that in the case of entire voivodships. The remaining purposes of the EU co-funded projects played a less important role. It can be observed that in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie Voivodships projects concerning the development of new tourism products are undertaken in both rural areas and in the entire voivodship. However, projects relating to promotion and information in the entire voivodship as well as in rural areas were carried out very rarely.

Diversity of the spending of culture-related EU funds depending on the purpose of a project is the result of historical social and economic processes as well as of the current needs of local communities functioning in this area. Concentration of the beneficiaries of European funds on the revaluation of cultural heritage objects in rural areas of Northern Poland is the effect of earlier neglect of cultural heritage assets on the one hand, and the lack of financial abilities on the other hand. It is also important to note that these are mainly the reminders of German-speaking communities living in this area before 1945. A high share in the structure of expenditures on the development of sports and recreation infrastructure as well as on the creation of new tourism products is primarily due to satisfying the increasing needs related to rural tourism development in the area. In Northern Poland, just like in the whole country, tourism function is becoming an increasingly important element of the economic landscape of rural areas¹¹. This promotes multifunctional development of rural areas in Northern Poland¹². Thus, we can say that the EU funds spent on projects directly and indirectly related to culture are a factor affecting socio-economic development of rural areas of Northern Poland¹³.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis conducted in this paper led to the following conclusions:

- Among all voivodships in Northern Poland the highest total value of the European "cultural" projects executed during the period 2007-2015 and the value of projects per one inhabitant were recorded in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship, while the highest EU co-funding was observed in the Pomorskie Voivodship.
- In the entire region of Northern Poland rural areas were the beneficiary of about 20 % of the amount of the EU co-funding for cultural heritage projects and they ranked second after voivodship capitals in which the spending ranged from 35 % in Zachodniopomorskie to more than 56 % in the Pomorskie Voivodship.
- Among the main purposes of "cultural" projects carried out in rural areas of the region there were: (1) revalorization of cultural objects and assets, and (2) sport and tourism infrastructure. In each of the voivodships 90 % of all financial resources were earmarked for these purposes. In the Pomorskie Voivodship the chief purpose was the revalorization of cultural heritage assets, in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship the focus was on sport and recreation infrastructure,

¹¹ Gralak K., 2009, *Tourism function and its importance for lokal and regional development* (in polish: *Funkcja turystyczna i jej znaczenie dla rozwoju lokalnego i regionalnego*). in: H.Powęska (ed), *Sposoby wykorzystania dóbr kultury dla potrzeb rozwoju funkcji turystycznej na Mazowszu przy wsparciu z funduszy strukturalnych*. Wydawnictwo SGGW, Warsaw, pp. 22-35; MacDonald R., Jolliffe L., 2002, *Cultural rural tourism: Evidence from Canada*. *Annals of Tourism Research*. Vol.30. Iss. 2. pp.307-322; Cawley M., Gillmor D.A., 2008, *Integrated rural tourism: Concepts and Practice*. *Annals of Tourism Research*. Vol. 35, Iss. 2. pp. 316-33.

¹² Adamowicz M., 2009, *Koncepcja wielofunkcyjności jako element zrównoważonego rozwoju obszarów wiejskich* (*The concept of multifunctionality as an element of sustainable development of rural areas*). *Polityki europejskie, finanse i marketing*. No. 2 (51 - T. 2). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SGGW, 2009. p. 11-38.

¹³ Murzyn-Kupisz M., 2012, *Dziedzictwo kulturowe a rozwój lokalny* (*Cultural Heritage and Lokal Development*), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie, Krakow, p. 350.

and in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship the value of the projects implemented and earmarked for the two purposes was similar.

- The analysis of the structure of purposes of all the projects implemented in the entire voivodship also shows the predominance of the two above-mentioned purposes, the share of expenditure on the creation of new tourism products being slightly higher than that in rural areas. However, tourism promotion and information, in both rural areas and across voivodships, were rarely financed in the years 2007-2015 under EU co-funded "cultural" projects in Northern Poland.

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