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SUPPORT FROM THE EU FUNDS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND IN THE YEARS 2007 – 2013

PODPORA ROZWOJA WIDIEKA Z FONDÓW EU W POLSKU W ROKACH 2007 – 2013

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In the European Union assistance for rural development in 2007 – 2013 has been provided in the framework of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The scope and form of support for rural areas in Poland during this period were stated by the Rural Development Programme. Its main objectives include in the first place upgrading the competitiveness of agricultural holdings through their restructuring, improvement of the condition of the environment and landscape, but also betterment of living standards of rural dwellers and promoting the diversification of economic activities. Apart from funding originating from the European Union, financial support for rural development in Poland requires involving domestic funds, or in some cases also private means. Evaluating the rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013 at the current stage of its realization it should be said that a considerable interest in selected measures may be observed among rural dwellers, visible as the number of submitted applications and a growing number of signed contracts. As at the date of the analysis already over 16.3 bn zlotys has been paid and utilization of EAFRD funding reached 23.61%. Utilization of funding will be increasing with subsequent interim payments or realization and settlement of investments qualified for assistance but also in connection with new calls for applications for the EU funding. On the other hand, analyzing the structure of realized payments within the limit of EAFRD funds one should state that as at the day of the analysis the major part of funds from EAFRD was paid to the measure supporting farming in mountain areas and other less favoured areas, subsequently modernization of agricultural holdings, early retirement benefits and also to the agri-environmental programme. Proportionally the least share of funding was paid within the measures: "Implementation of Local Development Strategies" and "Information and Promotion Activities".

Key words: Common Agricultural Policy, EU funds, rural development

In compliance with the implemented reform of the EU rural policy, since 2007, assistance for rural areas development has been financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), while the EU principles of support for rural areas were stated in the Council Regulation (WE) 1698/2005. In conformity with the EU regulation, rural development policy for the years 2007 – 2013 focuses on three priority axes. The first one concerns upgrading agricultural and forestry sectors competitiveness (so called economic axis), the second one refers to an improvement of the condition of the natural environment and rural areas (so called environmental axis), whereas the third one focuses on improvement of the quality of living conditions in rural areas and supports diversification of rural economy (so called social axis). The priorities mentioned above have been additionally supplemented by the fourth axis – Leader, aiming at inclusion of local communities in the process of both planning and management of rural development. Activities realized in the framework of Leader axis aim at de-centralized bottom-up implementation of constructed strategies concerning development of local rural areas but should also contribute to building social capital. This axis is horizontal and multi-sector one in character and all measures contained in the other three thematic axes may be implemented in its framework

Pursuant to the Council regulation (WE) 1 698/2005 each European Union member state was committed to develop a national strategic plan of rural development for the years 2007 – 2013. In Poland, the national strategic plan constructed on the basis of social, economic and environmental analysis shows the priorities and tendencies of rural development with reference to the EU priorities, which are the basis for

elaborating the Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013. The programme specifies the scope and form of support for rural areas in Poland according to general provisions of the EU policy on rural development support. Therefore, the instruments of this programme were grouped in axes, the implementation of which should contribute to:

- upgarding of competitiveness of agriculture and forestry through supporting restructuring, development and innovation (Axis 1),
- improvement of the natural environment and rural areas through supporting land management (Axis 2),
- improvement of life quality in rural areas and providing assistance for diversification of economic activities (Axis 3),
- activation of rural dwellers by building social potential in the country (Axis 4).

The article aims to present the European Union assistance targeting rural areas in 2007 – 2013 with particular regard to Poland. The sources of the European Union funding for rural areas were analyzed in the paper considering the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) broken down by the individual European Union countries, as well as by individual priority axes of the EU rural development policy. In general, the number of measures realized by individual member states in the framework of national rural development plans divided into priority axes was compared. Moreover, a basic information about the Rural Development Programme, which has been realized in Poland in 2007 – 2013 focusing on identified objectives and priority axes, was presented. The state of this programme realization was illustrated synthetically and final conclusions were presented.

Rural development programmes in the European Union

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is an instrument of the EU Common Agricultural Policy focusing on providing assistance for the member state regions with a typically agricultural structure. EAFRD provides financial support for the projects aiming at sustainable development of agricultural and forestry sectors, improvement of agri-food economy competitiveness but also increase in employment and upgrading entrepreneurship in the European Union member states. The fund should also contribute to improvement of the natural environment condition, extending infrastructure, development of tourism, and also to enhancement of the quality of life in rural areas. The breakdown of EAFRD funds for rural development allocated to individual European Union states is presented in Figure 1.

The highest amount of funding for the years 2007 – 2013 was allocated to rural development in Poland – 13.23 bn euro, which makes up over 14.5% of the whole EAFRD budget for 2007 – 2013 and in Italy – 8.29 bn euro. The other countries which obtained the highest amounts of money are Germany – 8.13 bn euro and Romania – 8.02 bn euro. The lowest share of funds were allocated to Malta – 0.08 bn euro, Luxembourg – 0.09 bn euro and Cyprus – 0.16 bn euro.

The greatest amounts of funding, i.e. 44% of the total EAFRD budget for 2007 – 2013 were allocated to realization of measures included in the axis 2 (environmental) and subsequently to the measures constituting axis 1 (economic) – 34% of funds. Measures implemented in the framework of axis 3 (social) received 13% of EAFRD funds, whereas 6% was allocated to Leader axis. About 3% of EAFRD means was reserved for the mechanism supporting proper implementation and management of individual programme of rural development in the member states (technical assistance).

Moreover, the European Union regulations committed each member state to develop a National Strategic Plan and national programme of rural development. A group of measures aiding rural development in the EU was determined in the regulation 1698/2006 and comprises a total of 43 codes. As much as 17 were identified in the framework of economic axis, 13 for the environmental axis, 8 in the framework of social axis and 5 for Leader axis. Management of the implemented programmes of rural development is also supported by the technical assistance means. The number of measures implemented by the individual EU countries in the framework of their rural development programmes is presented in Table 1.

Presented data show that most numerous packages of activities are implemented by Italy (41), Spain (40) and Germany (39). The least numbers of measures (11) were launched in Ireland, on Malta (21) and in Romania (22). None of the European Union countries has been implementing all available measures in the framework of axis 1. The highest number of activities in the framework of this axis has been initiated in Spain, Portugal and in Italy (14 measures in each country), whereas the least number in Ireland (only 4 measures), in Finland and Sweden (6 measures in each). In the framework of the second, so called environmental axis only Italy has been implementing the full package, i.e. 13 measures, whereas Portugal, Spain and Germany each are realizing 12. The lowest number of measures within axis 2 has been implemented on Malta – 2 measures and in Ireland, Slovenia and Sweden – 3 measures in each. In the framework of axis 3 (so called social axis) as many as eight EU member states have been implementing all measures available in the general

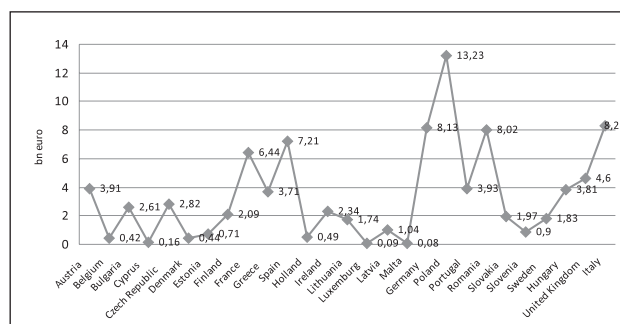


Figure 1 Funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development allocated to individual European Union countries in 2007 – 2013 in bn euro

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Obrázok 1 Prostriedky z Európskeho poľnohospodárskeho fondu pre rozvoj vidieka alokované v jednotlivých členských štátoch Európskej únie v rokoch 2007 – 2013 v mld eur

Zdroj: vlastné spracovanie autora na základe údajov poskytnutých Ministerstvom poľnohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

package. On the other hand, Ireland is not implementing any measure within this package^{1/} while Estonia and Portugal only two measures each. As many as 18 countries have launched all accessible measures in the framework of the last Leader axis, on the other hand the least number was initiated in Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia – only 3 measures each. Moreover, all countries except Luxemburg initiated technical assistance programme, which engages public means in proper implementation and management of launched rural development programmes. It should be also noticed that the selection of measures in the framework of individual priority axes is greatly diversified. In Sweden, great emphasis was put on the measures within economic and social axes, while the measures within the environmental axis were practically disregarded, whereas they are particularly important e.g. in Portugal. It is also worth mentioning that some countries, like e.g. Italy, Spain and Germany, developed programmes of rural development on regional level, which has its implications for the number of measures shown in Table 1, whereas other countries, including Poland have been implementing a single programme in the scale of the whole country.

Supporting rural development in Poland in the framework of Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013

The scope and form of assistance for rural areas in Poland in 2007 – 2013 have been stated by the Rural Development Programme (RDP for 2007 – 2013). The main objectives comprise in the first place upgrading competitiveness of agricultural holdings through their restructuring, improvement of the environment and landscape condition but also refining the living standards of rural communities and promoting diversification of economic activities. RDP for 2007 – 2013 has been realized in the whole area of Poland and all measures are financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and domestic public funds.

Apart from the funding received from the European Union, financial support of rural development in Poland requires also involvement of domestic public funds or, in case of some measures, also private means. The amount of funding

^{1/} In case of countries which do not allocate the required minimum funds to measures within the third axis, the measures are supported by axis IV – Leader

Table 1 Number of measures implemented by individual European Union countries in the framework of their rural development programmes

Country (1)	Axis (2) 1	Axis (2) 2	Axis (2) 3	Axis (2) 4	Technical assistance (3)	Total Implemented measures (4)
	max 17	max 13	max 8	max 5		
Austria	9	10	8	5	1	33
Belgium	8	6	7	5	1	27
Bulgaria	8	5	5	5	1	24
Cyprus	11	9	5	5	1	31
Czech Republic	10	9	7	5	1	32
Denmark	11	7	6	4	1	29
Estonia	11	7	2	4	1	25
Finland	6	6	8	5	1	26
France	13	10	7	5	1	36
Greece	12	10	7	4	1	34
Spain	14	12	8	5	1	40
Holland	8	4	7	5	1	25
Ireland	4	3	0	3	1	11
Lithuania	10	9	4	3	1	27
Luxemburg	7	4	7	5	0	23
Latvia	11	6	4	4	1	26
Malta	10	2	3	5	1	21
Germany	13	12	8	5	1	39
Poland	11	6	6	3	1	27
Portugal	14	12	2	3	1	32
Romania	9	4	3	5	1	22
Slovakia	8	9	6	3	1	27
Slovenia	11	3	4	5	1	24
Sweden	6	3	8	5	1	23
United Kingdom	10	8	8	5	1	32
Hungary	11	10	8	5	1	35
Italy	14	13	8	5	1	41

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Przegląd unijnych programów rozwoju obszarów wiejskich na lata 2007 – 2013, Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, Warszawa 2010 (Review of the EU rural development programmes for 2007 – 2013, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Zdroj: vlastné spracovanie autora na základe Prehľadu programov rozvoja vidieka EÚ pre roky 2007 – 2013, Ministerstvo poľnohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

Počet opatrení implementovaných jednotlivými členskými štátmi Európskej únie v rámci ich programov rozvoja vidieka

(1) členský štát, (2) prioritná os, (3) technická pomoc, (4) celkový počet implementovaných opatrení

Tabulka 1**Table 2** Breakdown of the RDP for 2007 – 2013 budget by individual axes for 2007 – 2013 [euro] as of 31-08-2010

Axis no. (1)	Axis name (2)	Means from EAFRD (3)	Domestic expenditure in euro (4)	Predicted maximum amounts of private contribution in euro (5)	Total cost in euro (6)
I	Upgrading of competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sector (7)	5 630 649 500.00	1 855 549 722.00	5 636 959 311.00	13 123 158 533.00
2	Improvement of the natural environment and rural areas (8)	4 302 801 216.00	1 074 311 415.00	0.00	5 377 112 631.00
2I	Quality of life in rural areas (9)	2 635 527 440.00	864 533 702.00	1 369 163 600.00	4 869 224 742.00
IV	Leader	630 000 000.00	157 500 000.00	403 115 385.00	1 190 615 385.00
	Technical assistance (10)	199 950 000.00	66 650 000.00	0.00	266 600 000.00
Total (11)	TOTAL	13 398 928 156.00	4 018 544 839.00	7 409 238 296.00	24 826 711 291.00

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the data supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Zdroj: vlastné spracovanie autora založené na údajoch poskytnutých z Ministerstva poľnohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

Prehľad rozpočtu Programu rozvoja vidieka pre roky 2007 – 2013 podľa jednotlivých prioritných osí k 31. 8. 2010 v eurách

(1) číslo osi, (2) názov osi, (3) prostriedky z EAFRD, (4) domáce výdavky, (5) predpokladné maximálne množstvo príspevku z privátneho sektora, (6) celkové náklady, (7) zvýšenie konkurencieschopnosti poľnohospodárstva a lesného hospodárstva, (8) zlepšenie životného prostredia a vidieckej krajiny, (9) kvalita života vo vidieckych oblastiach, (10) technická pomoc, (11) spolu

Tabulka 2

allocated to individual axes in the framework of Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013 in euro and broken down by public expenditure (EU and domestic) and predicted private expenditure is presented in Table 2.

The major part of funding in the RDP for 2007 – 2013 framework, total of almost 7.5 bn euro (the EU and domestic means) was allocated to axis I "Upgrading of agricultural and forestry sectors competitiveness", so called economic axis, in the framework of which over 13 bn euro, including private means, can be spent. Activities planned within this axis aim at providing assistance in restructuring agricultural holdings and strengthening real capital. The measures are meant to support individual subjects in bearing necessary costs accompanying adjustment of agricultural holdings to increasing Community requirements and growing competitive pressure of agricultural producers from other Community countries and third countries. The assistance is important because of low specialization level of agricultural holdings, their underfinancing in the sphere of agricultural production infrastructure and great dispersion of farmlands, which causes lower effectiveness of production. Instruments in the framework of this axis target also improvement of competitiveness of food industry and agricultural sector supporting enterprises in the area of upgrading quality of production, rural infrastructure and forming agricultural producer groups. The measures grouped in this axis are also meant to contribute to raising the level of education and qualifications of rural dwellers by means of professional training, informative and educational endeavours and technical assistance. It should be also noticed that the support provided so far in the first place relied on preparation of farmers for the integration into the European Union and enabling them to use the Community assistance. Technical assistance should presently focus on challenges facing farmers concerning modern farming methods and farm management, implementing cross-compliance principles, application of standards of production, public health, animal welfare, food quality and the use of good agricultural and forestry practice. Increasing competitiveness of agriculture requires land consolidation, technical modernization of farms, development of production services but also constructing efficient production and trade chains. In the framework of this axis as much as 83% of all expenses were planned for the measures aiming at modernization of agricultural holdings, increasing added value of basic agricultural and forestry production and early retirement benefits.

Almost 5.4 bn euro of public funds were planned for the measures in the framework of axis 2. Total of all planned financial expenses is lower in this axis because no private expenditure has been predicted. Measures aim at supporting farming in mountainous and other less favoured areas, afforestation of ploughlands and other lands, agri-environmental programme and endeavours supporting reconstruction of forestry production potential destroyed by natural disasters. Poland stands out against the other European Union countries due to good condition of the natural environment and biodiversity, therefore supporting instruments and encouragement for farmers are supposed to favour and improve the conditions of habitats and sanctuaries of various species.

Measures aiming at diversification of agricultural activities towards undertaking or developing non-agricultural or agriculture-related activities by farmers, improving economic competitiveness, development of entrepreneurship and labour market, extending some elements of technical infrastructure

and fulfilling social and cultural needs of rural dwellers are implemented in the framework of axis three. Improvement of the quality of life in rural areas is therefore the objective which assumes not only economic and social development of agricultural holdings (strengthening their economic potential, restructuring and modernization but also creating favourable living conditions understood as high quality of the environment and landscape, as well as social and technical infrastructure. The first group of measures in the framework of discussed axis is associated with diversification of economic activity. Due to the unemployment level in Poland these instruments provide a good chance for rural dwellers because they contribute to jobs securing and incomes owing to pursuing off-farm activities. Tendencies observed currently indicate that agriculture will increasingly absorb smaller labour resources. Urban centres, where rural dwellers can find jobs or education will play a crucial role in rural development. In these centres they will also fulfil their health and cultural needs. In this context it seems very important to support development of these functions of small towns and communities which will fulfil these needs. This applies in the first place to the localities participating in the restructuring process in rural areas. Budget for axis 3 was established on the level of over 3.5 bn euro, of which the largest expenditure, over 1 bn euro from public funds (Community and domestic funds) and over 1 bn euro of private expenditure, was planned for the measure which will help starting and development of micro enterprises in rural areas.

Leader axis makes possible realization and implementation of primarily social axis objectives. The basic objective of the discussed axis is activation of rural dwellers, which requires including local social partners' initiatives in planning and their implementation. The objective will be accomplished through building human potential in rural areas, increase in potential acquisition of financial means and their utilization but also owing to better management of local resources. Leader involves preparing a local rural development strategy (LRDS) by local rural community but also realization of projects resulting from this strategy. Representatives of local communities form so called local activity group (LAG), which according to the adopted strategy and criteria selects the projects for realization. It should be emphasized that such initiative assumes increasing the coherence of locally made decisions and quality of management but also strengthening social capital and contributes to implementation of innovative solutions in a given region. Formulating local strategies of activity should aid better utilization of possessed human and natural resources, but also help to adjust the directions of activities to the needs of subjects which operate in a given area. In the framework of discussed RDP for 2007 – 2013 priority axes, the least share of funds, only 800 million euro, was planned just for this axis, whereas within the axis itself the highest funding was allocated to the measure involving implementation of local development strategies.

A total amount of funding from public funds (from EAFRD and domestic means) in the framework of RDP 2007 – 2013 is almost 17.5 bn euro and together with planned co-financing in the framework of some measures financed by private subjects in the framework of this programme may reach almost 25 bn euro.^{2/}

^{2/} In 2007 – 2013 the actual sum allocated for expenses is about 14.4 bn euro because almost 3 bn euro must be spent on the commitments made in the previous period of the programme in the framework of Rural Development Plan for 2004 – 2006

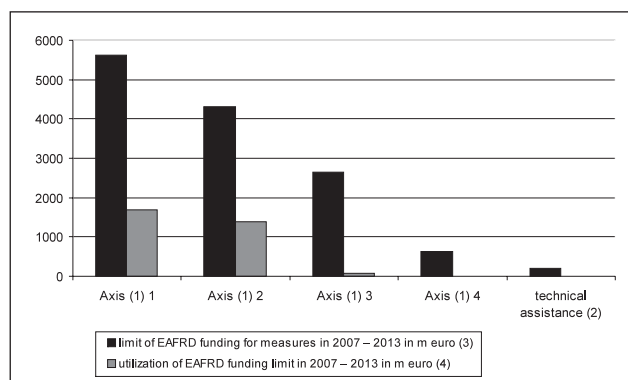


Figure 2 Utilization of funds from EAFRD within respective RDP 2007 – 2013 axes, as of 31. 8. 2010

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data supplied by the ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Obrázok 2 Využitie prostriedkov z EAFRD v rámci jednotlivých prioritných osí Programu rozvoja vidieka 2007–2013 k 31. 8. 2010
Zdroj: vlastné spracovanie autora na základe údajov poskytnutých z Ministerstva poľnohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka
(1) prioritná os, (2) technická pomoc, (3) limit finančných prostriedkov z EAFRD pre dané odvetvie pre roky 2007–2013 v mil. eur, (4) využitie prostriedkov z EAFRD v mil. eur

Status of Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013 implementation in Poland

Rural Development Programme for 2007 – 2013 was adopted during a meeting of the Committee on Rural Development of the European Commission in July 2007, whereas in September of the same year it was given the go-ahead by the decision of the European Communities.^{3/} Absorption of the funds originating from EAFRD in the framework of individual RDP 2007 – 2013 axes as of 31. 8. 2010 is shown in Figure 2.

As at the day of the analysis and in absolute terms, almost 1.7 bn euro has been paid from EAFRD in the framework of axis 1 – upgrading of competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sectors. The amount constitutes almost 30% of the EAFRD budget utilization. Concerning the measures attached to this axis the most of funds, from EAFRD i.e. almost 2.6 bn zlotys was spent on “Early retirement benefits”, which is a measure targeting a large group of potential beneficiaries involving regular payments on the basis of decision granting the benefits. In this context it should be noticed that the other measure within axis 1 which registered the highest value of allocated funding, 2.0 bn zlotys was “Modernization of agricultural holdings”, which, unlike retirement benefits, requires realization of some definite project and co-financing from private funds.

The next axis within which the highest amount of money was spent from EAFRD was axis 2. As at the day of the analysis, almost 1.4 bn euro was spent constituting 32.28% of utilization of these means. However, such considerable utilization of the budgetary limit is connected with specificity of some assistance measures realized within this axis, in case of which payment is made only when beneficiaries fulfil some definite criteria and an appropriate decision is taken or a contract is signed (they do not require co-financing from private funds). These actions include, among others, a measure supporting farming in mountainous and other less favoured areas within which the highest payment from EAFRD,

i.e. 3.2 bn zlotys, was made. The number of applications submitted within this axis, as well as the number of signed contracts or decisions issued were also the highest.

On the other hand little financial means from EAFRD, only 3.17% have been utilized so far within the third axis, i.e. the one whose objective was improvement of quality of life in rural areas. Among the measures implemented within this axis the highest amount of funding from EAFRD, almost 150 m zlotys was spent on projects involving diversification of agricultural activities towards non-agricultural activities or agriculture-related activities undertaken or developed by farmers, farmer households or farmer couples. A new and important measure within the discussed axis is “Creation and development of micro enterprises” as it provides conditions for diversification of economic activities and improvement of employment opportunities, therefore contributing to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas. However, its primary objective is increase of economic competitiveness of rural areas, provision of conditions for entrepreneurship development and improvement of job availability. In result it should contribute to increased employment opportunities in rural areas and therefore to a decrease in unemployment. Despite the ambitious objectives assigned to this measure and in spite of a significant potential impact on rural development resulting from this measure implementation, applications are verified far too slowly. As at the date of the analysis, only 2034 contracts for project financing were signed from among over 15 thousand submitted applications, whereas only 520 project accounts for a total amount of 51 m zlotys were settled (almost 37 m zlotys came from EAFRD).

The least amount of funding in the framework of discussed programme, only 1.17% of funds from EAFRD and 1.69% for technical assistance has been so far utilized within axis 4 – Leader. From among the applications submitted within Leader axis the largest funds, over 57 m zlotys were spent within the measure concerning operation of local activity groups. Almost 30 m zlotys were granted by EAFRD.

Conclusions

Measures realized in the RDP 2007 – 2013 were grouped into axes, whose implementation is supposed to aid enhancing competitiveness of agriculture and forestry through supporting restructuring, development, innovation, improvement of the natural environment condition and rural areas owing to supported land management, improvement of quality of life in rural areas but also due to support for diversification of economic activities and activation of rural dwellers through building social potential in the country. In Poland, within axis 1 great emphasis was put on the measures connected with modernization of agricultural holdings and infrastructure connected with agriculture, agricultural products processing, marketing but also on food quality assurance systems. Great importance has been attached also to measures aiming at adjustment of farmers' age structure and farm area structure and those connected with human capital development. Due to well preserved natural resources, within axis 2 strong emphasis was put on environmental measures (e.g. agri-environmental programme, assistance for Natura 2000 areas). The assistance targets both the areas with high natural amenities and the areas threatened with severe environmental pressure from agriculture. Another important measure implemented in Poland within this axis is assistance for less favoured areas (LFA). Objectives of axis 3 should be realized complementary to the

^{3/} Ever since the moment of RDP for 2007 – 2013 adoption by the European Commission the programme has undergone various modifications. The latest change was accepted by the European Commission in March 2010.

activities of other funds. Measures available within the discussed axis supplement the priorities determined within two previous axes and they should positively affect the inhabitants of rural areas in a synergic way. The last axis in the frame of discussed programme is Leader axis, whose realization over a longer period of time is supposed to help realize the aims of Renewed Lisbon Strategy and Göteborg Strategy (among others increasing number of jobs and economic diversity in rural areas). Realization of measures attached to this axis should lead to strengthening social capital in rural areas but also to improved organization and management on the local level. Moreover, implementation of local strategies should contribute to ensuring sustainable development of rural areas.

Evaluating Rural Development Plan for 2007 – 2013 at the current stage of its realization, one should say that a considerable interest in selected measures may be observed, which translates into a big number of submitted applications and growing number of contracts signed. As at the day of the analysis already over 16.3 bn zlotys has been paid, whereas EAFRD fund utilization reached 23.61%. Utilization of funding will be growing with subsequent cyclical payments (as in case of early retirement benefits) or realization and settlement of supported investments, but also in connection with new calls for applications for the EU funding. So far, the highest amount of funding, over 4 bn zlotys, has been paid within the measure supporting farming in rural areas and other less favoured areas and for early retirement benefits – over 3.4 bn zlotys. Within these measures the payment of financial means is made when the beneficiary fulfils some determined criteria and apposite decision has been made by the institution implementing a given measure. Therefore beneficiaries do not have to submit any complicated documents, realize any definite project or co-finance the investment from their own funds. Considering the investment measures, the highest utilization of financial means, 2.78 bn zlotys was registered within the measure concerning modernization of agricultural holdings.

On the other hand, while analysing the structure of payments realized within the limits of funding from EAFRD, one should state that as of the days of the analysis the major part of funding from EAFRD was used for the measure supporting farming in mountain areas and other less favoured areas – 42.40%, subsequently modernization of agricultural holdings – 35.77%, early retirement benefits – 34.38% and also agri-environmental programme – 26.89%. Proportionally the lowest funding was spent within the measure “Implementing Local Development Strategies” – 0.01% and on the measure “Information and promotion activities” – 0.03%.

Final assessment of the effect of individual measures implementation on the condition of Polish agriculture and rural areas will be possible only at a later date when realization of all projects and payments will be completed. Undoubtedly, these activities will contribute to modernization of rural areas both as places for living and work, they will allow for better employment opportunities for rural dwellers both in the agricultural sector and outside it, but they will also influence improvement of the natural environment and landscape condition. It should be also emphasized that although the discussed programme is an important instrument of assistance for rural areas, it does not finish the list of measures which assist Polish rural areas. Attention should be paid also to the instruments implemented in the framework of coherence policy.

Súhrn

V EÚ je pomoc pre rozvoj vidieka v rokoch 2007 – 2013 zabezpečovaná v rámci Európskeho poľnohospodárskeho fondu pre rozvoj vidieka. Rozsah a forma podpory vo vidieckych oblastiach Poľska v tomto období boli stanovené Programom rozvoja vidieka. Jeho hlavné ciele zahŕňajú v prvom rade zvýšenie konkurencieschopnosti poľnohospodárskych podnikov prostredníctvom ich reštrukturalizácie, zlepšenie stavu životného prostredia a krajiny, ale tiež zlepšenie životných podmienok vidieckych obyvateľov a podporu diverzifikácie ekonomických činností. Okrem fondov z Európskej únie sú pre finančnú podporu rozvoja vidieka v Poľsku dôležité aj domáce fondy a v niektorých prípadoch tiež súkromné prostriedky. Pri vyhodnocovaní Programu rozvoja vidieka pre roky 2007 – 2013 v aktuálnom stave jeho realizácie je potrebné povedať, že môžeme vidieť značný záujem o vybrané opatrenia medzi obyvateľmi vidieka, pozorovateľný počtom podaných žiadostí a rastúcim počtom podpísaných zmlúv. Ku dňu spracovania analýzy bolo vyplatených 16,3 mld. PLN a využitie EAFRD dosiahlo 23,61 %. Využitie fondov sa bude zvyšovať s postupnými splátkami alebo realizáciou a vyúčtovaním investícií oprávnených pre pomoc a tiež v súvislosti s novými výzvami na podávanie žiadostí v rámci fondov EÚ. Na druhej strane, pri analýze štruktúry realizovaných platieb v rámci EAFRD je možné skonštatovať, že väčšina prostriedkov z EAFRD bola vyplatená na opatrenia podporujúce poľnohospodárstvo v horských oblastiach a iných znevýhodnených oblastiach, modernizáciu poľnohospodárskych podnikov, skorý odchod farmárov do dôchodku a agro-environmentálne programy. Najmenej prostriedkov bolo vyplatených v rámci opatrení „Implementácia miestnej stratégie rozvoja“ a „Vzdelávacie a propagačné aktivity.“

Kľúčové slová: spoločná poľnohospodárska politika, fondy EÚ, rozvoj vidieka
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