

Structural Funds of Polish Agriculture

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Abstract—The research objective of the project and article “The impact of Structural Funds on the growth of competitiveness of Polish agriculture” is to assess competitiveness of regions in Poland from the perspective of Polish agriculture by analysing the efficiency of the use of Structural Funds, the economic procedure of their distribution and the regulatory and organisational framework under the Rural Development Programme (RDP). It must be stressed that defining the scope of research in the above manner limits the analysis only to the part of Structural Funds directed to support Polish agriculture.

Keywords—Structural Funds, Polish agriculture, Rural Development Programme.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE conducted research, which includes an analysis of consistency of legislation regulating the RDP, has shown already at this early stage some practical economic effects of using the Funds. Its primary objective is, however, also to show possible directions for amending Polish law to achieve a better and more efficient distribution of Structural Funds by agricultural administration service. For the purpose of these research three EU regulations, two Polish acts of Parliament, more than thirty ministerial regulations, one official RDP notice and several selected quasi-legislative documents, such as applications and instructions for potential beneficiaries, were analysed at the initial stage. In the next stage of this research, other legal acts will be analysed including, in particular, ministerial regulations, which are the most detailed documents with the greatest impact on legal reality.

The research project analyses the impact of legal and organisational mechanisms on spending the Structural Funds earmarked for the development of Polish agriculture, and, first and foremost, on coherence between these mechanisms and the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy. The effectiveness of legal regulations strongly determines the economic efficiency of the use of Structural Funds. Comparing legal mechanisms related to efficiency of the Structural Funds use will not only enable a better implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy in the regions, but, more importantly, it will show a possibility of streamlining the administrative process of distributing the funds.

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II. STRUCTURAL FUNDS OF POLISH AGRICULTURE – LEGAL ASPECTS

The initial legal analysis has already shown that the process of distributing the EU Structural Funds has influenced the increase of competitiveness of Polish farming and the manner it has changed the Polish agricultural law regulating this field of Polish farmers' activity. The attempt was also made at answering the question whether the actual effects of agricultural policy, which is also implemented through the issued legal norms, correspond to the declared objectives of this policy.

The aims defining the intended use of Structural Funds are set out in the Rural Development Programme for the years 2007-2013 [1]. In 2004, after the accession to the European Union, the Rural Development Plan 2004-2006 was adopted in Poland, which regulated some important legal instruments such as: early retirement, agri-environmental measures, afforestation of agricultural land, support for the so-called less-favoured areas (LFAs), aid to agricultural producer groups, technical assistance. In addition to the Rural Development Plan, a Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernisation of food sector and rural development” entered into force as part of the Rural Development Plan. The Sectoral Operational Programme covered e.g. land reparation and diversification of agricultural activity to provide alternative sources of income for farmers. Detailed effects of implementation of the above programmes have already been subject to analysis by economists.

The evolution of rural development policy led to adopting in 2007 the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. In Poland the main source of national law in the area of rural development policy is the Act of Parliament of 7 March 2007 on supporting rural development with the use of funds of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development [2], which defines the tasks and competences of the authorities and organisational units in supporting rural development, as well as the conditions and mode of granting assistance, disbursement and refunding of financial assistance under RDP measures. In the beginning of our research we encountered the first legal problem or, to avoid strong wording, a Constitutional law issue. RDP in Poland is in force pursuant to the Notice of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, an instrument which is not listed in the catalogue of sources of universally binding law set out in the Constitution. All the remaining detailed regulations relating to individual measures refer to RDP. The intricacy of the above construction raises a number of legal doubts, in particular in relation to the effectiveness of the references to

the RDP included in the regulations and the legal effects of non-compliance with the requirements of a notice, an instrument which may not serve to define the rights and obligations of citizens. Implementing the Rural Development Programme through a legal act which does not have the nature of a universally binding law should be assessed sceptically, because of the confusion it creates and of the lack of a precisely defined legal position of the Programme.

In order to distribute efficiently structural aid prepared for farmers, in addition to the act mentioned above a number of other acts were issued and several dozen regulations. It must be stressed that we deal here with over twenty measures of different nature including also some investment-type measures. One basic regulation was issued for each of these measures setting out rules and procedures of granting aid, as well as other regulations, where necessary, to streamline the disbursement of funds and control their spending [3]. A number of other documents of a non-normative nature were also issued such as instructions and explanations. Publications of such type are to increase the understanding of legal acts by farmers. In most cases the publications serve their intended purpose. It must be noted, however, that situations exist where there is a discrepancy between the content of an instruction and the binding regulation serving as the legal basis for a given measure.

The initially analysed legal acts have shown that the rules of granting and distributing funds are correct. The provisions of the EU regulations were correctly transposed into Polish law with respect to the most important issues they covered, both taking into account the procedure of awarding aid and defining the circle of beneficiaries. Despite the above positive assessment of the basic regulations, one may not, however, positively assess the whole legislation regulating the distribution of Structural Funds for Polish farming.

A substantial legal hindrance is a large number of amendments to the regulations governing the distribution of aid. For instance, the Regulation on early retirement was amended six times between 2007 and 2010, which gives on average two amendments a year. For such a short legal act it is a substantial number of changes to be made during the process of granting assistance. The most difficult issue here is the imprecision of legal provisions across different periods of time. Also, introducing amendments to RDP and amending the regulations do not take place in the same time. For several months there exists a discrepancy between the updated RDP and the yet unamended regulation. One should understand and accept a complex procedure of amending RDP and a lack of certainty concerning the amendments' final shape which depends on EU authorities. These amendments, however, should not cause a delay in their incorporation into the regulations concerning specific measures. The other legal acts on awarding material aid are also amended with similar frequency. The relevant act of Parliament itself has already been amended seven times. One may comprehend and accept the explanations of the law-maker pointing to the constant evolution of the European law and the necessity of amending

regulations due to the changing values of financial aid. It must be indicated here, however, that a large number of amendments do not result only from the two above-mentioned reasons and are largely an effect of implementing the current agricultural policy or, what needs to be said, correcting legislative errors. The changes are not purely of cosmetic nature but often completely transform the rules of granting assistance, define the group of beneficiaries differently and set the size of awarded aid at completely different levels. Such amendments, when they are introduced, together with unclear transitional provisions, result in legal chaos and lead to instability of the law. Introducing only necessary amendments and only those that may increase the efficiency of a given measure is generally recommended here. Stability of the law regulating legal and economic environment is a supreme value. Sufficient to say that, a large number of court cases filed by discontented potential beneficiaries or current beneficiaries concerns the changing law and its unclear interpretation. The number of suits brought to the courts and submitted claims should raise concern, especially when considering the temporal relationship between the length of adjudicating cases by courts of law and the duration of procedures for granting aid from Structural Funds.

It should be pointed out that apart from the excessive number of amendments, the following significant issues have emerged related to lawmaking and problems in terms of coherence of the legal system: the need to put order to terminology used in the regulations, especially in legal definitions (e.g. in the Regulation concerning the measure Setting up of young farmers in para. 2, subpara. 1, item 1 the requirement related to „agricultural real estate having an area of at least 1 ha of arable land” is defined imprecisely), the need to adjust certain provisions to the current RDP (an example will be provided later in the article), the need to amend certain provisions in order to avoid doubts arising in connection to their wording. The rules set out in para. 18, subpara. 1, item 5 of the Regulation concerning the measure setting up of young farmers may be cited as an example here. The requirement of being covered by social insurance for farmers does not derive from Community regulations. Applying this requirement may be a limitation for a group of persons who wish to start agricultural activity but may not be covered by agricultural insurance under the existing law. Stiffening of the rules resulting from the negotiations with the European Commission cannot be the only indicator of fulfillment of the lawmaker's intent.

Such activity should lead to increasing complementarity of different provisions and eliminating some of the existing internal contradictions.

Substantial work must be done, however, to make specific legislative solutions more precise and eliminate some of the errors. These specific legal solutions will only be signalled in this paper to be fully developed in the final dissertation as the result of conducted research. The proposed detailed amendments have a different nature and scope. Some amendments clearly indicate errors, which are serious legal

flaws, some have been described above, some prove discrepancies between different acts and documents, while other show only weaknesses and flaws related to legal order and drafting.

One example of such flaws is the regulations concerning one of the most popular measures Modernisation of agricultural holdings. Para. 2, subpara. 1, item 4 of the Regulation concerning this measure introduces age limits for natural persons who may apply for aid. It must be indicated that neither Community regulations, nor the RDP (which indicates that a person must be of full age and not having attained the retirement age) introduce such implicit limitation. Assuming that the term "retirement age" included in RDP should be understood by the applicant in accordance with Article 19, para. 1, item 1 of the Act of Parliament of 20 December 1990 on social insurance for farmers (consolidated text Dz. U. of 2008, No 50, item 291, as amended), which stipulates that: „An insured person who fulfills jointly the following conditions: has attained the retirement age; the retirement age for women being 60, and for men 65; shall be entitled to agricultural retirement". The amendment of the relevant provision in the Regulation should be considered, adjusting it to the requirements of RDP in accordance with the effective provisions on social insurance for farmers set out in the above cited Act. The above-mentioned Regulation may be considered as contradictory to the binding Act of Parliament.

Another example concerning the same measure may be the rule included in para. 2, subpara. 1, item 1, which introduces, similarly as in the other measures, the requirement of attaining a direct surplus from agricultural activity of at least 4 ESU. Regardless of the fact that a large number of farmers are not aware of the actual size of this unit, it should be noted that using this value seems to be time-consuming for the applicant and quite difficult despite the set of explanations included in the instructions prepared by the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture.

It should be considered whether the solutions in RDP should not be changed by shifting the focus and attaching more importance to the description of a holding's development included in the Farm Development Plan. The data included in the Plan are sufficient to document the economic viability of a farm and they also cover each individual farm. A plan developed for one individual measure could be modified for the purposes of any subsequent applications for aid and could serve as the basis for granting funds. Such solution will not only speed up the process of granting aid to farmers but will prevent the creation of several divergent Farm Development Plans referring to one and the same production unit.

The interrelations between the European and Polish regulations on Natura 2000 network and aid schemes, including in particular agri-environmental programmes, also require a clear definition. The procedure of applying for the aid under the Measure "Agri-environmental programme", defined in the Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 26 February 2009 on detailed conditions and mode of granting financial aid for the measure

"Agri-environmental programme" included in RDP 2007-2013 (Dz. U. of 2009, No 33, item 262, as amended), lists Package 5. Protection of endangered bird species and natural habitats in Natura 2000 areas as one of the packages under which agri-environmental obligations are fulfilled. The requirements described in the Regulation repeat in some of their parts the elements of conservation measures plans. The content of agri-environment plans drafted by potential beneficiaries (especially in their part containing a description of a natural habitat or a birds breeding site, or a grazing plan when the area is used as a pasture or used as hay and pasture land, as set out in Annex 11, part II, item 4 of the above-mentioned Regulation), may prove identical with the conservation measures plans in their part including a description of the presence of the species subject to protection, their conservation status, threats, requirements and possibilities of their conservation, and a description of geographical and natural conditions (para. 3, subpara. 2, item b-c of the Regulation of the Minister of Environment of 17 February 2010 on drafting conservation measures plan for a Natura 2000 site – Dz. U. of 2010, No 34, item 186). The above conditions, whose individual analysis is quite cost-consuming for a potential beneficiary, may limit possibilities of his applying for aid. In order to streamline the procedure and to use every conservation measures plan more effectively, as it is an act of local law, it is recommended to work on complementarity of the main possible elements of agri-environment plans and conservation measures plans. It should be possible to take directly the elements defined in conservation measures plans and use them for reference when drafting the agri-environment plans. The descriptions of natural habitats subject to conservation contained in conservation measures plans should also be a part of agri-environment plan. The beneficiary should be able to make use of conservation measures plans as these plans are an act of local law drafted by the experts using a complex procedure. Making the content of conservation measures plans linked with the content of agri-environment plans may facilitate the process of funds absorption.

Another problem emerging at this stage of conducting research is RDP's inconsistency with the existing regulations. While accepting a complicated legislative procedure of adopting RDP and the discrepancies present in the period between amending RDP and subsequent amending of relevant regulations, it should be noted that some of the obligations and requirements foreseen in the regulations are justified neither by Community legislation, nor by RDP. With this in mind, the existing discrepancies should be eliminated as soon as possible by amending such regulations. In addition, also some of the solutions foreseen in RDP derive from the adopted assumptions and so they can be modified, but in this case any changes should be first agreed with the European Commission. This, in general, also influences instability of the law. This modification is worth recommending even stronger with a view to the next programming period.

In order to streamline and speed up the process of

distribution of assistance funding both in the current and in the future programming period, shortening of time limits foreseen for different procedures in the process of granting assistance should be considered. Analysing the guidelines included in RDP and the actual time necessary to handle an application, a possible shortening of certain procedural time limits should be considered on the side of the Agency handling the applications. Some of these time limits are much longer than the limits foreseen by the Code of Administrative Procedure. Farmers, for example, after preparing a correct application expect some speedy decision-making and speedy granting of financial assistance. The lengthiness of the process of granting funds leads often to its inefficiency. Shortening of the time limits should speed up the process, what is awaited by potential beneficiaries. When shortening time limits for different procedures, it should be carefully considered whether every procedure is justified and the time necessary to perform each activity should be assessed. Reasonable adjusting of the time limits to the changing reality will enable a faster handling of cases, preventing in the same time the accusations of excessive lengthiness and bias.

A lack of consistency in regulating the amount of data required from a potential beneficiary has also been observed. Taking into account the reporting and monitoring requirements, as well as other legal provisions, the question should be asked whether all these data are necessary to include in the applications. The binding nature of the application, from which legal sanctions derive, implies verifiability of the data. It is recommended for the data to be included elsewhere and not in the main documents. This change should facilitate the process of filling out applications and shorten the applications appropriately. Currently filling out the applications which are several dozen pages long is a major hindrance. It should also be considered whether it is justified to use all the recommended annexes. Some of them can be incorporated into the application form, what will largely reduce the amount of documents to be filled out. Also some of the annexes could be shortened to include the necessary minimum.

A substantial amount of bureaucratic red tape connected to the process of obtaining assistance funds and later obtaining the assistance payments must also be noted. Not every administrative solution is a consequence of EU requirements. Adding red tape to the process requires also maintaining the extended structure of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture.

While merely signalling the other possibilities of using the Structural Funds in farming, one should also ask why not all farmers reach for this money. For instance, only 1.4 million beneficiaries out of 2.1 million of agricultural holdings in Poland apply for the aid which is easiest to obtain, the so-called direct payments.

III. STRUCTURAL FUNDS OF POLISH AGRICULTURE – ECONOMICS ASPECTS

The differences in transfers to individual voivodeships (provinces) are quite large. This is obviously an effect of the size of different provinces and their specific social and economic conditions. These differences are visible, for instance, in the surface of areas eligible for direct payments (almost 20% of funds in the RDP budget are earmarked to supplement direct payments) and in the size and type of less favoured areas (LFAs), the budget for the Measure concerning LFAs being almost 30% of the RDP budget. The size and type of LFAs is also a reason for a significant variation of the level of assistance granted to individual regions, depending on their farming conditions. As shown by several studies devoted to the previous programming period „the amount of RDP 2004–2006 funds per one rural inhabitant varies significantly across different regions: from over PLN 2,600 in Podlaskie province to approx. PLN 280 in Silesian province (nearly a 9-fold difference).”

The system of assistance for Polish farming has undergone some thorough changes and reconstruction since 1 May 2004. The possibility of using the Structural Funds has opened some new, never before seen development opportunities for Polish agriculture. The 2004-2006 programming period brought the first measurable effects of using the EU subsidies in Polish farming. The new financial perspective 2007-2013, which is currently in the process of distribution, has attracted great interest of potential beneficiaries. It must also be admitted that it is more strongly promoted in the media which also influences the increase in competitiveness through better access to information. In order to analyse competitiveness one must inevitably look at strategic management – competitive strategies of regions must be studied. Development strategies elaborated by management science are a good example of implementation of the EU cohesion policy applying the principles of subsidiarity, concentration, partnership and cooperation as well as sustainability of income. The question arises whether these strategies are used today in distributing funds for Polish agriculture?

The competitiveness of a region means a sustainable advantage of one region over other regions. The competitiveness of Polish agriculture ensures regional development through gradual improvement of the regions' economic condition, increase in competitiveness of economic entities and raising the living standards of the inhabitants. Therefore, development of regions results not only from a diversity of economic structures, accessibility by different modes of transport or business environment but also from natural environment, land use management and spatial order.

There exist five sources of regional diversification in the European Union:

- peripheral location of regions lagging behind and their insufficient supply of capital,
- low level of general and professional qualifications of their inhabitants,

- underdeveloped infrastructure,
- unfavourable structure of economy dominated by agriculture and high unemployment,
- creation of a customs union.

Each of these elements influences indirectly or directly the development of farming. Comparing the relevant indicators gives a picture of the impact of the Structural Funds on changes in the Polish agriculture. Coordinating RDP measures, including those leading to abandoning agricultural activity (e.g. afforestation of agricultural land), with the development of regions should provide a full picture of advantages and disadvantages of implementing a relevant policy of the Structural Funds distribution in Polish agriculture.

The improvement of competitiveness of Polish agriculture should take place at many different levels of development. The project has studied the issue of location (attracting investment, choice of place), the sphere of economic activity (structure and size of enterprises – including the new type of large-scale agricultural enterprises) and the quality of life of Polish farmers (a set of social conditions). The regional policy implemented under the Rural Development Programme, focused on maintaining the competitive advantage, should be directed at achieving competitive objectives that is at increasing attractiveness of a region, creating a better competitive position of its economic base and benefiting from its location. For instance, the support for LFAs should have the effect of evening out or even increasing the competitiveness of regions, but currently direct payments are used mainly for consumption instead of investment. It not only hinders the growth of competitiveness of these regions but also causes their developmental stagnation.

What should be noted is also the evolution of theory related to rural policy. First of all, such changes involve departing from rural policy based on direct support to prices and income in agriculture. Instead, farmers should receive support decoupled from current production and positive external impact of agriculture should be financed. Secondly, as observed by Jerzy Wilkin, the enhanced role of human capital, social capital and institutions is becoming increasingly important for the development of agriculture and rural areas. Other factors which are mentioned include: dissemination and implementation of the concept of sustainable development and the shift from rural policy focused on sectors to integrated policy supporting the development of agriculture and rural areas.

The assessment of the use of Structural Funds in agriculture will involve an analysis of the provisions specified in the Accession Treaty and particularly its provisions pertaining to the changes in the profile of the agricultural sector, whereby agriculture is to account for several per cent of the national economy and not 30 per cent as it is in Poland. Nearly EUR 17.2 billion was earmarked for implementation of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, with EUR 13.2 billion coming from the EU budget and the remaining part from the national funds. A question arises as to what is the impact of

the European and Polish agricultural policy on the distribution of such funds among specific regions and how such distribution influences the development of specific regions. It turns out that there are several possible answers to these questions. Finding the most appropriate one may be crucial for both formulating the new Common Agricultural Policy and negotiating the financial volume of the future budget for the years 2014-2020.

Another objective of the conducted research is the economic explanation of the Structural Funds' impact on the living standards of Polish farmers in specific regions. The use of assigned funds by managing authorities and by beneficiaries themselves differs not only in individual terms but also due to regional diversification. A question arises whether the Structural Funds are used for consumption or for investment and thus how specific measures influence the development of regions. It certainly has to be underlined that investments are made with funds under the so-called investment measures, such as Modernisation of agricultural holdings or Increasing the added value of agricultural and forestry primary products. Consumption, on the other hand, is financed with funds under non-investment measures, for instance through early retirement or LFAs as mentioned above. Apart from the above, it should be also noted that such measures lead to further fragmentation of agricultural holdings, which are divided into smaller production units. Amendments to law are of lesser significance in this case since they concern only already rare situations when farmers apply for early retirement.

Another problem is the use of direct payments by beneficiaries. Under the current system such payments are granted regardless of their potential purpose. This has detrimental effect on the growth of competitiveness measured with the value of investments made. These funds, if actually applied for, are to a large extent simply spent on current consumption needs and not on investments in skills and tools. It should be also determined whether the distribution of funds is influenced more by political or economic aspects. Which of the following has the greatest impact on the effective use of Structural Funds: legal regulations, availability of funds or the policy implemented? The answer to this question will have to be based on an analysis of experience from other European countries.

Contemporary economic problems faced by Polish agriculture which hinder the growth of its competitiveness include mainly difficulties related with organisation of work in the sector, open and disguised unemployment, limited labour market, as well as creating jobs through entrepreneurial development and non-agricultural activity. However, it should be underlined that the level of such unemployment differs depending on the region. When compared with other areas, inhabitants of rural areas still have lower levels of educational attainment and access to lower quality health care and public services. Naturally, this is changing through various measures under the Structural Funds. Moreover, one should note also the outflow of people under 30 from rural areas. In this case,

the results of the measure Setting up of young farmers seem unsatisfactory and the support apparently does not encourage young farmers to start permanent agricultural activity.

The Structural Funds should contribute to increased competitiveness of the entire agricultural sector and not individual beneficiaries only. Rural areas have insufficiently developed technical infrastructure, in terms of both available communication routes (especially the road network) as well as the sewage, gas, landline telephone and Internet networks. Without investments in agricultural environment this sector's competitiveness will still flounder. Naturally, the initiatives pursued by local self-government authorities are to be applauded but these should be intensified in the next programming period.

What undoubtedly has impact on the increased competitiveness of agriculture, and hence on the investments made under the Structural Funds, is the problem with land use planning in rural areas, and more specifically not only the lack of appropriate legal regulations, including land use plans, but also the lack of relevant economic analyses which should precede any activity and assess its potential profitability. Increase in the prices of agricultural property is another concern. Introduction of the direct payment system has discouraged farmers from selling their land. This preserves the fragmented structure of agricultural holdings and their ensuing lower competitiveness.

A separate issue which may improve the use of Structural Funds is a more strict control system, including the cross control system. The use of funds by beneficiaries should be based also on the feasibility of the presented farm development plans.

The volume of funds allotted to support the conducted measures may not be perceived as the only factor contributing to the competitiveness of Polish agriculture. Sustainable development of rural areas needs not only such funds but also a favourable environment. The measures implemented under the Structural Funds of non-agricultural purposes should be specifically used and interconnected, including the measures under the Operational Programme Human Capital. The future RDP may not be implemented irrespective of regional policy or cohesion policy. These actions should be conducted in harmony as only then it will be possible to state that the opportunities provided to Polish agriculture have been fully seized. Already it is possible to create a prospering agricultural holding, equipped with machines and yielding appropriate income. However, there has to be a good road leading to this holding, and a properly prepared area should be available as well. This example only demonstrates that competitiveness of Polish agriculture is conditional not solely on the RDP or direct payments. These measures should be perceived in a broader context.

IV. CONCLUSION

The above dissertation indicates the principal directions for change. Many administrative solutions adopted in RDP and, in consequence, also in the national regulations, do not derive directly from EU legislation and they often, to a smaller or larger extent, limit access to aid (what is frequently a conscious solution agreed with the European Commission and stemming from the need to implement the objectives set for specific measures). The conducted detailed analysis of specific legal acts shows that the above recommended changes, serving to increase efficiency, are possible. In the current debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and mainly in the negotiations concerning the level of granted assistance, the proposed changes should be taken into account and implemented in a rational manner.

The problems connected with the impact of Structural Funds on competitiveness of Polish agriculture briefly depicted above include only the most important elements of the analysis. The current picture reveals at least two contradictory economic visions. One of them is centred on increased competitiveness as a result of well-planned investment measures, creating jobs and setting up units which are able to challenge also foreign competitors. The other vision involves the impact of Structural Funds on maintenance and social security benefits, such as early retirement and other, which account for nearly 30 per cent of the RDP budget. Such measures constitute a certain reaction to the social and demographic situation in rural areas in Poland, however, they do not translate into improved economic indicators and they do not achieve the objectives set for them. It should be considered whether this type of measures, and with lower funds, actually boost competitiveness of Polish agriculture. The future RDP for the next budget period may not satisfy all as the present one was meant to, and may not limit investment measures by placing them on one level with social measures. Otherwise, we may as well strike out the word "development" from the programme's name, and replace it with "social assistance". Economic research in agriculture already some time ago has demonstrated that the best effects in terms of improved competitiveness may be achieved by concentration of funds under several major investment-type measures.

REFERENCES

- [1] The current RDP was published in the Notice of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 12 October 2007 on the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, (M.P. [Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland] of 2007, No 94, item 1035 as amended).
- [2] Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] No 64, item 427, as amended. Apart from this Act the other basic legal acts regulating the field which is the topic of the dissertation include: the Act of Parliament of 22 September 2006 on mobilisation of the European Union budget funds earmarked for financing of the Common Agricultural Policy (Dz. U. No 187, item 1381, as amended); the Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 25 March 2009 on conditions and manner of conducting checks on certain implementing entities by the Paying Agency with regard to performance of delegated tasks by these entities under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (Dz. U. No 57, item 473); the Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 18 March 2009 on distribution of the funds of the Rural

Development Programme 2007-2013 (Dz. U. No 48, item 388) and several other specific regulations which govern the granting of aid under individual measures.

- [3] The following regulations may be listed as an example here: the Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 13 December 2006 on conditions and manner of cooperation of the Minister competent for public finance with a coordinating unit and the internal auditor of a paying agency (Dz. U. No 239, item 1730); the Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of 6 December 2006 on the scope, manner and form of submitting financial data and information by paying agencies to a coordinating unit and on the time limits for their submission (Dz. U. No 229, item 1674); the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 12 August 2008 on loans from the State budget for advance funding under the Rural Development Programme (Dz. U. No 156, item 968); the Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 3 March 2009 on transferring the funds for the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy into a bank account of a paying agency (Dz. U. No 40, item 325); the Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 9 November 2006 on accrediting the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture as the paying agency in charge of mobilising the funds from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (Dz. U. No 204, item 1506, as amended).

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The project was funded by the National Science Centre in Poland.