



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

*“Development prospects for rural tourism in Europe”*

Kielce, 20 April 2012

### Declaration

**concerning the mechanisms of support for rural tourism in the European Union under the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective**

Tourism is a region-binding frame; connecting the urban with rural areas, it is one of the constituents of rural areas development. Tourism is an economic activity, which generates growth and employment, while contributing to economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence<sup>1</sup>.

Measures for the development of rural tourism and agri-tourism in the European Union are fully substantiated and extremely necessary since these sectors cover 500,000 accommodation facilities and nearly 6,500,00 accommodation places, 15-20% of which are located within agri-tourism facilities. It should be pointed out that within the last 10-15 years these sectors had an average annual increase in demand and supply at the level of 10-15% whereas the growth in the entire tourism did not exceed 4-5%<sup>2</sup>.

The most essential document that defines the common objectives for the European Union Member States, and makes it possible, at the same time, to preserve the diversity, is represented by the “Europe 2020 Strategy”<sup>3</sup>. The Strategy’s priority is to assure smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This document became one of the pillars for the formulation of directions of support for the rural areas development<sup>4</sup>, as well as the *National Reform Programmes*.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the European Commission “Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe”, COM(2010) 352, Brussels, 30.6.2010.

<sup>2</sup> Opinion of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development for the Committee on Transport and Tourism concerning Europe – the most popular tourism destination in the world – new political framework for the European tourism sector, 2010/2206(INI), 01.03.2011.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Communication on “Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (COM(2010)2020), Brussels, 03.03.2010.

<sup>4</sup> Proposal of the European Commission for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) COM(2011) 627 final, Brussels, 12.10.2011.

Poland, just like many other European countries, perceives the opportunity to combine the challenges faced by rural areas with the implementation of objectives of the new tourism policy, in particular with the implementation of its two priorities, as specified in the Communication from the European Commission of 30 June 2010 „*Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe*”, COM(2010)352, i.e.: *Stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector* and *Promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism*. The policy on tourism within rural areas should be consistent with the new Common Agricultural Policy<sup>5</sup>, including its measures aimed at sustainable territorial development (interim targets: support for employment within rural areas; promotion of economic diversity of rural areas; and promotion of structural diversity of agricultural systems) and sustainable management of natural resources. In order to support the development of tourism within rural areas, the opportunities provided by the Cohesion Policy instruments should be applied.

The support for integration of the measures taken for various economic sectors within rural areas is becoming one of the important constituents of the policy of states for these areas. Tourism within rural areas requires cooperation of numerous economic sectors, and at the same time the development of tourism and increase in tourists' traffic have direct impact on the development and competitiveness of economic entities operating within rural areas.

The support mechanisms for the development of rural tourism should promote increased employment within rural areas with a view to increasing the level of income of inhabitants of rural areas, to changing the disadvantageous demographic situation and to reducing the pressure on young people to emigrate to cities. Furthermore, the support instruments should specifically contribute to increasing the quality of human capital (including but not limited to enhancement of professional skills and qualifications of inhabitants of rural areas), activation of inhabitants of rural areas and development of the third sector within rural areas.

In order to assure further development of tourism within rural areas, it is necessary to specify the prioritised areas of support in 2014-2020. It is recommended to choose three areas of support and to specify the following primary action lines.

## **Recommendation for the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective**

### **1. Preserving the diversity of rural areas**

For the preservation of diversity of rural areas, it is recommended, in the first instance, to support the following action lines:

- 1) assurance of sustainable development of touristic rural areas, including the promotion and integration of entities and measures for the development of various forms of rural tourism;
- 2) initiation of measures for preservation of identity of rural areas, including the support for regional distinctness in the scope of plant and animal production, culture, tradition and customs, as well as regional products.

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<sup>5</sup> Communication from the European Commission “The CAP towards 2020 - Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future”, COM(2010) 672 final, 18.11.2010.

## **2. Integrated development of tourism within rural areas**

Integrated development of tourism within rural areas requires that the following action lines should be reinforced:

- 1) support for the construction and modernisation of the infrastructure that serves the development of tourism within rural areas;
- 2) integration of various sectors and entities that operate within rural areas for the increase of resource management efficiency level and increase in competitiveness, including the measures for the development of public-private partnership;
- 3) creation of high-quality tourism products and measures for the development of agri-tourism standards;
- 4) increase in the professional diversity by means of acquisition of new trades and acceleration of professionalization processes through improvements in the knowledge and skills;
- 5) vocational training of counsellors and coaches in the scope of agricultural and non-agricultural entrepreneurship by means of training, study visits and case studies.

## **3. Assurance of supply of environmental public goods**

It is recommended for the support to cover the following action lines:

- 1) sustainable management of natural resources, in particular the measures for preservation of biodiversity and landscape conservation;
- 2) adaptation to the effects of climate change and counteracting these change by means of introduction of new technologies and innovations in the production within rural areas and measures for energy efficiency;
- 3) strengthening of the public functions of rural tourism and related activities, including but not limited to agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- 4) dissemination of knowledge and practices in the field of environmental protection and cultural heritage of rural areas.

**Conference participants**

**Kielce, 20 April 2012**