

## TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY FORM IN COMMUNE OLSZTYN, POLAND

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**Abstract:** The article describes the tourist aspect of commune Olsztyn situated in the Krakowsko-Czestochowska Upland. The attractiveness of the area and the initiatives aimed at tourism development are emphasised. Also, the investments in the commune's tourism development are discussed. The funds used for the area's revitalisation in 2007-2012 are indicated with the emphasis of the significant role of EU funds contribution in the activities of commune Olsztyn.

**Key words:** tourism, commune Olsztyn, Krakowsko-Czestochowska Upland

### INTRODUCTION

The beginnings of tourism in the Krakowsko-Czestochowska Upland are dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of the long lasting tourist traditions in the region, the field of the local tourism development is poorly analysed and rarely discussed in scientific literature. Tourism is a multi-dimensional and dynamic phenomenon. It may be considered as regards the following aspects:<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>.

- spatial – tourist migrations, tourist land management and planning,
- economic – tourism market and services, economic effects of tourism development,
- psychological – human needs, tourist travel motives, aims, experiences and behaviour in the target destination,
- social – interpersonal relations, social bonds,
- cultural – tourism as a cultural function, relations between the cultures of the tourist and the local culture.

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<sup>4</sup> Nowakowska A., 2002, „Turystyka jako zjawisko społeczno – gospodarcze”, [w:] Golebski G. (red.), *Kompendium wiedzy o turystyce*, Wyd. Naukowe PWN, Warszawa-Poznań, ss. 19-42 (Nowakowska A., 2002, ‘Tourism as a social and economic phenomenon’, [in:] Golebski G. (ed.), *A Compendium of the Knowledge of Tourism*, PWN Scientific Publishing, Warsaw-Poznań, pp. 19-42.

<sup>5</sup> Golebski G., 2002, „Wstęp”, [w:] Golebski G. (red.), *Kompendium wiedzy o turystyce*, Wyd. Naukowe PWN, Warszawa-Poznań, ss. 9-12 (Golebski G., 2002, ‘Introduction’, [in:] Golebski G. (ed.), *A Compendium of the Knowledge of Tourism*, PWN Scientific Publishing, Warsaw-Poznań, pp. 9-12.

However, more and more often particular attention is paid to tourism as global economic force.<sup>6</sup> Thanks to tourism, new vacancies are created and local economy's functioning improves. Tourism is a social and economic growth factor together with such factors as industry, transport, services and trade.<sup>7</sup> In Poland, the influence of tourism on social economic development was researched by, among others, W. Kurek (1990)<sup>8</sup> and M. Drzewiecki (1980)<sup>9</sup>.

Both of the researchers noticed that tourism development may significantly influence the improvement of life standards and the economic situation of the tourist area inhabitants. It should be also emphasised that tourism brings invaluable benefits, particularly economical, to the local governments.<sup>10, 11, 12, 13</sup>. They ought to be considered for the following criteria:

- new vacancies in the tourist sector,

<sup>6</sup> Milne S., Ateljevic I., 2001, „Tourism, economic development and the global-local nexus: theory embracing complexity”, *Tourism Geographies*, 3 (4), ss. 369-393 (Milne S., Ateljevic., 2001, 'Tourism, economic development and the global-local nexus: theory embracing complexity', *Tourism Geographies*, 3 (4), pp. 369-393)

<sup>7</sup> Kowalczyk A., 2003, „Tourism as a factor of local development”, [w:] Kowalczyk A. (red.), *Geographical space at the turn of the century*, Wyd. Wydziału Geografii i Studiów Regionalnych, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa, ss. 217-222 (Kowalczyk A., 2003, 'Tourism as a factor of local development', [in:] Kowalczyk A. (ed.), *Geographical space at the turn of the century*, Geography and Regional Studies Department, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, pp. 217-222)

<sup>8</sup> Kurek W., 2004, *Turystyka na obszarach górskich Europy. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Instytut Geografii i Gospodarki Przestrzennej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków (Kurek W., 2004, *Tourism in Europe's Mountainous Areas. Selected Issues*, Institute of Geography and Spatial Management Jagiellonian University, Krakow)

<sup>9</sup> Drzewiecki M., 1980, *Rola turystyki w rozwoju ekonomicznym wsi pomorskich*, Wyd. Instytut Turystyki, Warszawa (Drzewiecki M., 1980, *The role of tourism in economic development of Pomeranian countryside*, Tourism Department Publishing, Warsaw)

<sup>10</sup> Buczak T., 2000, „Dochody podatkowe budżetu państwa z turystyki”. *Problemy turystyki*, 3 - 4, rok XXIII, ss. 5-17 (Buczak T., 2000, 'State Budget Tourism Tax Revenue'. *Tourism Issues*, 3-4, year XXIII, pp. 5-17)

<sup>11</sup> Derek M., 2005a, „Turystyka a dochody budżetowe gmin”, niepublikowany referat przygotowany na XXII Seminarium Terenowe *Warsztaty Badawcze z Geografii Turyzmu w Szczyrku*, organizowane przez Katedrę Geografii Miast i Turyzmu, Uniwersytet Łódzki, w dniach 16-18 września 2005 (Derek M., 2005a, 'Tourism and the budget revenue of Gminas', non-published paper prepared for the *XXII Outdoor Research Seminar on Geography of Tourism* in Szczyrk. Organised by the Department of Cities and Tourism Geography, University of Lodz, 16-18 September 2005)

<sup>12</sup> Derek M., 2005b, „Rozwój turystyki na obszarach wiejskich a wpływy budżetowe gmin”, w: Sawicki, B., Bergier, J. (red.). *Uwarunkowania rozwoju turystyki związanej z obszarami wiejskimi*, Wyd. PWSZ, Biała Podlaska, ss. 26-30 (Derek M., 2005b, 'Development of tourism in the countryside and Gminas' budget revenue', in: Sawicki, B., Bergier, J. (eds.). *Conditioning of Tourism Development in the Rural Areas*. PWSZ Publishing, Biała Podlaska, pp. 26-30)

<sup>13</sup> Gaworecki W., 2003, *Turystyka*, Wyad. PWE, Warszawa (Gaworecki W., 2003, *Tourism*, PWE Publishing, Warsaw)

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- improvement of the area's image,
  - funds raised by the local subjects dealing with tourism,
  - supporting the local financial activities by the EU funds,
  - economic diversity allowing for independence from the economy fluctuations,
  - infrastructure development.

Polish tourism is an important achievement of the Polish national economy. However, it is necessary to notice that, despite its market character, it requires state, as well as EU financing. Such programmes and obtained funds are used to develop and modernise the local tourist base, such as for instance: accommodation and food infrastructure, public tourist and recreation infrastructure, health resorts infrastructure, tourist information system and tourism promotion.

The country's tourist economy activities are financed from the state's budget by the government administration. Also, the tourism expenses, to a large extent, are incurred by the local government administration.

In 2007-2011, the expenses of the local governments in voivodeships, poviats, cities with the poviat status and gminas increased dynamically. Initially, they equalled 201 mln, to reach the amount of PLN 801 mln in 2011. In 2007-2011, the expenses of the local government units raised by over PLN 599 mln.

The increase of tourism expenditure in 2007-2011 was caused by the developing interest in tourism at the level of the local government units as the sector of economy positively influencing social and economic development of a particular region, as well as by the UE funds contribution. In 2007-2011, at the level of the local government units the process of intensive cooperation with the local and regional tourist organisations took place. It concerned tourism and tourist products development, as well as, the introduction of promotional strategies. However, the decrease of tourism expenses in 2012, resulted from the end of investment programmes preparing Poland for the European Football Championships UEFA EURO 2012<sup>TM</sup>.

In 2007-2011, many new (infrastructure) tourism investments at the level of the local government units were realised. It is worth mentioning that, in the financial perspective EU 2007-2013, all the regions considered tourism development as a significant element of their development – tourism priority was included in all the Regional Operational Programmes (ROP). Due to the fact that investments co-financed by the EU structural funds of ROP were also financed from the particular local governments' budgets, the subjects' total expenses raised.<sup>14</sup> ( Table 1)

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.msport.gov.pl/statystyka-turystyka/raport-z-badania-krajowego-rynku-turystycznego>

**Table 1.** *Expenses of local governments on voivodeships, poviats, cities with the poviat status and commune for the Tourism division in 2007-2012\* (in PLN)*

Specifications	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Voivodeship local government (Total)	21 696 749	27 349 177	210 762 625	66 577 393	121 662 727	120 060 515
Poviat local government (Total)	6 422 036	5 695 584	12 139 546	47 743 711	50 334 885	26 371 589
Local government of cities with the poviat status (Total)	31 654 100	31 043 820	74 822 236	145 578 549	148 174 466	137 674 486
commune local government (Total)	142 115 476	130 736 248	167 126 323	460 728 775	480 946 842	362 570 305
Total	201 888 362	194 824 828	464 850 730	720 628 428	801 118 920	646 676 896

Source: <http://www.msport.gov.pl/statystyka-turystyka/raport-z-badania-krajowego-rynku-turystycznego><sup>15</sup>

## COMMUNE OLSZTYN CHARACTERISTICS

Commune Olsztyn is located in southern Poland in the Silesian Voivodeship, in the southern part of the Poviat of Czestochowa (12 km from the city of Czestochowa). It borders with the following communes: Czestochowa, Mstow, Poraj, Poczesna, Janow, Zarki, Kamienica Polska. Commune Olsztyn comprises 10 towns and villages: Olsztyn, Biskupice, Bukowno, Krasawa, Kusiet, Przymilowice, Skrajnica, Turow, Zrebice Pierwsze and Zrebice Drugie. The biggest town is Olsztyn with the remaining places located concentrically around it.

The commune's area equals 109.13 km<sup>2</sup> and is inhabited by around 7800 citizens. The territory is cut by the national road no. 46 and Czestochowa-Kielce railway.

The first information about Olsztyn come from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is related to the castle near Przymilowice. Nearby, a settlement beyond the castle walls was established; it was called Olsztynek. The settlement obtained the town character in 1488 from the king Casimir Jagiellon. Nowadays, with the several-century past, Olsztyn is the seat of the commune's authorities.

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## COMMUNE OLSZTYN ATTRACTIVENESS

Commune Olsztyn is a touristy area. It is visited by around a million tourists every year. The main sightseeing highlights are the ruins of the Olsztyn's castle from the 14<sup>th</sup> century (the castle hill of ca. 16 hectares) and the nature reserve of the Sokole Mountains (planned to become a National Park). The medieval fortified castle was most probably built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Casimir the Great. After

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.msport.gov.pl>

many invasions and wars, only fragments of fortifications are preserved. Another historically important place is the 18<sup>th</sup> century parish church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, built in the late Baroque style.

Also a larch church of St. Giles from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the belfry in Zrebice and manor in Bukowno are worth mentioning. The vintage street system together with its wooden buildings has been preserved in Olsztyn. The Olsztyn Market Square is on the list of Polish historical monuments for its urban planning.

The commune is situated within the border of the Landscape Park and its buffer zone. It comprises nature reserves of Zielona Góra and Sokole Góry. The features of the natural environment such as inanimate nature elements, variety of biological life and rare plant species make the area of Olsztyn attractive touristically.<sup>16</sup>

Due to the area's landscape beauty, as well as rare flora and fauna preservation, it has been considered particularly valuable touristically. The area is also characterised by white limestone rocks and caves. Such elements of inanimate nature attract tourists. Moreover, it is a perfect place for various sports: rock climbing, speleology, paragliding, walking, Nordic walking, cycling and horse riding. Numerous recreational, sport and cultural events take place here, e.g. Tournament, commune's Cross Country Run and Teetotal Artistic Creativity Exhibition "Zamczysko" etc. A popular walking and cycling tour destination are the Sokole Mountains. Olsztyn has become popular also thanks to the International Pyrotechnics and Lasers Shows among the medieval castle ruins.

For years, the main source of income for most of the commune's inhabitants was work for manufacturers in nearby Częstochowa. However, most of them were closed down in the recent years. The commune is dominated by service companies, small businesses. There are no big manufacturers. The natural environment values and comfortable communication in the gmina encourage for seeking new possibilities of development – with tourism playing one of the main roles.<sup>17</sup> The basis of the area's development must be a rich offer suggested by the accommodation and food services. Moreover, one of the targets should be the longer stay of tourists in the commune, as opposed one-day stays of inhabitants from the neighbouring agglomerations. For many years commune Olsztyn was treated as a one-day recreation resort which did not bring substantial tourism income. It ought to be emphasised that due to the above-mentioned local values, the terrain may be particularly attractive touristically throughout the year.

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The attractiveness of a particular region is decided, to various extents, by its natural values, its readiness for tourism and recreation and the accessibility, in particular, of its cultural goods and national heritage.<sup>18</sup> An important element is the

<sup>16</sup> [www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl](http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl)

<sup>17</sup> *Lokalny Program Rewitalizacji gminy Olsztyn 2007-2013. (The Gmina Olsztyn Local Revitalisation Programme 2007-2013)*

<sup>18</sup> Koźuchowski K., 2005, *Walory przyrodnicze w turystyce i rekreacji*, Wyd. Kurpisz, Poznań (Koźuchowski K., 2005, *Natural Values in Tourism and Recreation*. Kurpisz Publishing, Poznań)

communication infrastructure, roads network in particular, as the means of road transport are the most often used by tourists.

Therefore, the commune's authorities, developing in 2007 the Local Revitalisation Programme, paid particular attention to the strengths of the area (The SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats):

- Very high landscape values,
- Thermal waters reserves in the commune's area,
- Cultural heritage and potential,
- Terrain reserves for garden plots and accommodation construction,
- High afforestation rates,
- Good quality drinkable water reserves,
- Beneficial localisation on the national road 46,
- Well-developed public transport,
- Good quality local food,
- Active social and non-governmental organisations,
- Community and local authorities' involvement with local events.

Also, the weak sides were enumerated, e.g.:

- Lack of plots for construction with technical infrastructure,
- Functional constraints of the public space,
- Unsupervised landfill sites,
- No by-pass around Olsztyn,
- Lack of car parks,
- Variety and fragmentation of land property in the commune,
- Lack of sanitary sewer,
- Poorly developed catering and accommodation services,
- Low level of public safety,
- Internal community conflicts,
- Bad technical state of educational venues and poorly developed sport infrastructure.

However, apart from numerous assets of the commune (social, economic, natural), the variety of touristic development in the following years should be emphasised. Tourism gives opportunities for the natural and cultural values exploration in order to improve the region's attractiveness. It helps to develop through the creation of new vacancies. For this reason, commune received the EU funds for the revitalisation and modernisation of the public space. Apart from the commune's budget:

- Structural funds of the European Union for 2007-2013
- Voivodeship Fund for the Environment and Water Economy Protection

**Table 2.** *Expenses of the revitalisation in 2007-2013*

Year	Expenses of the revitalisation	The EU fund share in the revitalisation (%)
2007	10 000,00	0
2008	37 746,01	85%
2009	95 000,00	85%
2010	50 940,00	85%
2011	2 460,00	85%
2012	5 947 192,96	85% z kwoty 5 638 859,05
2013	2 000,00	0

*Source: own collation based on the sources made available by commune Olsztyn*

The data presented in Table 2 show the importance of all the funds obtained apart from the commune's budget for the revitalisation processes. In 2008-2011, the European Union funds constituted as much as 85% of the whole amount paid for the revitalisation.

The obtained funds made various investments and promotional activities possible for direct and indirect tourism development. Commune Olsztyn ranked on the 6<sup>th</sup> position in the country and the 1<sup>st</sup> in the Silesian Voivodeship in EU funds raising by the rural gminas.

**Table 3.** *EU funds obtained for tourism development in commune Olsztyn*

Year	EU Funds (PLN)
2009	600000
2010	1 200000
2011	100000
2012	4 100000
2013	740000

*Source: own collation based on the sources made available by commune Olsztyn*

The EU donations made it possible for various investors to build and modernise tourist routs and cyclists paths, to create the systems of tourist information, organisation of shows and exhibitions, fairs, outdoor events in order to improve Olsztyn's image (Table 3).

The creation of new vacancies, lifestyle improvement, investors' interest in the area, development of small businesses – all these influence the gmina's revenue too. Certainly, apart from the EU funds, each year, the commune uses a part of its budget for promotion and development of tourism. In 2009-2013 the sums fluctuated between PLN 100 thousand to PLN 300 thousand. Also in 2014, during the public consultations on the strategies of the gmina's development for the years 2014-2020, the importance of tourism was highlighted and its further development was planned. The following development targets were enumerated:

- the use of the commune 's tourist potential, especially the thermal springs,
- tourist and cultural values promotion,
- improvement of the role of the local tourist services market (with the pilgrimage movements and active forms of tourism, e.g. climbing, Nordic walking, cycling)
- exploiting the area for sport, recreation, tourism and culture

## EXAMPLES OF INVESTMENTS FOR COMMUNE OLSZTYN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Frequently, commune Olsztyn undertakes numerous activities for development and modernisation and creation of tourism infrastructure. Realisation of such projects would not be possible without the EU funds.

Apart from direct expenses on tourism, the gmina finances numerous modernisation projects: roads' reconstruction, sewage system construction etc. Such investments are to be used for years by the tourists and – above all – the local population. The most serious and expensive activities comprise:

- the Olsztyn market square revitalisation,
- complex modernisation of Karlinskiego, Ogrodowa and Napoleona (in part) Streets in Olsztyn,
- a multipurpose sport field and playground construction in Przymilowice,
- development of the rout 'St. Gile's Path'.

Moreover, in 2014 commune Olsztyn finalised a large EU project: 'The tourist development of the forest by the 14<sup>th</sup> century castle ruins, its link by the cyclists path with the natural reserve of the Sokole Mountains and reconstruction of the car park and the place of tourist services in commune Olsztyn'. (Picture 1)



*Figure 1. Cycling path and leisure site with a car park in*

*Source: <http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl>*

Within the investment, a park with aisles was created by the castle hill next to the old garner; the site was decorated with four attractive balancing sculptures. Also, four recreational glades and mountain cycling paths were created. Smaller elements of architecture were also included: benches, rubbish bins, lamps and grill stations.

A unanimous tourist signage system was applied. The investment managed to be realised thanks to the EU project: 'The commune Olsztyn Identification System'. All the towns and villages in the gmina are to be equipped in unanimous signage according to the visualisation book of Gmina Olsztyn. Such signage system helps tourist to easily move around the area and facilitates its least well-known values' exploration. Commune Olsztyn focuses its promotional and investment actions on active recreation. A promotional campaign to popularise Nordic walking has been organised. It comprised – among others – a commercial spot on regional TV and in TVN country channel, on the radio, in the country and regional press, on the Internet



and on 400 billboards and banners displayed in main cities of the region. Also, mass public events were organised, promotional materials were produced (folders, maps, leaflets, calendars of events, gadgets). Nordic walking as a new, popular tourist product let the tourists and inhabitants discover the region's values, at the same time, encouraging to active leisure. (Picture 2)



**Figure 2.** Nordic walking promotional banner

Source: <http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl>

In Olsztyn, an outdoor gym has been built. It can be used by the inhabitants and tourists. (Picture 3)



**Figure 3.** Outdoor gym.

Source: <http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl>

The projects also include ideas of attractions for children. A good example is the modernisation project for the area surrounding the playground in Olsztyn. The attractive location of the playground was enriched by the square around the fountain, a walking granite aisle and gravel, sand and wood perception path. There are also new benches and rubbish bins around the playground. (Picture 4)



**Figure 4.** *Playground in Olsztyn*  
*Source: <http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl>*

Commune has been developing several new projects, e.g. ‘Jurassic Thermal Springs – the promotion of the commune Olsztyn investment values’. The main aim of the project is winning new investors from the whole country and from abroad via activities promoting a 5-hectare investment terrain with localised thermal waters, belonging to commune Olsztyn.<sup>19, 20</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism has become one of the basic economic activity forms in the Krakowsko-Czestochowska Upland. Its development allows for the use of natural and cultural values of the area in order to improve its attractiveness. This, in turn, helps to create new vacancies and increase the tourist economy contribution in GDP growth.<sup>21</sup>

The Krakowsko-Czestochowska Upland is a valuable area with rich landscapes, natural reserves and monuments. Due to this fact, the gminas in the Upland invest in tourism development. It is possible with the public funds’ support. Such forms of financing are indispensable to develop the local areas into sport and recreation tourist resorts, as well as to build and modernise infrastructure and undertake promotional activities. Also, the support of entrepreneurs running business activities in tourism is of crucial importance. Thanks to the European Union membership, they can benefit from various funds helping them to develop.

The article presents the initiatives undertaken by commune Olsztyn to develop tourism in the region. It is worth emphasising that in recent years, the use of tourism in the area has been undergoing rapid changes. Their main aim is the creation of favourable conditions for year-round and longer than one-day (holiday) tourist stays in the area. They would influence the tourism dynamics in the region.

The examples of the tourist investments in the area indicate the involvement and operability of the local government for the tourism development. All things considered, commune Olsztyn is a good and interesting example of a region using its potential for modern tourism development.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.olsztyn-jurajski.pl/>

<sup>20</sup> Sources obtained from Gmina Olsztyn

<sup>21</sup> Bąk-Filipek E., 2010 „Finansowanie turystyki w Polsce „,Nr 4 (53) , s.204-212. (Bąk-Filipek E., 2010, ‘Tourism Financing in Poland’, No. 4 (53), p.204-212)

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