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Between Sacrum and Nature: tourism development in Nowa Slupia¹

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Abstract. Nowa Slupia is a well known small town, situated in an attractive location in the heart of Swietokrzyskie Mountains. This article presents an analysis of tourism economy development and achievements of local community in the area of development. The community fails to take advantage of the opportunities ensuing from the popularity of this location. The Author discussed the factors which exerted an impact upon this state of affairs, with particular attention paid to institutional factors, which hold the tourism sector hostage to the relationship between the National Park and the local Church institutions, which own the key cultural heritage sites located in the community.

The literature on factors influencing tourism development has grown quite rich. The development of tourism is usually assumed to depend upon natural and cultural resources, as well as upon the development of tourism infrastructure. An increasing number of research projects have actually been giving priority to the latter, concluding that while the ownership of cultural and natural sites is an important factor to the development of tourism and facilitating its initiation, nevertheless it is the infrastructure that makes the development of tourism possible. However, more and more examples confirm the fact that such advantages may be - at least partly - artificially substituted (such as i.e. a skiing slope in Dubai, a lagoon at the Tropical Islands near Berlin, or an artificial cave with copies of rock paintings from Lascaux cave in France or Altamira cave in Spain). Such concepts have been known for centuries, i.e. when large Calvary complexes were being built in different parts of Europe to provide less daring and courageous pilgrims to Jerusalem with an alternative, where they could pray and meditate in a less strenuous and safer manner, and for less money. Many such

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sites have been established without any relationship whatsoever with any resources: Las Vegas is a classic example of a city built in the middle of a desert as a complex tourist product. Theme parks usually have nothing in common with their respective locations, as they are usually situated in the vicinity of their potential clients (Disneyland, Legoland, Baltow Jurassic Park etc). The examples referred to above indicate that tourism is not exclusively triggered by resource-based supply; resources may serve as a supporting factor but - save for certain specialist forms of tourism (heliskiing, mountain climbing, mushroom picking, etc.) – are neither a precondition, nor a suspensory condition to such development. Growing tourist demand is conducive to the replacement of actual resources with substitutes, which attract interest due to lower transaction costs and higher availability. Attractive mass tourism sites are to an increasing degree being determined by the supply of tourism products, most popular of which are offered in package deals.

Tourism and natural environment are closely interrelated. Starting from the first research into this topic (Mathieson and Wall 1982), literature indicates numerous examples of both negative and positive character. The former are more numerous, since the dynamic development of tourism in new locations, taking advantage from chances ensuing from growing tourist demand, usually outgrows the planning capacity of reception area (Bramwell B. et al. 1996). This, in turn, results in physical development chaos, infrastructure shortages and strong, negative impact upon environment (Southgate and Sharpley 2002, Kowalczyk 2000, Degorska 2003). Positive impacts include the establishment of national parks and other forms of nature protection, infrastructural improvements, etc. (Sharpley 2006). Sometimes, although rarely, things go deeper, when antropo-pressure is replaced with specific nature-pressure, where legal and institutional solutions not only subject tourism to control, but also freeze the development of tourism or, in extreme cases, relegate local communities - and that also includes tourists - from their natural habitats (Stasiak 2002).

More and more researchers indicate that broadly perceived tourism is assuming an increasingly cultural character (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006, Richards, Wilson 2008). This, however, does not apply to obvious forms thereof, such as visiting cultural heritage sites, museums, studying the traditions and beliefs of local, often exotic communities (Gaworecki 2003). The oldest and most frequent forms of tourism include pilgrimages to religious sites. Trips focused on nature resources are also being transformed into a complex education process (studying ecosystems in action), understanding associations with local culture, becoming acquainted with such cultures, etc.

While literature, for the sake of clarity, is mainly stressing single-factor situations in the research projects, actually we are very seldom dealing with such circumstances. Situations where tourism and related development problems can be brought down to a single relation with environmental or cultural matters are rather an exception, than a rule in the globalising world. In my opinion, such situations will become increasingly rare in the future. Please let me quote the example of the community of Nowa Slupia located in Central Poland (National and Landscape Park), with their complex interrelations influencing the condition of tourist infrastructure and development (sector). For the needs of this presentation, the analysis of the status of tourism development in the community, actions taken by main actors and their outcome will be discussed, concluded with an attempt to identify the factors determining its future development.

Information presented in this text comes from the official documents and data and interviews with the main stakeholders in Nowa Slupia (collected in February 2008). For the needs of the research interviews covered also representatives of the regional tourism administration and tourist organizations based in regional capital Kielce.

Tourist Description of the Region.

The community of Nowa Slupia is located in Central Poland, in Swietokrzyskie Voivodship (Province), to the east from the regional capital of Kielce. The region differs from central and northern Poland by the fact that it has Poland's only mountain range situated north of Carpathian and Sudeten mountains. The mountains are relatively low (with the highest peak of Lysica of 611 metres above sea level). The mountains are flanked with important communications routes, linking Central Poland with southern and south-eastern regions of the country (main road and railway route linking Warsaw and Krakow).

Swietokrzyskie Mountains are rich in geological and natural attractions, hence a considerable part of the mountain strain has been declared a nature or landscape park. The area also includes a number of nature reserves. The most popular attractions of the region include the "Raj" (Eden) cave, a mining site for characteristic, local striped flint, the Kamienna River valley and numerous historical sites.

The region is rich in cultural sites and boasts a long, historical tradition. Earliest relics of metallurgy date back to prehistoric times. The region has been located in the heart of Poland since the origins of Poland's statehood. During Renaissance it became an important centre of culture and Poland's Protestantism. The main relics of material culture include the Renaissance city of Sandomierz and a number of other, smaller towns with exquisite

antiquities (Wachock: 12th century Cistercian cloister, Szydłowiec with a Renaissance town hall and castle, Szydłów with medieval urban structure, Wislica with a collegiate church dating back to 11th century, etc.). One of the best-known historical sites is the monastic complex of Święty Krzyż, established on Lysa Góra mountain by Benedictine monks perhaps in 1006 (and certainly not later than in the beginning of 11th century) ²(second highest peak of the entire range, 593 m above sea level), and the St. Catherine's Monastery built in 15th century at the foot of the highest peak (Lysica, 611 metres above sea level). The name of Święty Krzyż is shared by the entire region. The region is rich with old legends and stories. Apart from the Sacred Cross, another well-known symbol of the region is a witch: witches supposedly gathered on the highest peak, where the remains are still visible of a prehistoric stone circle. The monastic complex of Sacred Cross has definitely been built there on purpose.

The regional capital - Kielce - is a city with the population of 210 thousand, several higher education facilities, a national museum situated in an exquisite baroque palace and numerous other tourist attraction (recreational grounds located within the former Kadzielnia stone quarry, the Old Town, the Karczunkowskie hill with a baroque monastery). The city of Kielce also has its own fair and exhibition grounds, the site of an important logistics and infrastructure fair.

The regional tourist infrastructure is rather modest. The hotel base counts among the least developed in Poland, and is marked with adequately low standard (first 4* hotel was built in 2007, mainly for guests to the fair and exhibition events). Despite mountainous location, skiing infrastructure is underdeveloped, although recently a growing number of investments was noted in this area (despite practically snowless winters of 2006 and 2007). The network of tourist routes criss-crossing the main parts of the mountain range is quite well developed. The region lacks well-prepared cycling routes or small accompanying infrastructure (numerous routes run along local roads, a feature that fails to guarantee safe travel); efficient public transportation linking main tourist sites is also insufficient.

Nowa Słupia is located in a valley, right in the centre of one of Poland's and Europe's oldest mountain ranges - the Świętokrzyskie Mountains. The community has the population of 11 thousand, 1580 of whom live in the city of Nowa Słupia. The community covers the area of 8594 hectares, of which 1839 hectares belong to Świętokrzyski National Park. Local economy is mainly based on small farms, resulting in relatively low community income. In

² Sacred Cross (Święty Krzyż): the name is derived from the alleged remnants of the Christ's crucifixion cross, stored in the church since 17th century.

2003, the community register included approximately 440 businesses, mainly natural persons (Nowa Słupia, 2004). Local economy is dominated by trading and small service companies.

The community has no contemporary physical development plan; this fact contributes to the prolonged and lengthy planning and implementation process of any investment.

The community can hardly be called affluent. The community's budget for 2008 stood at PLN 27 million on income side and PLN 31 million on the side of expenditures (approx. EUR 6 million and 7 million, respectively). Compared against 2004, the budget was twice as high (the latter standing at PLN 13.5 million on income side and PLN 14.8 million on the side of expenses). In 2004, the community tourism budget envisaged the income of PLN 25 thousand and expenditure of PLN 52 thousand. In 2007, mainly due to EU funds, the tourism-related expenditures have grown to PLN 3.5 million (BIP, budget resolutions 2004-2008).

The city serves as a sub-regional communications node, providing access to numerous tourist attractions (Kielce 40 km, Sandomierz 50 km, Baltów 30 km). Nowa Słupia is located at the foot of the main range of Swietokrzyskie Mountains. Most mountain slopes are covered with dense forests. The main range is covered by Swietokrzyski National Park, part of the community area is located within Jeleniowski Landscape Park, and a large part of the remaining area is subject to protection as National Park surrounding area. Nowa Słupia borders the National Park and is located within the National Park surrounding area. The city maintained its medieval urbanistic arrangement. The antique iron ore mine in nearby village of Rudki is a unique relic of history (archaeological reserve), together with numerous earth furnaces for iron smelting (dymarki) and pre-historic metallurgic furnaces. Some of these objects have been taken-over by the Museum of Antique Metallurgy. City's main relics include a parish church built in 12th century, the remains of a synagogue (bóznica) and Jewish cemetery (kirkut), as well as a number of timber houses. Nowa Słupia is the starting point of Royal Route (Szlak Królewski) leading to the Sacred Cross Monastery, a traditional footpath combined with a tourist route leading to the St. Catherine's Monastery along the main mountain range. The name is derived from the historical ascent by king Wladyslaw Jagiello to Swiety Krzyz before the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. The community has the total of 200 km of marked tourist foot trails. There also is a number of short cycling paths which, however, have not been separated from other routes (they usually run along local roads) and do not create a uniform system. Within the National Park area, several kilometres of educational trails have been created. Apart from the Sacred Cross Church, the mountain top of Lysa Gora is also the site of the state-owned Nature and Forestry Museum (Muzeum Przyrodniczo-Lesne) and a Missionary Museum owned by the Church.

Since 1967, Nowa Slupia is hosting the annual "Dymarki" festival, combining the shows of ancient iron production techniques, commercial events and artistic performances. The festival is highly popular, with the number of guests usually outgrowing the capacity of local hospitality industry.

Tourist Infrastructure and Tourists.

The information presented below has been acquired either from documents prepared by the community authorities or in the course of interviews with representative of community authorities and local personnel members responsible for tourism.

In the sixties, Nowa Slupia used to have 4 tourist hostels, providing hospitality services to school groups, making traditional trips to Swietokrzyskie Mountains and National Park. Only one of these youth hostels in Nowa Slupia survived the past two decades (53 beds). There are two night stay facilities in operation now (50 beds, most rooms without bathrooms). Local conference centre offers 146 beds in rooms with bathrooms and is now developing a new Spa service, a novelty on local scale. There are approximately 20 agro-tourist facilities operating within the community (some of which are not located on farms), offering approximately 200 beds.³ Tourist cottages offer approximately 100 beds. Local hospitality infrastructure fails to offer quality services, and fails to meet the demand in terms of both quantity (from the total of approximately 600 beds, Nowa Slupia itself accounts for approximately 240), and quality.⁴

Annually the community (mainly Nowa Slupia) is visited by approximately 140-150 thousand tourists, most of them coming for one-day stays. Approximately 70% of guests come in organised groups. Pilgrimage tourism to Sacred Cross, accessible not only from Nowa Slupia, but also via an easier, southern route, also plays an important role. According to estimates from Sacred Cross monks, approximately 400 000 persons visit the site each year (Nowa Slupia, p. 30). Visitors are driven by diverse motives: historical church and monastery, mummified body, according to local tradition - of duke Jeremi Wisniowiecki⁵, museums and

³ Agro-tourist facilities operating within an active farming household are tax exempt (fully PIT-exempt, and VAT exempt up to the revenues of EUR 40 thousand). As such enterprises are also exempt from keeping any accounting documentation, their contribution into the community budget is close to null.

⁴ Based on information acquired from the Community Office of Nowa Slupia, Local Development Plan and statistical data provided by the Tourism Institute (Instytut Turystyki, <http://www.intur.com.pl/bazy/kwatery/kw2.php?w1=26&zestaw=razem>)

⁵ An army commander in the civil war of 1648, depicted by writer Henryk Sienkiewicz in one of Poland's most popular adventure novels „With Fire and Sword”. When reinstating law and order along the eastern frontiers of the Republic, Wisniowiecki in reciprocity did actually rely mainly on fire and sword.

a breathtaking sightseeing point. Another well-known, annual attraction is the Dymarki Swietokrzyskie festival (previously held each September, now each August).

Tourists visiting the community usually come in organised groups (school and other trips). Individual tourists are dominated by families with children; they usually chose to stay at agro-tourist facilities. Most tourists come from Central Poland (within the range of 170 kilometres, including Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz and Lublin). Rarely, guests arrive from the seaside or from abroad.

Dispersed hospitality infrastructure inhibits any overall resource management and promotion: all attempts to present a joint offer, undertaken i.e. by agro-tourist facilities, affiliated with a local association, failed. Neither did the operations of Local Tourist Organisation, affiliating most tourist enterprises, did any visible effects. According to the entrepreneurs interviewed, the main obstacle is low social capital, lack of confidence in joint ventures based on actual partnership (which would, however, limit the independence of individual entities). Both associations have been established not as tools of cooperation between tourist branch businesses, but as separate entities, aimed at ensuring a steady inflow of means and tourists. Unfortunately, the strength of such associations is nothing but the sum of strength and activity of their respective members. When such strength and activity are missing, and there is no capital either, one can hardly expect any effects.

The community is suffering from a serious underdevelopment of associated infrastructure, starting from the shortage of public toilets in the city, noted by nearly everyone (inclusive of local authorities). The road network is quite good, as it ensures access from a number of directions, although road surface quality is still hardly adequate. In high season there are no parking places available. The number of cycling paths is insufficient, despite the possibility to adapt the embankment of narrow gauge railway for this purpose. The city doesn't have a single decent restaurant, and existing coffee shops or seasonal catering booths fail to meet the expectations of visitors in high season or during the "Dymarki" festival.

There are no other recreation-related facilities in place. Recently, an open air sports and recreation facility was built several kilometres from Nowa Slupia with considerable EU financial support (in the village of Baszowice). Landscape features and rapid development of skiing in Poland give certain hopes for building skiing resorts, but both the local authorities and owners of hospitality businesses have no doubts that the National Park will block any related actions. The existing infrastructure excludes any forms of active tourism (save for short walks along pedestrian routes). The several hours'-walk route linking Nowa Slupia, Sacred Cross and St. Catherine's, located further to the west, offers attractive views and

numerous educational advantages, but its use is inhibited by the lack of communications linking the starting and ending points of the trail.

The community is suffering from water shortage; few deep water sources do not guarantee stable water supply, resulting in - so far - periodical water shortage also suffered by tourist facilities. In case of large facilities, servicing large tourist groups, water shortages which may last for several hours constitute a considerable inhibition of business operations. The construction of community's sewage system has not been completed yet, and existing, obsolete water treatment plants are capable of servicing only a part of the local population.

Tourism in community development documents

The community produced a local development plan for the years 2004-2006 and a draft tourism development strategy, developed by an employee of local authorities and still pending approval. Representatives of local authorities do not deny that the documents referred to above have been prepared mainly to meet the requirements for access to EU funds, and in case of tourism - also under the influence of preparations to the Millennium festivities in 2006 (1000th anniversary of the probable foundation of the Sacred Cross Church). One must stress that so far, neither of the documents referred to above has entered into force, hence the presentation thereof rather serves the purpose of displaying the approach taken by local authorities than actual development strategy. One must also note that the main provisions of both documents in the matter of tourism have been reflected in the statements made by deputy Head of Local Government and an employee responsible for promotion and tourism, allowing a presumption of stable perception of tourism.

The draft Strategy refers to tourism as the main driving force of community's development. The community's mission statement stressed, inter alia, that „By way of sustainable development we shall protect areas of high natural and cultural value, and enhance our identity based on history and culture, as well as tradition, including maritime tradition.” (Strategy, p. 21).

The SWOT analysis presented in the Strategy is based on the SWOT analysis of the Development Plan, and apart from down-to-the-point statements („underdeveloped and obsolete tourism and recreation infrastructure, „bad condition of roads” as weaknesses , „Dymarki Swietokrzyskie” as one of the strengths), also features a number of factors of no relevance to tourism development („high unemployment rate”). Some factors contradict each other: i.e. „underdeveloped and obsolete tourist infrastructure” *versus* „existence of basic,

albeit small tourist infrastructure". On the other hand, statements like „Low population income”, „Underdeveloped areas.”, „Lack of financial resources...”, „Progressing destruction of historical sites” can hardly be considered threats, whereas „Growing income of both the community and the local population generated from tourism” - as chances, as they may only be considered a consequence of utilising other chances, associated with close vicinity of other tourist areas, improving the tourist attractions of Swietokrzyskie Voivodship, or i.e. of increased interest in agro-tourism.

The strategic objective adopted was the “sustainable development of tourism within the area of Nowa Slupia community”. The draft Strategy is focused on the development within the community of sustainable tourism, including the following forms thereof: 1. agro-tourism, 2. eco-tourism, 3. eco-agro-tourism, 4. country tourism (Strategy, page 25). Such formula would be tantamount to an attempt at departing from the one applied today, based mainly on school trips and other organised groups, visiting mainly the Sacred Cross and - much less frequently - Nowa Slupia, either to see the "Dymarki" festival or to use the local communications facilities. So far, agro-tourism serves as a magnet in servicing the tourist traffic.

Vague and loosely interrelated social, environmental and economic objectives constitute an important part of the draft Strategy, followed by leading and operating objectives and finally by a series of notes on the conditions and suggested actions focused mainly on the tourist product. As this part of the document lacks prioritisation, it is difficult to analyse the related logical interrelations. In terms of methodology, a number of comments may be formulated. Clear indications of projects which in the opinion of authors could enhance the development of tourism are doubtless an advantage of the document . Main investment-related activities include the revitalisation of selected historical objects and the construction of „recreational-sports-cultural” infrastructure. Some of these planned investment projects have already been implemented.

The basic weakness of the draft Strategy is insufficient attention paid to environmental protection issues. Nature is mainly referred to therein as a resource which requires protection or as an advantage which attracts tourists. However, the fact that most of the community area has been classified as protected areas (as part of national park, landscape park or park surrounding areas), exerts enormous impact upon the capacity for tourism development, i.e. by limiting the investment possibilities within the community, or imposing upon the potential investors the obligation to consult any projects with National Park authorities. The problem also applies to the Community Authorities, which - to make things worse - have no land plots

available for investment. The National Park policy is very consequent, excluding any investments within the Park boundaries and limiting investment opportunities in the vicinity of the Park, i.e. exactly where the Community Authorities focus their attention and plan to use a meadow located at the entrance to the Royal Route into the Park for tourist purposes. The site referred to above, located at the edge of Nowa Slupia, is provided with relatively highest developed tourist infrastructure (restaurant, museum, youth hostel, parking lot, several modest souvenir shops and barrows). According to talks with representatives of Community Authorities, this lack of agreement with the Park inhibits the further development of local tourist services. The several hundred meters' long route, linking the Nowa Slupia market square with the Park gate is the main site visited by tourists, and logically speaking, should become the centre for servicing tourist traffic. This is exactly what the local authorities focus on by investing into a new parking lot and launching a new Tourist Information officer and a free hot spot on the market square. The construction of an Archaeological and Cultural Centre (Centrum Archeologiczno-Kulturowe) on the site of the existing Museum of Antique Metallurgy (Muzeum Starozytnego Hutnictwa) would allow a better utilisation of interest in old metal working techniques. Such project would also increase the foundation for the flagship product, i.e. the "Dymarki Swietokrzyskie" festival and - according to the plan adopted by the authorities - could divide the event into two different parts: scientific, focused on the reconstruction and presentation of old technologies, and popular, like a public picnic. The implementation of this objective by providing better accommodations for thousands of visitors coming to see the "Dymarki" festival is conditional upon final arrangements with Park authorities. So far, the community authorities failed to achieve any notable success and find it hard to conceal their disappointment with the attitude of the Park. The community is not running any joint projects with neighbouring communities.

Despite obvious problems with sewage systems and underdeveloped tourist infrastructure (shortage of reasonable beds first of all) Nowa Slupia and Swiety Krzyz complex play significant role in regional tourism development strategy as a place where culture and nature form one of the key brands of the region (SRT 2005).

Tourism Development Activities

Until the middle of present decade, the community has taken a rather passive attitude towards development: contrary to other Polish communities, no considerable infrastructural investments have been undertaken (problems with water and sewage systems, lack of

communications infrastructure). In the recent 2-3 years, first actions have finally been taken for the sake of local development, including tourism. The market square and streets leading towards the Royal Route have been tidied-up (and new parking lots established), draft strategy document was prepared in cooperation with other local and Voivodship institutions, and the resources for tourism development have been acquired (mainly for the purpose of renovation of antiquities). Another incentive to increase the community's efforts oriented at tourism development was the Millennium celebration, which mobilised the authorities to prepare specific projects and apply for the necessary funding. The changes in budget expenditures referred to above indicate that the community acquired less investment-related resources than expected (mainly tourism-related), but still considerable (in just a year, the acquisition of mainly EU funding resulted in a 60-fold growth in tourism-related expenditures). Of all the investments referred to in the draft Strategy, the authorities managed to implement two main projects.

1. Project entitled „Renovation of antiquities and construction of tourism infrastructure around Sacred Cross”. The Project covers the territory of the community of Nowa Slupia and the community of Bieliny, located within the Swietokrzyskie Mountains range. The need for project implementation stemmed from the necessity to support the socio-economic development of the communities and to build a competitive force basing upon the region's resources. Local authorities perceived the project necessary also due to the growing number of visitors and the needs of local population. The project envisaged the [implementation of] (...) renovation and repair works on valuable cultural resources, comprising the visiting card of Swietokrzyskie Mountains. The investment covered the area of: Nowa Slupia community within the scope of: 1. Renovation of the House of Abbots of Swietokrzyskie Mountains, 2. Construction of the Way of the Cross along the Royal Route to the Sacred Cross peak, 3. Repair of the Parish Church in Nowa Slupia, 4. Renovation and conservation works at the Monastic Complex on the Sacred Cross peak. and within the boundaries of Bieliny community within the scope of: 1. Reconstruction of a historical farm house in Kokanin, 2. Local community road to the Parish Church in Bieliny. 3. Repair of the Parish Church in Bieliny.” (BIP, 2008)<http://www.nowaslupia.bip.jur.pl/?go=199>) The project value is approx. PLN 5 million, including PLN 3.5 million from ERDF (ZPORR Operating Programme). Poland's contribution included a small subsidy from community budget. Most project-related activities have been implemented within the Nowa Slupia community. The main beneficiaries of the project are the parish churches and the Sacred

Cross monastery. No tourist products have been created pursuant to project implementation. As Swietokrzyski National Park refused to allow the construction of chapels within the Park boundaries, the chapels had to be erected outside the Park area in Nowa Slupia and on the Lysa Gora summit, within the monastery site.

2. Project entitled „Construction of a recreational and sports complex in the village of Baszowice”, implemented within the scope of SPO „Restructuring and Upgrade of Food Sector and Development of Rural Areas in 2004-2006” – „Sustainable Development of Rural Areas” priority – „Renewal of Villages and Protection of Cultural Heritage” activity. The community received funding in the amount of over PLN 400 thousand. The location of the complex far from main tourist sites, at the edge of a small village, and lack of permanent care resulted in 2007 in growing devastation of this attractively designed facility.

Apart from the projects referred to above, the community also received ERDF funding for the construction of 3.4 km of water and sewage installations (with two pump stations) in the village of Serwis (PLN 1.6 million, including PLN 1.0 million from ERDF). The project entitled „Development of Water Network for Nowa Slupia Community in the Villages of Baszowice and Hucisko” was similar (PLN 1.3 million, including PLN 0.7 million from ERDF). Neither of these projects directly contributed to the development of hospitality facilities or to the creation of new tourist products.

The reconstruction of Nowa Slupia market square, which considerably improved the aesthetics of the site, has been made possible by the investment implemented by the Swietokrzyskie Voivodship Road Authority (Swietokrzyski Zarzad Drog Wojewodzkich) (PLN 3.3 million, including PLN 2.2 from ERDF). The project definitely changed the image of the town centre, and contributed to improving the comfort of both visitors and local population. However, it failed to improve the visual attractiveness of the site.

In the light of the Local Development Plan, and the draft Tourism Development Strategy in particular, and taking into consideration the diagnosis we have been presented, the projects referred to above did not directly contribute to the creation of tourist products and the development of tourism infrastructure within the community. Neither of the projects contributed to the establishment of new jobs or increasing the tourism-related income. Due to the nature of renovated antiquities, no new tourism products have been created. Water and sewage system projects have been implemented in locations of relatively small impact upon tourism within the community. The sports and recreational complex was located on a site not

linked to the tourist traffic, separated and devoid of any care or protection. Unfortunately, in the recent years, despite considerable investment outlays, the community authorities failed to generate a synergy effect between individual projects. For this reason, the investment projects already completed are not accompanied by any undertakings aimed at developing the tourist infrastructure, increasing the number of beds or enhancing the catering base. This opinion is shared by persons running tourist operations within the community, who pointed out considerable neglect of community infrastructure (and of the water and sewage systems in particular), lack of consequence in resolving infrastructural problems and no association between actions undertaken and the development of tourism, even though in areas of high natural and cultural value tourism is the only sector of local economy fit for development. The community lacks a clear development vision, as confirmed by the lack of physical development plan and associated planning documents. The community failed to utilise the advantages of the Millennium celebrations: the festivities remained a one-off local undertaking which left no trace upon the condition of tourism on community level. Taking into consideration the statement made by a representative of local authorities, who declared that the only true form of tourism is based on faith and ancient national traditions (who also opposed the so-called conference tourism), one may understand why not a single of community's projects was aimed at the development of local tourism products. Despite the fact that the Strategy is stressing various forms of agro- and eco-tourism, none of the actions undertaken by community authorities focused on such topics (even though agro-tourism served as an argument, but by no means the most important one, supporting the construction of water and sewage systems). Another highly interesting issue is the fact that the problem of building a public toilet for tourists in Nowa Słupia proved unsolvable to this date. A small commercial „complex” built at the entrance to the Park still fails to meet the expectations of tourists, despite new investments, and is marked with striking temporariness.

Plans for the Future

In general, the community aims at gradual streamlining of its water and sewage infrastructure, improving the quality of road infrastructure and implementing the tourism-related investment projects specified in the Strategy, i.e. mainly the construction of Archaeological and Cultural Centre and adapting the northern part of the town, bordering the Park, for tourist needs. Local authorities also appreciate the need to build an artificial water reservoir to enhance the summer tourist offer. The possibility is also being reconsidered to

organise within the "Dymarki Swietokrzyskie" festival an event of educational and didactic nature (presentation to the visitors of community history and ancient metalworking techniques), separated from the "public fair" event.

Most of these projects have not gone past design stage and it is hard to tell when they will be ready for implementation. The vicinity of the National Park and the need to acquire its consent to any activities are an additional challenge.

Community authorities are convinced that the future of local tourism development lies in the offer addressed to the same clients, i.e. less affluent tourists, looking for a less expensive offer, organised, attracted by the community's natural and cultural advantages, focused around the monastic complex on Sacred Cross Mountain (and the Royal Route in general). According to statements made by community representatives, they would be more satisfied with tourism based on national, religious and family values. However, the projects already undertaken have little in common even with this perception of tourism: they mainly focused on the protection of cultural heritage, without practical reference to building tourist products.

Community authorities support the concept of moving the state-owned Nature Museum, located in the monastery buildings to another location at the foot of the Sacred Cross Mountains. Pursuant to the above, the Museum would be moved to a modern building in the village of Huta Szklana, located 2 kilometres to the south from its present site, while church authorities would be more than glad to transform the present Museum building into a reception and tourist facility. Available data indicate that the project has not even reached preparatory stage so far, hence it is more of an idea than an appraisable undertaking.

As the community lacks any obligatory planning documents (concerning local or tourism development), in early 2008 the above project can hardly be viewed as feasible.

Conclusions

Tourism development success factors may be sought in the sphere of nature, culture and infrastructure development, and tourism infrastructure in particular. In case of Nowa Slupia, the first two of the aforementioned conditions have been met. Regardless of the above, and despite the central location within the complex of Swietokrzyskie Mountains and its role of a sub-regional communications node, the community of Nowa Slupia is hardly prepared to actively utilise such factors for the needs of development. This failure is a consequence of a number of reasons of technical, ecological, social and institutional nature.

Underdeveloped technical infrastructure is one of the most important problems: inadequate sewage system and problems with necessary water supply inhibit any serious investments into hospitality industry. There are no trails enabling safe tourist traffic or creating a system interlinked with the surroundings, thus inhibiting the utilisation of natural resources. Hospitality and catering infrastructure is severely underdeveloped and of inferior quality. Road system is in urgent need of upgrade.

The existence within the community of a national and landscape parks, considered to be an asset, is also an impediment to any investments in direct vicinity of either of the parks. Many of the persons interviewed expressed a conviction that national park authorities are unable to reach a compromise and undermine any initiatives aimed at the development of tourist infrastructure. On the other hand, development ideas have not even reached the stage of project development, i.e. the stage at which the Park authorities could become acquainted therewith.

The Church and centuries-old tradition of pilgrimages to the Sacred Cross Mountain are of great importance to the development opportunities of tourism on community level. Community authorities definitely prefer this traditional form of tourism, as evidenced by the fact that most of the funds (acquired mainly from EU Structural Funds) have been allocated to the renovation of historical churches and to the construction of the Way of the Cross (along the Royal Route). In the latter case, the Park indicated its different opinion on the joint actions undertaken by local and church authorities: Park authorities consequently refused to allow the construction of Cross Stations within the protected areas.

The factors referred to above outline the scope of development of tourism in Nowa Slupia, although they fail to answer the question why tourist infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped on community level. The key index of underdevelopment is the extremely limited range of tourist products: after 2-3 hours, an average tourist usually has nothing more to do and simply leaves. The problem is not limited to this particular location, but is of regional scope (as confirmed by a very small number of exceptions, such as Baltow Jurassic Park), and has been indicated as such in Voivodship's tourism development documents as main weakness (SRT 2005).

The research also indicated the existence of problems with social capital on institutional level. Tourism on community level is subject to scrutiny and interest on the part of numerous entities which, however, are unable to appoint a leader and establish cooperation for the purpose of reaching common goals. Despite declarative support to tourism development and the will to promote it, actually no common, coordinated actions have been

undertaken. Tourist-base owners are not strongly organised, and their contacts with local authorities have not always been good in the past, usually taking ceremonial form at the best. Despite subordinating the community investment projects to the "tourism development" motto, the projects failed to generate new jobs or income to local population and do not translate into building sophisticated tourism infrastructure. Local authorities maintain good relations with local church authorities, but not with the National Park authorities. Both institutions - the Park and the Church - are clearly the key players in this game and exert strongest impact upon the development-related initiatives within the community. However, their points of view usually differ considerably. We are dealing here with a situation when there are too many leaders with not a single leader, capable of giving tourist infrastructure the priority in the development of local community and of arriving at a compromise, reconciling the expectations of main players. Without such agreement and the development of a joint tourism development programme in Nowa Słupia and neighbouring communities, no swift changes can be expected. The fact that the voice of entrepreneurs is hardly heard or listened to is an additional impediment. With the lack of plans, there is no one responsible for tourism management. Without agreement being reached soon local community is facing the challenge of paying the cost of hundreds of thousands of visitors with little or no rewards.

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