

## 1. Introduction.

### Problems of quality of tourist space management

#### 1.1. General characteristics of the undertaken research

This collection of articles is a summary of the work undertaken by the editor and authors under the project "Tourism for the Region - Integrated Doctoral Development Program", financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund. The articles present conclusions from research on the quality of tourism management in the Łódź Voivodeship. They were confronted with an assessment of the effectiveness of this process in the Norwegian county Oppland, carried out during the implementation of the mentioned project, and above all during the study visit carried out in the first week of May 2012. It is worth recalling that the capital of Oppland County (Lillehammer) was the organizing city of the Winter Olympic Games in 1994. However, it should be pointed out that the opportunity for tourism development resulting from the organization of such an important sports event was not used immediately. What's more, at the end of the 1990s tourist traffic in Lillehammer began to fall sharply. The reasons for this negative phenomenon should be attributed to the lack of coordination of tourism policy undertaken by the Oppland county communes, including the city of Lillehammer. The lack of consistent tourism management in the county area resulted in the inability to provide a comprehensive tourist product of the highest possible quality.

The first step in solving the problem described above was the establishment of the local research group Lillehammer Miljø in 2000, whose aim was to identify the basic problem areas of tourism development management in Lillehammer and the Oppland County. The activity of this group was financed from the funds of the Nordic Industrial Fund (Danish - Nordisk Industrifond). General guidelines for activities for the development of tourism have become the answer to the diagnosed problems:

- 1) mutual cooperation of local suppliers of simple tourist products in the field of marketing, booking and selling services, waste management, transport and other areas,
- 2) designing a marketing message indicating the Lillehammer and Oppland spaces as an ecological space, channeling the message to all groups interested in the development of tourism in the discussed area,
- 3) taking actions for the development of new tourist products that have a direct relationship with the natural and cultural heritage of Lillehammer and Oppland,
- 4) strengthening the credibility of the local tourist product, in line with consumer expectations (WELFORD, YTTERHUS 2004).

A systemic approach to the problem of tourism development in the Norwegian Oppland initiated a decade ago is starting to bring tangible, positive results. Therefore, it seems that despite a number of differences regarding forms of tourism, which are developed or can be developed in both areas, despite the different size and structure of the supported tourist traffic, managers of tourist reception areas in the Łódź voivodeship can successfully use Norwegian experiences.

While the literature discussed a number of concepts for the management of tourism space, relatively little space in Polish and foreign research achievements was devoted to the assessment of the quality of this process. The intention of the authors of the articles presented in this collection was to supplement the indicated gap and join in the discussion on the assessment of the quality and efficiency of tourist space management. The following articles present a threefold approach to the indicated problem:

- 1) discussion was undertaken on the dependence of management quality on the quality of strategic documents that set the directions for the development of tourist areas,
- 2) the impact of the method of financing tourism from local government funds on the quality of tourism management on a local scale was assessed,
- 3) the impact of objective conditions of tourism development on the quality of the management process of the discussed area was assessed.

## 1.2. Tourist reception area as the subject of the management process

When discussing the problems of the quality of management of tourist reception areas, it is worth defining precisely the subject of this management. A few key concepts should be pointed out: tourism space, guest space, territorial product and, finally, tourist product - the place. The subject of the discussed management process is tourism space, and its final stage, desired as a result of the effective use of the discussed process - guest space. It seems, however, that from the perspective of the tourist area management process it is also worth mentioning the tourist product - the place, i.e. what is actually offered to tourists and what is at the same time a component of the territorial product.

According to B. Włodarczyk (2009), the tourism space is functional, therefore it is the part of geographical space in which tourism functions are developed: tourism is present, tourist development is visible. What is important, in his definition of tourism space B. Włodarczyk indicates that this space is characterized by a strong, internal diversity, which, among other things, determines the different accessibility of space (physical, economic or psychological) for different groups of tourists. This diversification is affected, inter alia, by the activities of various entities responsible for the use and development of tourism space. Ultimately, from the perspective of entities managing the tourism space, this space should function as a guest space.

We are talking about a space arranged materially and characterized by such social conditions that would enable safe and comfortable stay for tourists. As B. Włodarczyk (2009) emphasizes, the guest space is a part of the tourism space, distinguished due to social attitudes revealed by residents, entrepreneurs or space managers, as well as due to the organization of tourism space. The guest space can be both commercial and non-commercial.

From the perspective of running tourism marketing, instead of talking about tourism space, it is more convenient to talk about a tourism product - a place, or analogically about a tourism product - a region, powiat, city. It is worth emphasizing that this product is extremely geographically determined. A tourism product - a place includes not only the natural and anthropogenic values occurring in the space, nor the services provided by various entities, but based on the existing tourist or paratourist development. When talking about a tourism product - a place, one should also include historical and cultural heritage related to a given space, hospitality and favor of the inhabitants, the image of the area and all events that will occur during the tourist's stay (KACZMAREK, STASIAK, WŁODARCZYK 2002). A tourism product - a place can be considered as part of a territorial product, which is defined as "cumulative socio-economic utility of a place (area), offered to internal and external clients to meet their material and spiritual needs, current and developing, related to consumption and investment" (SZROMNIK 2007). Logically, the development of a tourism product - a place must be subordinated to the development of a territorial product. Similarly, management of tourism development should be part of the overall actions related to the management of the area, take into account broadly defined directions of socio-economic development of a given territory (NAWROT, ZMYŚLONY 2009).

The tourism space can be considered from the supply side, i.e. from the perspective of elements that are of interest to tourists. As J. Carlsen (1999) points out, the main supply elements of tourism space are: transport accessibility, tourist attractions, tourism development, as well as promotion and tourist information. The above elements form a functional system, by interacting with each other. This means that changes in one of the elements imply changes in the others. This results in the need for a systematic, comprehensive approach to the management of tourism space. What's important, the supply elements in the tourism space are most often developed as a cluster, so as a geographical aggregation of entities specialized in providing tourist services. However, the full formation of the tourism cluster depends on: the flow of knowledge and technology between the said entities, consolidated support and active participation of the local community in the development of tourism, strongly developed supply of tourist products and their production factors, and finally available, adequate supply of labor (ZMYŚLONY 2008). It is worth adding that in the opinion of P. Zmyślony (2008), the development of the tourism cluster requires the selection of leadership entities, that is the entities most involved in the development of tourism in the area, activating and coordinating the activities of other entities.

According to Ł. Nawrot and P. Zmyślony (2009), the need to systematically manage the development of tourism space results from the fact that this space (e.g. tourist region) is treated as a special economic unit. The tourist economy in the region must constantly improve its efficiency, and the region must constantly improve its competitiveness in relation to other areas targeted at tourists' reception. It is worth noting that these researchers equate the development of the tourist region with an increase in its competitiveness. W. Hong (2009, quoted from: MOSTAFAVI SHIRAZI, PUAD MAT SOM 2011) distinguishes several elements indicating the achievement of competitive advantage by a given tourism space:

- 1) infrastructural investments, primarily in relation to the development of the accommodation and catering base, improving the transport accessibility of the area, including its accessibility for people with disabilities,
- 2) strategic planning at the level of all entities of the tourism market,
- 3) care for natural and anthropogenic resources, as well as control of their use, including the implementation of technological innovations in the field of tourism services or crisis management system,
- 4) social development, taking into account economic growth or increase of public safety,
- 5) increase in the efficiency of travel agents, composing packages consisting of individual tourist products produced in a given area,
- 6) development of additional activities that catalyze the development of the tourism economy, e.g. local government support services for entrepreneurship, financial institutions.

One can also look at the tourism space through the prism of actively operating entities. Tourism space considered from the subjective side will also have the character of a system. It will be created by geographical elements (space generating tourist traffic, transit space and reception space of tourist traffic) and social elements (tourists and entrepreneurs providing tourist services and intermediaries in the sale of these services). In the tourism space, social and cultural, economic, technological, political, legal or ecological interactions take place between the social elements of the tourist system. As a result of these interactions, there are changes in social elements (tourists, entrepreneurs and intermediaries), as well as transformations of geographical elements (the three-fold tourism space). In the subjective view of the tourism space, it is pointed out that tourism is carried out not by material flows but by interpersonal relations. In the systematic approach to tourist space management, the starting point are the elements that make up the tourist system and the relationships between them. It is crucial to consider mutual relationships between the indicated elements. Systematic management of tourism space means, therefore, decision making in relation to the elements of the tourist system, which takes into account the occurrence of specific interactions on the side of the other elements of the system (CARLSEN 1999).

### 1.3. The demands of sustainable development in the management of the tourist reception area

As Ar. Welford, B. Ytterhus and J. Eligh (1999) point out, the sustainable development of the tourism economy is mainly related to environmental issues (e.g. efficient energy use, rational waste management, limited water consumption), economic (e.g. improving the competitiveness of public transport, involving local enterprises in the process of planning tourism development, introduction of local products to the offer distributed among tourists) and social (e.g. involving local community in tourism development, indication of real benefits resulting from it, searching for dialogue for future tourism development plans, solving cultural conflicts between tourists and residents). In connection with the above, the management of tourism space, if it is to take into account the demands of sustainable development, must include certain socio-cultural and economic aspects. However, even in the case of managing tourism development in protected areas, the main beneficiary of long-term tourism development should be the local community. Residents of the protected area should derive economic benefits from the development of tourism, should receive support in the promotion of ecological attitudes, and finally should be a party to strengthened relations between themselves and the tourism industry (XU ET AL. 2009).

Ar. Welford, B. Ytterhus and J. Eligh (2002) indicate the necessary conditions for success in implementing the sustainable tourism development strategy: 1) well-established policy of protection of natural resources at the government level, 2) strong interest of local authorities in the implementation of the policy, 3) infrastructural and cultural development opportunities aimed at environmental protection, 4) local entrepreneurs' perception of the demand for organic products, as well as 5) savings resulting from the use of green technologies (reducing energy consumption, waste production, increasing the durability of products), 6) strong social position of the local leader responsible for the implementation of the sustainable tourism development strategy, and finally 7) financial support of the government for the initiative of developing and implementing the discussed strategy. The phenomenon that prevents the sustainable development of tourism in any area is the lack of cooperation between local authorities and enterprises. Similarly, the lack of involvement of the local community in the tourism development process, both from the side of the decisions made and the benefits gained, should be considered extremely negative. Residents should have a real impact on the tourist policy of the managed area, as well as participate in the economic benefits resulting from the development of tourism in this area. Sustainable development of the tourism economy is also hampered by the unequal relations of small and medium enterprises providing basic tourist services with large, often international enterprises intermediating in the sale of these services. Apart from this difficulty, there are also unequal relations between developed economies of countries generating tourist traffic and developing economic systems of reception countries (WELFORD, YTTERHUS, ELIGH 1999).

Long-term planning of tourism space development is closely related to the expectations and reactions of the population living in the analyzed space. Tourism can be properly developed only in a situation where the local community has a positive attitude towards the development of tourism, as well as has the opportunity to participate in this development, decide on the nature of the discussed development and participate in the resulting benefits. It is undeniable that at a time when tourist functions appear in a given space, that is when a given space begins to develop as a tourist space, the style and quality of life of the local community may undergo significant transformations. It means both negative changes (exceeding the absorption ratios and tourist capacity resulting from it: increase in crime, degradation of the natural environment, including noise, pollution of waters, land and air, infrastructure problems, including those related to road transport), as well as positive changes (creation of new jobs, revitalization of historic areas, modernization of infrastructure, improvement of the quality of social life). However, the most complex problems are revealed in the area of direct relations between tourists and local people. Negative attitudes of the inhabitants of the area towards the visitors are extremely significant, objective difficulty in the development of tourism. In connection with the above, the attitude of the local community should be considered the most reliable measure of tourism development potential in a given area. The attitude of the local people to the issue of tourism development in their area depends on several factors: first of all their attachment to this area and their identification with it, furthermore, the perception of the effects of tourism development and, finally, the forms of tourism desired by the local community, developed on their territory. It should also be emphasized that the areas inhabited by mobile population, which is relatively less attached to the area, does not identify strongly with it, and lives there for a shorter period of time, are areas where the development of tourism is definitely easier in relation to the areas where settled population dominates, strongly attached to the place of residence. The second group of people is characterized by much lower openness in relation to the allochthonous population, which radically hinders building positive relations with tourists (AMBROŽ 2008). The results of the research undertaken by M.S. Jackson and R.J. Inbakaran (2006) among the inhabitants of the Australian state of Victoria prove that the population living relatively longer in a given area is not opposed to the development of tourism more than the population living in this area for a shorter period of time. The members of the first group demand rather the possibility of active participation in creating the tourism policy of the area. Interestingly, people who do not have connections with the local tourist business express a stronger desire to get involved in designing tourism development in a given territory.

#### **1.4. Determinants of effective management of the tourist reception area**

A number of researchers have tried to determine the factors determining effective management of tourist reception areas. M. Kachniewska (2004) emphasizes that nowadays, effective management of tourist reception areas requires a comprehensive approach to the problem of all involved entities. It is worth noting that only combined organizational and capital resources of individual enterprises, organizations and local government can be the basis for achieving positive effects in the management process.

Contemporary, strong competition on the tourist market often requires not only cooperation within individual areas (e.g. municipalities), it also forces cooperation between these areas. In addition to the discussed idea of partnership in the management of tourist reception areas, it is also important to be open to the idea of sustainable development and a creative and comprehensive approach to the quality of a local or regional tourist product.

Ł. Nawrot and P. Zmyślony (2009) indicate in their work four principles conditioning the effective management of the tourist region. Firstly, the management of the tourist region is in principle a strategic process. It refers to the whole economy of the region, it treats its elements comprehensively and long-term. It is oriented both to the inside of the region (it takes into account the interests of residents, local entrepreneurs and local government), as well as to the outside of the area (it takes into account the interests of tourists and investors from outside the area). The indicated orientation of management within the tourist region forces the involvement of all entities interested in the discussed process, i.e. residents, entrepreneurs and local government. All in all, the management of the tourist region must be based on long-term development strategies. The second principle that determines effective management of the tourist region is the assessment of the region's competitiveness in the international perspective. The third principle is multifaceted integration. It concerns the method of analysis and assessment of various determinants of the region's competitiveness. It is required by its tourist function and other socio-economic functions of the region. It is desired in the pursuit of various entities to achieve various goals, in the use of diversified resources and in undertaking various activities for variously understood effects of tourism development in the region. Fourthly, effective management of the tourist region enforces a qualitative orientation. Managing the development of tourism in the region should lead to the improvement of the quality of the regional tourism product. This quality must be considered comprehensively, it must not only concern tourist services, but also issues related to the quality of life in a given area, including ensuring security, protection of the natural environment, as well as maintaining the cultural identity of residents.

In the model of competitiveness factors of

M.E. Porter, the so-called "Porter's diamond", adapted for the needs of the analysis of tourism reception areas, N. Vanhove (2008) distinguishes four groups of factors for building a competitive advantage by the tourist region. The first of the factors can be identified with elements defined by J. Kaczmarek,

A. Stasiak and B. Włodarczyk (2002), which create the tourism potential of the region, that is with the structural and functional resources of the region. The second factor consists of elements that complement the tourism potential of the region. These are different types of activities developing around or based on the regional tourism industry. An example may be the souvenir industry, medical services, the construction industry and retail services. The third factor of building the competitive advantage of the tourist region is tourism demand. The fourth is the regional tourism development strategy. It is worth emphasizing that such a strategy is a reflection of regional structures and organization of the tourism market.

The indicated factors should be comprehensively managed, usually by local government authorities. The above-mentioned interdependent elements also determine the chance of developing tourism in the region.

N. Vanhove (2008) formulates four key assumptions of the tourism development strategy. The first assumption is to subordinate tourism to the postulates of protection of the natural environment, cultural heritage and respect for the social bonds and social coexistence formed in the area. The second assumption is to orientate economic development around the tourism sector. Thirdly, the development strategy of the tourist region should assume a significant strengthening of distribution channels for regional tourist products. In the strategy, particular emphasis should be placed on determining the role of national, regional and local tourist organizations, as well as defining the principles of creating new tourist products. The fourth, last assumption of the tourism region's development strategy should be the dynamic expansion of the private tourism sector. It is important that private entrepreneurs are oriented on the quality of products offered, that they are open to cooperation with the public sector, and that they are able to effectively recognize the potential tourist demand.

The efficiency of tourism development management depends on the quality of each of the constituent management processes: planning, organizing, conduction and control. Planning tourism development is not an easy process. Its complexity results mainly from the multitude of spatial planning scales (national, regional and local), from which cohesion is required at the same time. Plans created at different spatial scales must be coordinated. Secondly, the complexity of planning tourism development is related to the involvement of various interest groups (central authorities, local governments, entrepreneurs, property owners and many others). Due to the multitude of categories of entities involved, the real possibilities of implementing tourism development plans are significantly limited (CIZMAR, LISJAK 2007). Effective preparation of economic, social and environmental regional structures for the development of tourism is possible only through the involvement of all interested entities in the process. This partnership should be as broad as possible, involve all the key players for the development of tourism in the region on a democratic basis, including the private and public sector, as well as public benefit organizations. The indicated entities should define individual benefits resulting from the development of tourism in the area, identify common benefits, and then should strive to develop a shared vision of the tourist region. Determining this vision is related to a number of compromises that the entities in question should work out. These compromises should concern the scope of impact of individual entities on jointly made decisions, as well as the principles of operation and, above all, cooperation for the development of tourism in the region. The partnership of entities interested in developing tourism in the region should be based on the conscious need for cooperation and on mutual respect, trust and honesty in the activities undertaken, both individual and joint. Ł. Nawrot and P. Zmyślony (2009) suggest that there are two fundamental reasons for the emergence of a partnership for the development of tourism in the region.



The first is the perception of the tourism market entities of the ability to develop more effectively through cooperation. The second, definitely stronger reason is the crisis in the regional tourism market, which forces cooperation between endangered entities.

K. Czernek (2008) suggests that the most difficult stage of building a tourism partnership in the region is the creation of a common, regional tourist product. While it is possible to undertake ad hoc one-off joint activities with reference to the other elements of the marketing-mix concept of the tourist region, the development of a common regional idea requires strong integration of entities operating on the regional tourism market. Ł. Nawrot and P. Zmyślony (2009) indicate that effective control in the process of tourism development management in the region should concern all areas: satisfying the needs of tourists, achieving desired economic effects, reducing negative and strengthening positive social and cultural effects of tourist inflow, preserving the quality of the natural environment.