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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION SUMMARY

SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF WARMIŃSKO- MAZURSKIE VOIVODSHIP AND HUMAN CAPITAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2007-2013

The concept of “human capital” fully reflects contemporary developmental opportunities of Polish administrative regions and functional areas. Investing in people contributes to capital inflow, promotes innovation creation, is a causative factor of networking at various spatial scales and it shapes a competitive position in a local, regional, national and macro-regional dimensions. On the one hand, human capital fosters social innovations creation and on the other hand, it is their product as well. This capital is a catalyst of new values incubation, ideas or projects which then create conditions for seeking innovative solutions to social problems. This also translates into regional or local development, quality of life increase and larger social groups inclusion in these processes. Since the early 90s, many documents of European Commission have been emphasized important role and category of social innovations meaning. As a result, the European Union has created many grant programmes supporting innovative ideas for solving social problems.

European Social Fund is the main source of support in this regard. In accordance with the Commission's guidelines of the ESF in the period 2007–2013, at the Member State level operational programmes should have taken social innovation into account and mainstreamed it into EU development practice. Human Capital Operational Programme was the only available source of these plans co-financing in Poland in the period 2007-2013.

Thanks to regional component in the framework of HCOP 2007-2013 funds, Polish regions had a chance to implement innovative projects responding to complex education needs, social exclusion and labor market. It was especially important for regions experiencing social problems, such as the Warmińsko -Mazurskie Voivodship.

The main goal of dissertation is to identify barriers and factors determining social innovation development and to determine support effectiveness for this process from EU structural and investment funds in the period 2007-2013 (HCOP). The goal formulated in this way was achieved thanks to quantitative and qualitative innovative projects research implemented in the period of the EU programming perspective 2007-2013 in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship in the

framework of HCOP. The author reviewed and critically analyzed social innovations which were results of innovative projects co-financed by the HCOP funds implementation in a region with a special consideration to their effects on sustainability. Conducted surveys, in-depth interviews and case study descriptions enabled to explain difficulties and barriers, as well as to identify factors fostering social innovations development at the analyzed region level.

Despite significant expenditure from EU funds and a noticeable improvement in generating social innovations, their impact on the region's development is still marginal.

This requires further research concerning the change need of the mechanisms of creating demand innovations instead of supply ones, and their better anchoring in the regional development processes and real local or regional needs.

Therefore, further research in this area is necessary, including regional development processes, ways of creating regional policy, and not only changes in the framework of EU programmes supporting innovations in social sphere.

Keywords: innovation, social innovation, European Social Fund, European Union, Human Capital Programme 2007–2013, regional dimension.