

International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting  
Under Adverse Conditions

4-6 December 2017 |

Adam Mickiewicz University | Poznań | Poland



Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions:  
Analysing Innovative Troubleshooters in Action

[ruraction.eu](http://ruraction.eu)

This project has received funding  
from the European Union's  
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No. 721999



Organiser:





International Conference

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**Regular conference fee**

35 EUR/150 PLN

for more information  
see page 9

**Venue**

Adam Mickiewicz University  
Poznań, Poland  
see pages 10-14

**RurAction project**

> [ruraction.eu](http://ruraction.eu)

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Structurally weak rural regions in Europe face multiple challenges. They have a below-average economic productivity because only a few enterprises from the fields of industrial production or commercial services offer jobs. If any, then mainly very small and medium-sized businesses are active in these regions. Furthermore, the regions are insufficiently supplied with physical or social infrastructure, also public transport is limited. Inhabitants lament reduced communication in village life, even more as the small shops, the baker's, the doctor's surgery, the post office and the village pub, that once were important meeting places, have long gone. The assumption that investors would come and open up economic welfare, that they create new jobs and promote regional development were abandoned. As a result of the bad economic situation and the infrastructural deficits in many rural regions, a downward spiral has started with ever more people moving to the cities, thus further reducing the economic opportunities of rural regions. These trends are increased by public discourses referring to a lack of future prospects and raise out-migration as a topic of discussion.

The question of how such downward spirals can be stopped cannot be answered easily. Typically, rural development happened by way of more or less top-down approaches in the form of EU as well as national development programmes that include bottom-up elements. However, there is an imbalance in the range of support activities due to funding agricultural rather than community-related development. The EU and Member States are aware of such problems. Furthermore, awareness has grown that in rural regions novel approaches to the solutions strengthening their socio-economic potentials are needed.

Against this background, hopes are turned not least towards social enterprises. They are seen as a factor which can help to cope with the multifaceted problems. Social enterprises or social entrepreneurs are actors who, through an entrepreneurial approach, develop and implement social innovations, empowering regional actors in doing the same. Their focus is not profit, but the production of social added-value for a region. Social innovations offer novel ways of proceeding in order to meet existing problems more satisfactorily than previous ones.

The concept of social innovation in terms of significant changes in social, cultural, and political practices – apart from economic and technical innovation – has become accepted in most scientific disciplines. It is considered as an important complement to innovation research, not least in the context of social-science based spatial research. However, whereas the innovative capacity of cities typically is estimated to be high, it is said that rural regions are remote from (social) innovation since they consist of homogeneous and traditionally minded groups





International Conference

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4-6 December 2017

inclined to preserve, not to change, existing assets. This would mean that social enterprises in rural regions have to act in very different ways under adverse conditions.

The conference focuses on both the challenges and the potentials for social innovations in the countryside. In particular, the specific economic, political and cultural framework conditions of structurally weak rural regions in Europe will be discussed. These conditions are considered as the socio-spatial contexts of social entrepreneurial acting.

To be more specific, the following issues will be highlighted:

- > socio-economic dynamics of structurally weak rural regions (Session 1)
- > rural development strategies and policies (Session 2)
- > changes of rural life and culture (Session 3)

In the conference we will welcome a number of internationally renowned researchers from different disciplines such as sociology, human and economic geography, political sciences, and business studies. Together with practitioners from award-winning social enterprises they will give insights into the current debates on rural regions. The sessions will be complemented by poster presentations.

The conference marks the beginning of the research network “Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions: Analysing Innovative Troubleshooters in Action (RurAction)” funded by the European Union under the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie Programme “Innovative Training Networks”. From 2017 to 2020, ten early-stage researchers will conduct research on different aspects of social enterprises and social innovations in structurally weak rural regions. They will be trained for a career both in the academic field and in the field of social entrepreneurship.

We invite researchers, PhD students, actors from social enterprises, and policy makers from the local, regional, national and European level to discuss challenges and opportunities of structurally weak rural regions in Europe and to elucidate the specific potentials of social entrepreneurship for the development of innovative solutions.





International Conference

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4-6 December 2017

## Monday, 4 December 2017

Venue: Lubranski Small Aula, Collegium Minus, Wieniawskiego 1

13:30 Registration

### 14:00 Official Opening of the Conference – Welcome Addresses

Prof. Dr. Ryszard Naskręcki | Vice-Rector of the Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU), Poznań, Poland

Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper | Director of the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS), Erkner, Germany

Representative of local authorities

Representatives of the AMU Faculties of Geography and Social Sciences

Representatives of the Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial

Management and the Institute of Sociology

Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Erkner, Germany

Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Strykiewicz | AMU, Poznań, Poland

15:30 Coffee break

### Session 1: Socio-Economic Dynamics of Rural Regions

Chair: Prof. Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Erkner, Germany

### 16:00 Keynote Speech: Solidarity, Sustainability and the FairShares Model: Early Insights from the FairShares Labs Project

Dr. Rory Ridley Duff | Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

### 16:40 Inner Peripheries in Europe and Poland. Theory and Practice

Dr. Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek, Dr. hab. Marcin Wójcik and

Dr. Paulina Tobiasz-Lis | University of Lodz, Poland

### 17:00 Development of Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas – Diagnosis, Trends, Recommendations

Prof. Dr. Jerzy Bański | Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

### 17:20 European Rural Regions Facing Problems and Challenges: Similarities and Differences

Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Strykiewicz | AMU, Poland

### 17:40 Final Discussion of Session 1

19:00 Dinner

Venue: Wiejskie Jadło (eng. Rural Cuisine) Restaurant

Old Market Square 77 | entrance from Franciszkańska Street



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4-6 December 2017

## Tuesday, 5 December 2017

Venue: Collegium Geographicum, B. Krygowskiego 10, room 4

### Session 2: Rural Development Strategies and Policies

Chair: Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Strykiewicz | AMU, Poznań, Poland

- 10:30 Keynote Speech: Fostering Leadership through Collaborative Governance in Rural Northwest America: (Re)building 21<sup>st</sup>-century Communities in the Columbia River Gorge**  
Darren J. Nichols | Portland State University's School of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland, USA
- 11:10 Recent Polish Initiatives Concerning the Social Economy**  
Prof. Dr. Ewa Leś | University of Warsaw, Poland
- 11:30 Knowledge-based Municipal Entrepreneurship Empowerment in Rural Regions**  
Prof. Dr. George Tsobanoglou | University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Greece
- 11:50** Martin Hollinetz | OTELO eGen, Vorchdorf, Austria
- 12:10 Final Discussion of Session 2**
- 12:30** Lunch – Venue: Collegium Geographicum
- 13:30 Poster session** – Venue: Collegium Geographicum

### Session 3: Changes of Rural Life and Culture

Chair: Prof. Dr. George Tsobanoglou | University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Greece

- 14:30 Keynote Speech: Some Notes on the Future of Rural and Rurban Places: Relations, Cultures, and Everyday Life**  
Prof. Dr. Marc Redepenning | Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany
- 15:10 Semantics of ‚Slow‘ as Social Innovation: German and Italian Cittaslow Towns in Comparison**  
Ariane Sept | Technische Universität Berlin, Germany
- 15:30 Social Economy – the Tactic of Resilience or Adaptation to the Crisis?**  
Dr. Przemysław Nosal | AMU, Poland
- 15:50 Rural Societies Between Tradition and Innovation**  
Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Germany
- 16:10 Final Discussion of Session 3**
- 16:30 Conclusions**  
Tadeusz Strykiewicz | AMU, Poland and Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Germany
- 16:40** Coffee break
- 17:00** End of the conference



International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

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**Wednesday, 6 December 2017**

**Possibility to participate in a bus excursion to Wągrowiec, including:**

- > visit to the communal office
- > visit to the social cooperative "Common Success"
- > dinner with the representatives of local authorities and the leader of the cooperative

Wągrowiec is located in the Pilski subregion – a structurally weak rural region in north-eastern Wielkopolska, 55 km in the north of Poznań. The commune of Wągrowiec is a place of successful implementation of social innovations.

**14:00**      **Departure of the bus**

**22:00**      **Expected time of return at Poznań**

**Meeting point for departure**

parking in front of Collegium Geographicum,  
Ul. Krygowskiego 10, 61-680 Poznań

**Place of return at Poznań**

Ul. Wieniawskiego 1 (city center)



International Conference

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## Session 1: Socio-Economic Dynamics of Rural Regions

Chair: Prof. Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Erkner, Germany

### 16:00 Keynote Speech: Solidarity, Sustainability and the FairShares Model: Early Insights from the FairShares Labs Project

Dr. Rory Ridley Duff (and Dr David Wren) | Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

**Abstract** In this paper, I begin by describing three interests (general, mutual and private) that have been theorized as the underpinning logics of four distinct approaches to social enterprise. These approaches are presented through a critique of the typology used in the ICSEM global study of social enterprise models to clarify its value and identify how different models of social enterprise contribute to the creation of social value. In the second part, I explore how social value creating activities contribute to the UN's 2030 sustainable development goals. Using the FairShares Model as an example, I suggest how innovations in social enterprise help to align the social economy with sustainable development by acting as an institutional force that redistributes power and wealth through an expansion of reciprocal relationships that - over the medium/long-term - enhance citizens' capacities to democratically control their trading activities. In concluding the paper, the long-term implications of adopting FairShares design principles are considered through an examination of the arguments for pluralism in social enterprise development.

### Biography



**Rory Ridley-Duff** is a management researcher. He is Reader in Co-operative and Social Enterprise at Sheffield Hallam University where he chairs the Principles of Responsible Management (PRME) Group within Sheffield Business School, and acts as key contact by his university's Institutional membership of the EMES International Social Enterprise Research Network. He is currently working on several EU projects to develop the social economy: the Erasmus+ project "FairShares Labs for Social and Blue Innovation"; the NEMESIS Horizon 20/20 project to embed social innovation skills in schools; and the EMPOWER-SE project (Cost Action) to invest in social enterprise scholars. Rory's main research areas are the governance and management of cooperative social enterprises, and the application of the FairShares Model to advance workplace and community democracy. He is part of the editorial advisory board of the Social Enterprise Journal and Journal of Social Entrepreneurship, and co-organiser of the UK Society for Co-operative Studies conference. In addition to publishing a leading textbook on social enterprise ("Understanding Social Enterprise: Theory and Practice"), he has published articles in: Human Relations; Corporate Governance: An International Review; Industrial Relations Journal; European Journal of Sports Management; International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research; Social Enterprise Journal; Econviews, and; Journal of Cooperative Studies.







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## 16:40 Inner Peripheries in Europe and Poland. Theory and Practice

Dr. Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek, Dr. hab. Marcin Wójcik and  
Dr. Paulina Tobiasz-Lis | University of Lodz, Poland

**Abstract** All rural areas are subject to change overtime. Structure and spatial elements of rural space are evolving in different directions and at different speeds which may also lead to peripheralization. During the 1980s and 90's spatial peripherality as an analogy for "economic potential" was measured using various spatial models, especially one which used Newtonian gravity and it was widely assumed that the effects of peripherality could be predicted as a function of distance from centers of economic activity. Both, in continental and smaller scale, the peripheral regions and „enclaves” of peripherality identified were mostly rural sparsely populated areas where – according to the description of inner peripheries – “(...) peripherality comes primarily from their poor accessibility and paucity of real urban centers where central functions can be concentrated . (...) The main problems of these areas are their weak and vulnerable regional economies and their lack of appropriate job opportunities. (...) These trends create the conditions for social exclusion, and even territorial exclusion, from mainstream socio-economic processes and opportunities.” (*Nau- mann, M. and Fischer-Tahir, A. eds., 2013. Peripheralization: The Making of Spatial Dependencies and Social Injustice. Springer Science & Business Media.*)

This presentation explores the problem of conceptualizing and delineation of Inner Peripheries as well as specificity of peripheralization processes within Europe. The compilation of findings allows for a generalized determination of the nature and intensity of changes ongoing when it comes to the peripherality of rural regions.

### Biography



**Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek** is a geographer. She is Assistant Professor at the Department of Regional and Social Geography, University of Lodz (Poland). Karolina is committed to the EU-projects “Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development (RELOCAL)” – H2020 and “Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner peripheries in Europe (PROFECY)” - ESPON. She was a main researcher in the National Science Centre funding schemes entitled “Application of the concepts of sense of place and social capital in the analysis of NIMBY conflicts in rural areas of Poland” and “Spatial representations of rural settlements. Case of Poland”. Dr Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek has conducted the cohesion analysis of Warsaw-Lodz bipolar metropolitan area and participated in the program “The Network of the Most Interesting Villages in Poland”. Her main research fields include in general social (human) and rural geography, geomatics as well as the issue of locational conflicts. She is the author and co-author of numerous publications i.a. (together with M. Bednarek-Szczepańska) “The NIMBY syndrome in rural areas of Poland. Determinants and specificity of conflicts on the location of unwanted investments” (2016).







International Conference

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4-6 December 2017

### 17:00 Development of Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas – Diagnosis, Trends, Recommendations

Prof. Dr. Jerzy Bański | Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

**Abstract** The purpose of the presentation is the evaluation of Poland's rural areas in terms of conditions for the SME sector development and the evaluation of economic entities' activity operating in rural areas. An attempt was made to identify the development barriers for entrepreneurship in countryside. The study covered the sector of micro, small and medium sized enterprises on the regional scale. Five problem areas are analyzed: institutional background, regulatory background, financial support, enterprise competitiveness and enterprise cooperation.

An average entrepreneur is a man aged around forty years with higher or technical secondary education. There are very few young rural entrepreneurs aged below 30. The structure of rural enterprises is dominated by micro-enterprises, among which there is a significant share of one-person entities. Women are on average running every fourth rural enterprise. In the branch structure service companies prevail, followed by trading and production enterprises.

Cooperation intensity between rural entrepreneurs and business background institutions is rather low. Two fundamental regulations – on the one hand most relevant in terms of running an economic activity and on the other bringing most difficulties - include tax system as well as obtaining external capital. Bureaucracy is definitely the most important obstacle impeding efficient and uncomplicated application for external support and further development of rural entrepreneurship.

In promoting the development of rural entrepreneurship, attention should first be paid to: local and regional characteristics of competitive advantage, the effective use of business support systems and the secure and clearly understood regulations.

#### Biography



**Jerzy Bański** is a full professor of human geography in the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences (IGSO PAS) and a professor of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. His main research interests include: rural and agricultural geography, land use, regional policy, spatial organization and local development. From 2008 he is the head of Department of Rural Geography and Local Development at the IGSO PAS, in the period 2006-2012 was the President of the Polish Geographical Society and from 2017 he is the chair of the Local and Regional Development Commission of International Geographical Union. Jerzy Bański is author of 370 publications, including 21 books and more than 170 papers with review processes. He was co-ordinator of 40 research projects and member of 35 other national and international projects.



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4-6 December 2017

### 17:20 European Rural Regions Facing Problems and Challenges: Similarities and Differences

Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz | AMU, Poland

**Abstract** The paper presents the main challenges that structurally weak rural regions in Europe face. Some of these are common in all structurally weak rural regions and include:

- demographic issues, such as a declining or ageing population, and out-migration;
- deficits in the availability of physical and social infrastructure, limited access to transport networks;
- below-average economic productivity and few jobs, limited innovative capacity, worsening socio-economic situation.

However, there are also considerable differences among European structurally weak rural regions depending on their respective institutional settings (including various EU support programs), settlement structures and economy, level of social capital, environmental vulnerability, resilience to crisis etc.

In the paper an attempt is made (1) to analyze a selection of inter-regional similarities and differences, and (2) to answer the question whether (or to what extent) these adverse conditions create an opportunity for the development of social innovations and social entrepreneurship as a chance of overcoming the negative consequences of structural weaknesses in the discussed rural regions.

#### Biography



**Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz** is full professor in geography. He is Head of the Research Department “Regional Policy and European Integration” at the Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland). His main research fields include human and economic geography, regional and local development, regional policy, organization and dynamics of socio-economic space, in particular its contemporary transformations. He is the managing editor of the journal “Quaestiones Geographicae. Series Human Geography and Spatial Management” (in English) as well as a chairman of the Editorial Board of the journal “Rozwój Regionalny i Polityka Regionalna” [Regional Development and Regional Policy] (in Polish). Recently he edited or co-edited the following monographs: “Kurczenie się miast w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej” [Urban Shrinkage in East-Central Europe] (2014); “Krajobrazy kulturowe. Sposoby konstruowania i narracji” [Cultural landscapes. Ways of Construction and Narratives] (2016; together with R. Traba and V. Julkowska) and “Creative Industries in Europe. New Drivers of Sectoral and Spatial Dynamics” (Springer Verlag, 2017; together with C. Chapain).





International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

## Session 2: Rural Development Strategies and Policies

Chair: Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Strykiewicz | AMU, Poznań, Poland

### 10:30 **Keynote Speech: Fostering Leadership through Collaborative Governance in Rural Northwest America: (Re)building 21st-century Communities in the Columbia River Gorge**

Darren J. Nichols | Portland State University's School of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland, USA

#### Abstract

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (The Gorge) is a world-renowned place of natural beauty along 136 km of the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest. The bi-state region is home to 13 rural communities and 4 indigenous tribes.

In 1986 Oregon, Washington, and the United States Congress passed strict interstate compact laws to protect the Gorge's natural, scenic, and cultural resources. While the law also allows for the "enhancement" of the economy, that effort was left to small rural communities. For three decades the struggling communities blamed much of their economic weaknesses on the top-down conservation laws.

In 2013, facing desperate socio-economic challenges, a few visionary entrepreneurs convened 80 diverse leaders from the region: agencies, industries, small towns, ports, and citizens. The grassroots group's mission was somewhat ambiguous – leaders were simply invited to begin working together on shared challenges and opportunities. The group quickly found an identity as collaborative problem-solvers and advocates for the region. Today "OneGorge" generates ideas, develops regional communications, organizes legislative advocacy, shares resources and connects people to leverage regional strengths and empower rural communities. To revitalize rural regions while stewarding natural landscapes requires innovative collaboration and leadership at all levels. This presentation tells the story of the innovative grassroots formation of "OneGorge" – an example of social innovation and collaborative governance that is strengthening rural communities.

The presentation provides insights into collaborative governance, multi-disciplinary problem solving, and evidence-based public policy in the rural Pacific Northwest. The presentation offers lessons for fostering leadership through collaborative governance in 21st century rural communities.

#### Biography



**Darren Nichols** is a practitioner who works with rural communities and regions in the Pacific Northwest states of Oregon and Washington. He advises local governments, tribes, agencies, and private sector clients on public policy and collaborative decision making. Mr. Nichols has also served as executive director of the Columbia River Gorge Commission, where he worked to protect a National Scenic Area and support the regional economy of thirteen rural communities. He has worked with the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Earlier, Darren oversaw the implementation of Oregon's statewide land use planning program







International Conference

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Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

covering a landscape of 255,000 sq. km and 241 cities of which only five have a population greater than 100,000.

He currently serves as adjunct faculty in the School of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon (USA). Previously Darren served as associate director at the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, a collaborative governance and public policy Center jointly housed at the University of Washington and Washington State University. Darren holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Economics, a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, and a Juris Doctorate in Environmental, Natural Resource and Energy Law. For more about Darren's background and experience please visit [www.linkedin.com/in/darrennichols](http://www.linkedin.com/in/darrennichols)

### 11:10 Recent Polish Initiatives Concerning the Social Economy

Prof. Dr. Ewa Leś | University of Warsaw, Poland

**Abstract** The paper presents a concise review of strategies, programs and initiatives deployed by Polish governments between 2013 and 2017 to foster the nation's social economy (i.e. the Responsible Development Strategy RDS, Strategy for Human Capital Development SHCD, Polish Rural Development Program RDP, National Program for Social Economy Development NPSED). It also provides practical examples of policy tools ranging from fiscal incentives, to support measures, and entrustments. The objectives of RDS include fostering socially sensitive and territorially sustainable development based on the principle of solidarity, ensuring effective state and economic institutions that contribute to economic growth, as well as promoting social and economic inclusion. RDS is based on several pillars: reindustrialization, developing innovative companies, capital for development, foreign investment, and social as well as regional development including a pact to promote rural areas and education. The primary goal of RDP concerns improving the competitiveness of Poland's agricultural sector, ensuring a sustainable management of natural resources, undertaking climate-oriented measures and sustainably developing rural areas. The primary objectives of NPSED, in turn, encompass job creation at the local level, providing high-quality services for the general public (especially social services in local communities), and increasing the number of active social economy actors and social enterprises. This is intended to help fulfil the national development objectives, such as increasing employment levels, social cohesion and social capital.

The Polish social economy is an emerging sector made up of a plurality of entities including cooperatives, associations, foundations and other similar social enterprises and organizations. In the past decade, Poland's political institutions (parliament, government, local governments) have gradually recognized the social economy's capacity for correcting grave social and economic imbalances caused by the systemic change after 1989 and for helping promote social and economic inclusion as well as economic development in rural areas.







International Conference

## Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

### Biography



**Ewa Leś** is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Civil Society Development at the Institute of Social Policy at the University of Warsaw. Her main research interests are the comparative aspects of social policy reconstruction, covering both Polish social welfare reforms and the analysis of national and international welfare partnerships. She has been a contributor in numerous projects and books on non-profit, third sector and social economy as well as social enterprise programs. Her publications include *The Voluntary Sector in Post-Communist East-Central Europe*, *Dimensions of Social Economy* and *Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship*. Her extensive community service experience includes consultation to diverse Polish and foreign public institutions and social economy organizations, among them the Polish Presidential and Prime Minister Offices, the Polish Parliament, the Polish Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, The National Cooperative Council, the World Bank and UNDP.

### 11:30 Knowledge-based Municipal Entrepreneurship Empowerment in Rural Regions

Prof. Dr. George Tsobanoglou | University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Greece

### Abstract

The LEADER approach has helped rural actors assess the long-term potential of their local regions and has proven to be an effective and efficient instrument in the organization of local development policies. The European Commission has promoted this partnership-based method of funding projects in the EU initiatives URBAN, URBACT, EQUAL, Local Agenda 21, Transition Towns and Territorial Employment Pacts. This is what gave rise to Community Led Local Development (CLLD). The CLLD is a knowledge-based local empowerment dynamic mechanism used by entrepreneurial innovators at sub-regional level. It has the capacity to mobilize and involve local communities and organizations so they can contribute to a learned, sustainable and inclusive social development. The CLLD is a new type of partnership geared to nurturing social innovation. In the contribution, the CLLD method will be shown as the tool to apply for advancing local social entrepreneurship in rural areas, as local partnerships and territories become central subjects round which participation develops. Examples of policies which work along such principles will be presented while the problematic of systemic variation within the EE will be explored, bringing in some of the issues surrounding local knowledge-power ensembles. Barriers to social economy applications, as knowledge issues, will be explored as the CLLD needs to be drafted of how a particular Member State has approached it, including recommendations for effective implementation. Applications and sound evidenced based policy gives value to the role of conflict mediation and local skill promotion as part of local cooperative agreements for the building of local self-confidence and entrepreneurship.





International Conference

## Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

### Biography



**George O. Tsobanoglou** studied Sociology, Anthropology and Political Science at the Universities of Trent, McMaster and Carleton in Ontario, Canada where he took his PhD in Sociology. He is the Director of the Sociology of Work Lab and Professor of Sociology, Sociology Dept., University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Greece. He is the Vice-President of the Research Committee on Sociotechnics/Sociological Practice of the International Sociological Association (ISA-RC26). He worked as a researcher at the Institute of Social Research, Oslo and was a visiting Professor at the Universities of London, London School of Economics, of Leeds and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. He served as a Scientific Advisor to the President of the Greek Employment Service (OAED) and was the Director of the Work Conditions Section of the Hellenic Occupational Health and Safety Institute (ELINYAE). George is the Greek Partner of the EU-project "Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions: Analyzing Innovative Troubleshooters in Action (RurAction)". His main research fields include the sociology of work-processes, communication and local employment development, policy analysis in empowerment and participation in local labor applications, capacity building and the social economy formation in a comparative perspective. Some of his recent publications include: "The Debt Crisis in the Eurozone: Social Impacts", with N. Petropoulos, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK (2014); "Spatial and Local Socio-Economic Development : Theory, Methods, Strategies", (2016) with G. Korres and E. Kourliouros, Stamoulis Eds, Athens; "Approaches to the Post-WWII Labour-Based Social Economy of Greece", (2017) in G.M. Korres et al, "Handbook of Research on Policies and Practices for Sustainable Economic Growth and Regional Development", IGI Global Disseminator of Knowledge, Hershey, PA, US.

### 11:50 Rural Development Strategies for Innovation Cultures

Martin Hollinetz | OTELO eGen, Vorchdorf, Austria

### Abstract

Granted, rural regions are facing great challenges. At the same time, these could be seen as an opportunity. Rural regions have always had to deal with changes and so far have coped well. Small, manageable structures enable faster decision-making during change processes. What is currently happening out of necessity is that regional innovation culture is being renegotiated, whereby increasingly top-down directives and the creation of local innovation networks are decoupled from each other. Regions preparing for the future must focus on and foster the following network structures:

1. Innovation humus. Spaces and formats are needed that give people opportunities to discuss, experiment with and advance new ideas. Examples of this include open workshops or open technology laboratories.
2. Innovation greenhouses. When the humus is good, plants grow better and, by analogy, support structures (such as technology centers or co-working initiatives) can be more effective.
3. Weeding out. If companies are well developed and rooted in the region, expansion strategies can be successfully implemented. Here again, regions can score points through lean decision-making.





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Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

ing and support structures and by actively strengthening innovation culture. This requires creating a culture of inviting outsiders, especially young people, to come and develop regional living spaces into viable spaces for tomorrow.

## Biography



Martin Hollinetz is one of the founding members of OTELO eGen, an employment cooperative in Austria. Organization, strategy and public relations are in addition to the establishment of an international network for innovation culture, new, trend-setting educational offers and process consulting his focus.

As a regional manager, Martin has already devised new models in the field of work, education and regional development. Participation, cooperation and the innovative reconnection of existing structures were for him the decisive ingredients for participation in the OTELO eGen and seamlessly tie in with the international OTELO network for innovation culture.

## Session 3: Changes of Rural Life and Culture

Chair: Prof. Dr. George Tsobanoglou | University of the Aegean, Mytilini, Greece

### 14:30 Keynote Speech: Some Notes on the Future of Rural and Rurban Places: Relations, Cultures, and Everyday Life

Prof. Dr. Marc Redepenning | Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany

## Abstract

This talk has three goals:

1. I will try to discuss the utility of the Systems Theory-inspired distinction between social structure and semantics for studying the everyday lives of people inhabiting rural places and for coordinating research on socio-spatial relationships.
2. In a second step, I will closely examine the potentials of space-related semantics to steer and orientate local life.
3. The third part will discuss the relationship between culture and everyday lives in rural or rurban localities. Here, I will use the example of urban gardening and alternative food networks in Germany's Bamberg region to look in detail at how culture is framed and linked to identity and rurban life. I will attempt to transfer some of the insights from this cultural-geographic analysis to the phenomenon of social innovation.

## Biography



**Marc Redepenning** is a geographer. He is Professor of Cultural Geography at the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg. His main research fields include the function of space-related self-descriptions and spatial semantics in modern societies as well as the different figures by which the rural is distinguished from the urban. He is also interested in how local cultures shape the distinctiveness of villages and towns and has recently explored the link between towns, food and identity. A publication on "figures of the rural" will be finished in 2018.







International Conference

## Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

**15:10 Semantics of ‚Slow‘ as Social Innovation: German and Italian Cittaslow Towns in Comparison**  
Ariane Sept | Technische Universität Berlin, Germany

**Abstract** The analytical dimensions of semantics, pragmatics and grammar have been successfully transferred to innovation research to allow for a sociological analysis of innovations (Hutter et al. 2011). Semantics refers to meaning, knowledge and discourse. Pragmatics are understood as creative activities and innovative actions, whereas the dimension of grammar denotes “arrangements, regimes and rule systems that make innovation possible” (ibid.). Such an analytical lens seems very helpful not only for innovation research but also for studying new approaches in urban and rural development.

The Cittaslow movement can be understood as a new approach in urban development. Created in 1999 by four Italian mayors (from Bra, Orvieto, Greve in Chianti, Positano) it has today grown into a network of around 230 small and medium-sized towns in 30 countries all over the world. The basic idea of the network was to transfer the Slow Food philosophy to daily life, administration and development in towns with fewer than 50.000 inhabitants. Towns participating in the Cittaslow movement opt for a leisurely pace, a high quality of life, to foster local and regional identities, sustainable tourism, and to promote and use local products. In order to become a Cittaslow movement member, towns have to comply with a strict set of about 70 criteria regarding for instance environmental policies, hospitality, local architecture or social aspects.

The three dimensions of semantics, pragmatics and grammar are used as an analytical framework to gain a better understanding of how and why urban development changed in these member towns due to Cittaslow principles. By applying the lens of semantics, my presentation will focus on strategies to establish Cittaslow ideas through discourse, symbols and specific local interpretations of the Cittaslow philosophy in German and Italian towns.

### Biography



**Ariane Sept** studied urban and regional planning in Berlin. Her diploma thesis “Urbanistica in Movimento: die italienische Stadtplanung und das europäische Programm URBAN” was published in 2008. After her studies she worked for Interreg-projects in Rome. Back to Berlin in 2009 she has been working as a freelancer in the fields of urban studies and communication. Since 2015 she has been a member of the Graduate School “Innovation Society Today” at Technical University Berlin. In her PhD thesis she is dealing with social innovations in urban and rural development taking the network Cittaslow as an example. Articles on Cittaslow as an urban concept (2018) as well as on urban and spatial innovations (together with Martina Löw, 2018) are forthcoming. Together with her colleagues from the Graduate School she is editing a volume on innovation phenomena (“Innovationsphänomene. Modus und Effekte der Innovationsgesellschaft”, 2018).







International Conference

## Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

### 15:30 Social Economy – the Tactic of Resilience or Adaptation to the Crisis?

Dr. Przemysław Nosal | AMU, Poland

**Abstract** The on-going economic crisis is subjecting a growing number of individuals to social marginalization. Long-term unemployment engenders passivity and causes welfare dependency. This situation raises questions over resilience strategies, resourcefulness and adaptability.

On the one hand, resilience is a bottom-up approach. It is focused on individuals' skills which are harnessed to regain a feeling of control over their situation. Thus, such "resilience skills" are used to deal with their respective crisis situations.

On the other hand, social policies support the development of resilience. This is the major goal of the activation paradigm. A resilient society does not require large-scale state involvement.

The social economic system (e.g. social cooperatives, NGOs or centers for social integration) can be analyzed as one that fosters resilience-building. The question is whether the actors are more "resilient" or "adaptive"?

#### Biography



**Przemysław Nosal** - PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. His research interests cover the sociology of sport, the sociology of social problems, social economy and social policy. He is a member of European Sociological Association and Polish Sociological Association. He was awarded a Polish Prime Minister Award in 2013. He is the author of "Technology and Sport" (2013) and the co-editor (with H. Jakubowska) of "Sociology of Sport" (2017) – and the first Polish reader about the sociology of sport. He is also the author of a number of papers about the social policy and social economy in Poland.

### 15:50 Rural Societies Between Tradition and Innovation

Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann | IRS, Germany

**Abstract** Many structurally weak rural regions in Europe are facing enormous challenges: structural deficits such as a below-average economic productivity, low professional perspectives, an insufficient supply of technical and social infrastructures as well as of services drive people moving to the cities, thus further reducing the economic opportunities of rural regions. This calls for novel approaches to solutions both in community development and regional policy. However, in order to be able to move beyond long-beaten paths social practices and attitudes are required that enable proactive, creative and innovative action. In this respect, cities are said to be hotbeds for innovation, whereas in contrast rural regions are seen very often to be hostile to novel approaches because – as it is stated – they consist of homogeneous and traditionally minded groups, inclined to preserve existing structures and social practices.





International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

In the presentation first of all different types of rural regions with their typical characteristics will be differentiated. Furthermore, the potentials for novel ideas and approaches in the countryside will be discussed. Not least it will be pointed out how the term innovation – and particularly social innovation – can be understood in the rural context. It will be argued that in rural regions both tradition and innovation are needed and that it is a question of how to effectively combine both aspects.

## Biography



**Gabriela B. Christmann** is a sociologist. She is Head of the Research Department “Dynamics of Communication, Knowledge and Spatial Development” and Deputy Director at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner (near Berlin). At the same time she is Professor of Sociology at the Technische Universität Berlin. Gabriela is the Coordinator of the EU-project “Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions: Analysing Innovative Troubleshooters in Action (RurAction)”. Her main research fields include the sociology of knowledge and culture, social innovations, rural sociology, communicative processes in the construction of spaces as well as resilience building. She is editor of “Zur kommunikativen Konstruktion von Räumen” (2016) and (together with Margarethe Kusenbach) co-editor of the Special Issue „Disaster Vulnerability and Resilience Building at the Social Margins“ of the „International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters“.





International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017



## Organisers

Local organisers' committee at Adam Mickiewicz University | AMU, Poznań, Poland



### Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz

Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management  
Head of the Research Unit of Regional Policy and European Integration  
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### Dr. Łukasz Rogowski

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### Wojciech Dyba

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Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions:  
Analysing Innovative Troubleshooters in Action  
[ruraction.eu](http://ruraction.eu)

This project has received funding  
from the European Union's  
Horizon 2020 ITN programme  
under the Marie Skłodowska-  
Curie grant agreement  
No. 721999





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# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

## Organisers



RurAction organisers' committee at Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space | IRS, Erkner, Germany



**Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann**

Coordinator of RurAction

Head of the Research Unit:

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Project Manager of RurAction

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## The Consortium of the RurAction project

- > Lead Partner: Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space | IRS, Erkner, Germany
- > Adam-Mickiewicz-University | AMU, Poznan, Poland
- > ADCMoura | Moura, Portugal
- > Ballyhoura Development | Kilfinane, Ireland
- > Johannes Kepler University | Linz, Austria
- > Leibniz Institut für Länderkunde | IfL, Leipzig, Germany
- > Otelo eGen | Vorchdorf, Austria
- > Roskilde University | RUC, Roskilde, Denmark
- > Social Impact | Potsdam, Germany
- > Stevia Hellas | Lamia, Greece
- > Technische Universität Berlin | Berlin, Germany
- > University College Cork | UCC, Cork, Ireland
- > University Institute of Lisbon | ISTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal
- > University of Leipzig | Leipzig, Germany
- > University of The Aegean | UAE, Mytilini, Greece



Social Entrepreneurship in Structurally Weak Rural Regions:  
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International Conference

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4-6 December 2017

**Fees** – only for external guests, not members of the RurAction consortium

The mandatory **conference fee** for the **two days** (including two coffee breaks at 4 and 5 December 2017 as well as lunch at 5 December 2017) is **35 EUR/150 PLN**.

The optional fee for the **official dinner** on 4 December 2017 (including a three-course dinner with a glass of wine/water) is **35 EUR /150 PLN**, if you wish to attend the dinner. Please make also your choice, if you prefer a vegetarian dish.

The optional fee for the bus **excursion to Wągrowiec** on 6 December 2017 is **20 EUR/85 PLN**, if you wish to join the excursion. Please note that places are limited. We will work on a “first come, first served” basis. You will be notified soon after the registration whether you can join the excursion.

### Accommodation

- > See a variety of hotels at: > [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)
- > Apartments as an alternative to hotels and hostels: > [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)
- > AMU Dormitory „Jowita” (for University guests)  
hostel standard, option cheaper than hotels: Zwierzyniecka 7  
> [dsjowita.home.amu.edu.pl/pokoje-goscinne/standard-podwyszony](http://dsjowita.home.amu.edu.pl/pokoje-goscinne/standard-podwyszony)  
Questions, reservations: > [dsjowita@amu.edu.pl](mailto:dsjowita@amu.edu.pl)





International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

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## Venue

Adam Mickiewicz University | AMU, Poznań, Poland



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## How to get to Poznan

### By plane

Ławica airport is located within the city borders, the access from the airport to the city centre is easy and possible by a public bus or taxi

> [www.airport-poznan.com.pl/en](http://www.airport-poznan.com.pl/en)

### By train or bus

Poznań is located half way between Warsaw and Berlin, there are several connections from there, train/bus station is located 15 minutes from the first day of the conference venue

> [www.poznan.pl/mim/turystyka/en/how-to-get-to-poznan,p,1065,1066.html](http://www.poznan.pl/mim/turystyka/en/how-to-get-to-poznan,p,1065,1066.html)

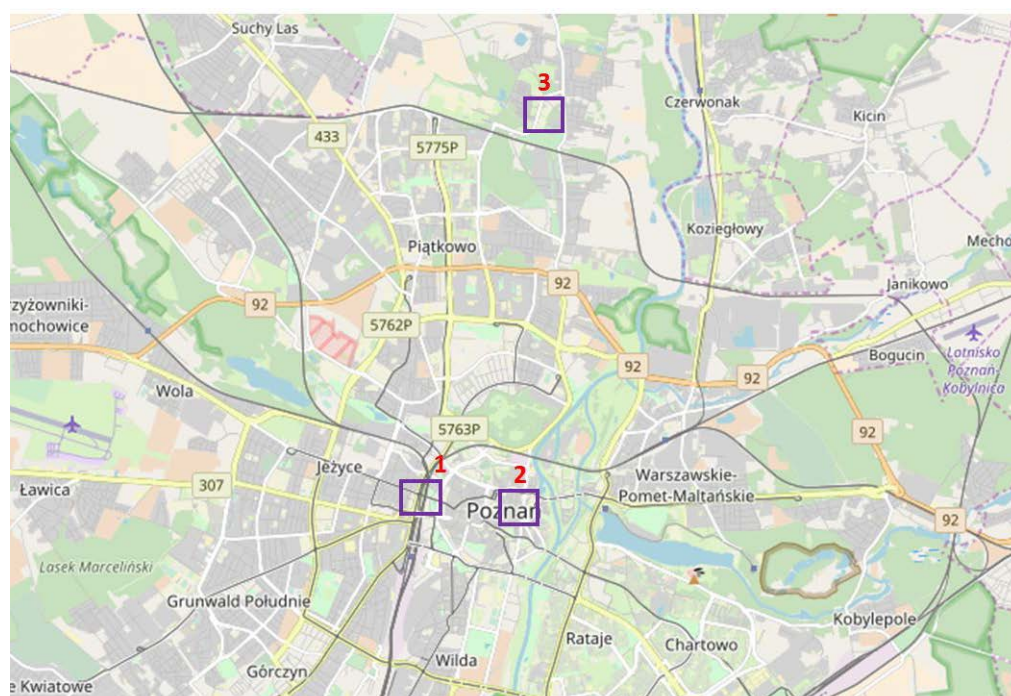


International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

## Conference venues



### City transport connection searcher and timetable:

> [www.jakdojade.pl/poznan](http://www.jakdojade.pl/poznan) + write "A" – start place, "B" – end place





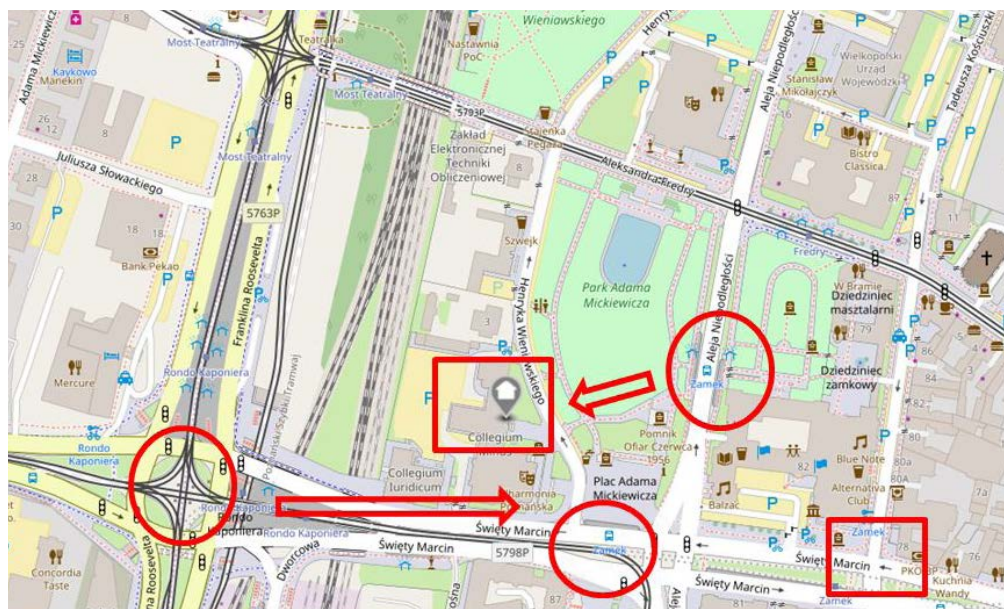


International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017

## Conference venues and public transport to the venues



### Venue of the 1st day of the conference (conference opening) at 4 December 2017:

Lubranski Small Aula, Collegium Minus, Wieniawskiego 1  
District: City Centre – Old Town (“Stare Miasto”)

#### Tram/bus stops:

- > Rondo Kaponiera (exit – direction św. Marcin)  
tram lines: 2,8,10,11, 12,13,14,15,18  
bus lines: 48,59,68,69;
- > Zamek – bus lines: 51,63,68,69,71

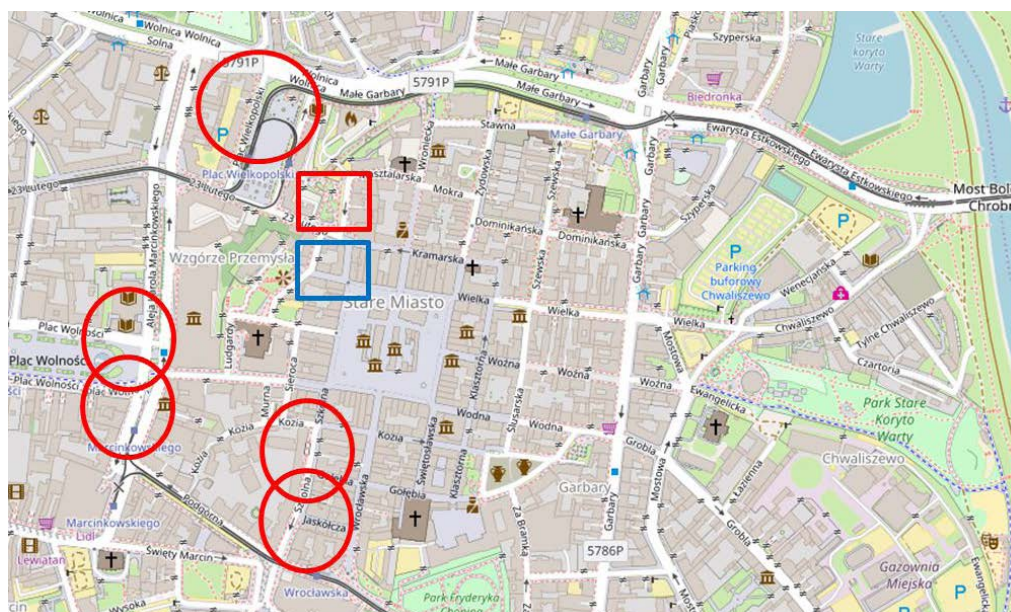




International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017



## Venue of the optional dinner at 4 December 2017:

Wiejskie Jadło, Stary Rynek (Old Market Square) 77  
District: City Centre – Old Town ("Stare Miasto")

## Tram stops:

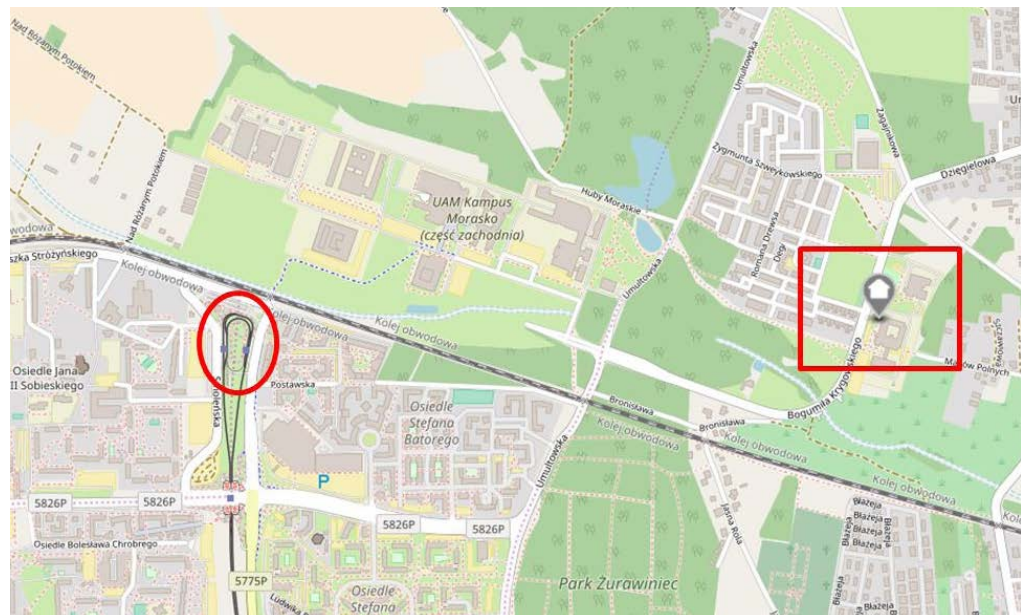
- > Wrocławska – lines: 5, 16
- > Marcinkowskiego – lines: 5, 16
- > Plac Wielkopolski – lines: 3,4,8,17



International Conference

# Challenges and Opportunities of Structurally Weak Rural Regions in Europe

Social Innovations and Social Enterprises Acting Under Adverse Conditions  
4-6 December 2017



## Venue of the 2nd day of the conference at 5 December:

Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management  
Collegium Geographicum  
ul. Krygowskiego 10  
District: AMU Campus Morasko, eastern part

### Tram stops:

- > 1 stage: Jana III Sobieskiego, trams 12,14,15,16  
(trams are recommended, faster than buses); buses 51,74,85,90,91,93 + change
- > 2 stage (final destination): UAM Wydział Geografii, bus 98 or 348

### Alternative route:

- > 1 stage: Kurpińskiego, trams 12,14,15,16 + change into:
- > 2 stage: UAM Wydział Geografii, bus 87