

Work Package 6 – the local arena for combating poverty

Local report: Radom, Poland

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Abbreviations

LTU - Long Term Unemployed (LTU): Persons unemployed longer than 12 months

PES - Public Employment Services (PES): depending on the administrative level they are either poviats/local (local – LAU I) and regional (NUTS II)

PiS – Party “Law and Justice”

PO – Party “Civic Platform”

PSL - Polish People's Party oriented to the people living in rural area

MIP - Minimum Income Protection: For the purpose of this report framework, MIP refers to cash benefits/transfers that can essentially be characterised as **benefits of last resort**, with the aim to alleviate poverty or social exclusion. Eligibility to MIP is determined by **means- testing**.

SAO – Social Assistance Organisation: a term referring to public social assistance offices in gminas and in cities (Municipal SAO)

SP - Single Parents (SP): Single parents are those who live alone with their dependent children. Dependent children aged less than 16.

Working Poor (WP): Workers whose equivalised household income is less than 60% of the national median income

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Introduction

There is no visible poverty. One beggar, who sits next to the church. We have a hostel for the homeless, we have a hostel for homeless men, we have a hostel for homeless women, but in relation to the population of the city it is a very small number..... But yet there is poverty, in areas where there is social housing, and there truly is poverty, and these are simply saying - very hermetic enclaves. These people live there, do shopping.... actually their way around the city is this social housing area or way to local SAO .. and nothing more (Local Politician).

Radom was selected as a typical post-industrial city. It has been experiencing very high unemployment and the related phenomenon of poverty since the beginning of 1990s. It is currently under the economic restructuring. The process is strongly supported by the city authorities trying to use a very large potential of NGOs to solve the problem of social exclusion, which is innovative as far as the rest of Poland is concerned. The city is looking for its own ways to combat poverty due to the sense of uniqueness of the political and economic position within the Mazovia region. Apart from that, the city has a distinctive experience in solving the problem of social exclusion of the Roma population, which dates back to the 1960s. This distinguishes Radom from most of the Polish cities, since the enclaves of the Roma in the country are generally quite rare and small in size.

It is a medium-sized city with the poviats status (LAU 1, former NUTS 4). In the past it was a poor working-class city and a part of the Central Industrial Area, which was built before the World War II. The workers of the city revolted in June 1976 against increase in food prices. This protest and accompanying urban unrest were brutally suppressed by the Communist authorities. Judicial proceedings associated with it had given political dissidents an opportunity for consolidation and greater public actions in the following years.

In the 1990s, the city experienced the collapse of big industrial companies, which resulted in sharp fall in vacancies. Military equipment factory, which had employed 12 thousand people in the late 1970s, was downsized and restructured into two different companies: Arms Factory (400 employees) and ASPA ELECTRO servicing (not producing) sewing machines. The following companies were closed down: Radom Tanning Factory, Radom Factory of Fireproof Materials, Enamelled Articles Factory, and Radom Telephone Factory. In place of those big state-owned companies dispersed business centres have begun to arise, composed of small and medium-sized enterprises using primarily the existing human capital which remained after the fall of the huge Socialist companies. However, those business centres did not create as many vacancies as before. Moreover, they offered completely different type of work: more jobs were associated with production services. For many industrial workers it proved very difficult to retrain for work in services and they became the long-term unemployed.

In 1999 a nationwide administrative reform was introduced and Radom lost the status of the voivodeship city (NUTS 2), which meant also the reduction in jobs for white-collar workers. Yet, those jobs have begun to reappear slowly in the newly introduced (on the basis of the mentioned reform) powiat structures (LAU 1), as well as in the spreading services sector. Radom, remains still an important municipal centre in the south of the Mazovian region, and is one of the hundred communes in Poland with the highest developmental potential (Dziemianowicz, and others 2012).

Among all 66 Polish sub-regions (NUTS 3) Radom sub-region is ranked 49th in terms of the GDP size. National income per capita in this sub-region amounted to only 71% of the country's GDP indicator in year 2008 and equalled 7500 euro. Even though the sub-region has been growing less than average in the last decade, the city itself is not in apathy. The community of Radom is still characterised by the industrial culture, with its strong and highly valued morale of work. Radomians were perceived in the interviews as strongly oriented to work, even the one popularly considered unattractive.

The report is based on 10 interviews conducted with the following persons:

- Deputy of City Mayor responsible for health and social policy,
- Director of the Municipal Social Assistance Organisation,
- Director of the Local Public Employment Services,
- Priest - Director of the Caritas Diocese of Radom (Catholic NGO institution)
- President of Dobry Duszek Foundation, NGO
- President of Radom Food Bank, NGO
- Local politician, Law and Justice Party
- Local politician, Polish People's Party
- Local politician Civic Platform Party
- Leader of Trade Union "Solidarity" in Radom District

Moreover, a brief phone call was carried out with a representative of the Radom association named Romano Waśt (Roma Helping Hand). Additionally, public speech given by Piotr Duda, President of Trade Union NSZZ Solidarnosc in Radom on 25/06/2013 at the Higher School of Commerce was observed and written down. The speech concerned government policies relating to working poor and junk jobs.

1. Local socio-economic factors

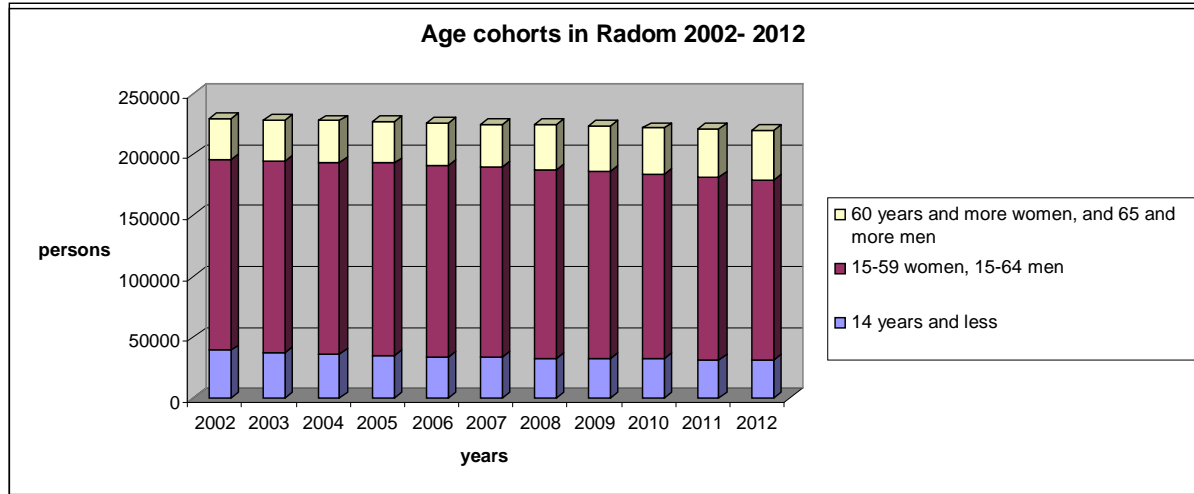
1.1. Population

The size of the population of Radom in the last 10 years decreased by almost 10 000. This phenomenon is quite common in Poland, not only in the city under study. The re-ruralisation is connected with the search for a better quality of life in the countryside and the development of private transport infrastructure enabling access to work and schools in the nearby cities (Frenkel 2010). Currently, about 220 000 people live in Radom.

In the years 2002-2012 the population of children (up to 14 years old) decreased by 20%, while the population of elderly people at non-working age i.e. women over 59 years old and men over 64 years

old increased by 24%, whereas the cohort of people in the working-age decreased by 6%. This means that the population of Radom is systematically aging (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Age cohorts, city of Radom (LAU 1), 2002-2012



Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013: http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks

Radom is characterised by small ethnic diversity, foreigners constituted only 0.1%-0.2% of the city workforce in 2005-2010. However, there is a visible and recognized group of Roma. It consists of 500 to 600 residents – which constitutes approximately 1/3 of the population of Roma in the Mazovia voivodeship (NUTS 2)¹. Over 60 years ago, the Communist Government had forced Roma to settle down and a large group chose Radom. They were employed in the industry sector. The interlocutors claim that the main source of their living is currently trading of used cars and as a result their economic situation is bearable. The Radom association named Romano Waśt, which assesses that only a small group of Roma has a job, does not confirm this opinion. Car trading is becoming more and more difficult in terms of making a living and local employers do not want to employ the Roma. Probably for this reason that small ethnic community is being pushed to shadow economy. The Woldanowska Centre, financed from the city budget, operates in the neighbourhood of the Roma community and aims at greater integration of Roma – especially children – with the local community. Voivodship (NUTS 2) authorities have decided to build the Roma European Centre of Culture and Education in Radom.

1.2. Local employment patterns

No data concerning employment are available for the city of Radom. Thus, only statistics for the Radomski sub-region (NUTS 3) will be presented in this section. Apart from the city of Radom it consists of 7 other surrounding poviats (LAU 1)².

¹ In 2002 only 1600 Roma lived in the entire Mazovia voivodeship (Szymańczak 2011)

² Radom powiat (rural powiat surrounding the city of Radom), białobrzegi powiat, zwoleński powiat, lipski powiat, kozienicki powiat, przysuski powiat, szydłowiecki powiat.

The population of economically active people in Radomski sub-region is constantly decreasing. In 1999 it amounted to 336000 people, 152000 women and 184000 men (Table 1) and shrunk to 261000 in 2009. The main reasons for that seem to be the aging of the population in the sub-region and early retirements.

Table 1. Economically active population (aged 15-64) in Radomski sub-region (NUTS 3, PL128), 1999-2009

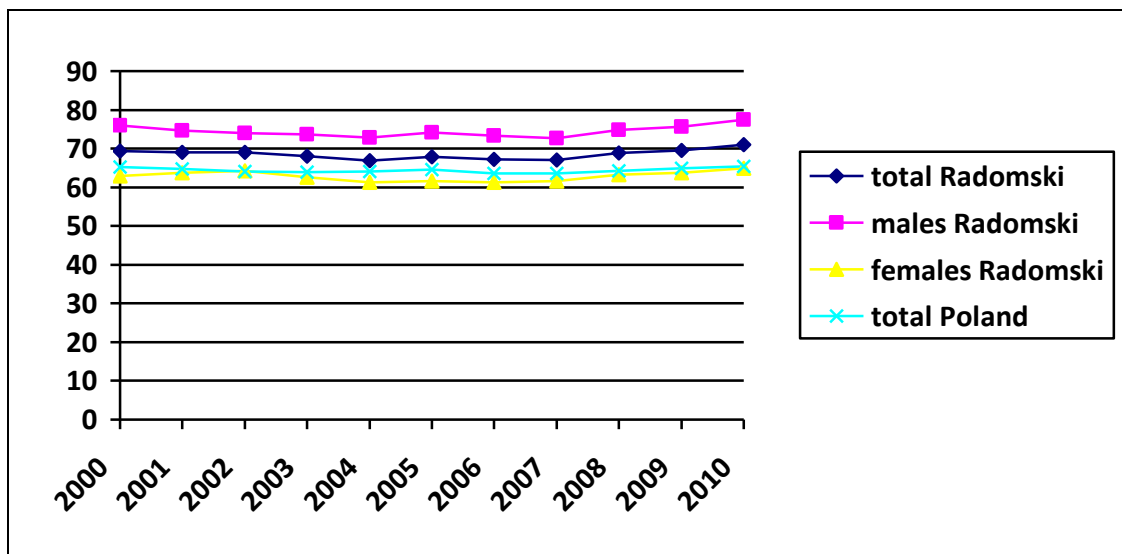
Year	Economically active population (persons)		
	Total	Females	Males
1999	336400	152300	184100
2000	316600	141100	175500
2001	287700	128900	158800
2002	243800	112600	131100
2003	237000	111200	125900
2004	249400	116100	133200
2005	273500	124400	149200
2006	287100	127800	159300
2007	290200	128000	162200
2008	278500	119900	158600
2009	261000	110200	150700

Note: The economically active population is defined as the sum of employed (all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week or were temporarily absent from such work) and unemployed (all persons who were not employed during the reference week and had actively sought work during the past four weeks and were ready to begin working immediately or within two weeks) persons.

Source: Eurostat.

The economic activity rate increased slightly in the years 2007-2010. It has invariably been lower for women than for men. Yet, the total activity rate in Radomski was higher than the average for Poland in the period 2000-2010 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Economic activity rates (population aged 15-64, male and female) in Radomski sub-region (NUTS 3, PL128) and in Poland, 2000-2010

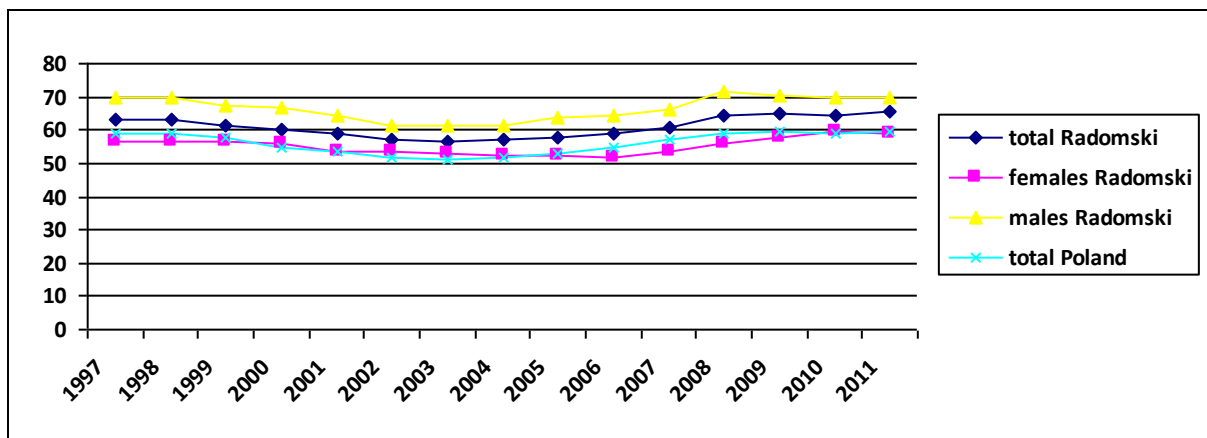


Note: Economic activity rate is the share of population that is economically active (see note Figure 1).

Source: Eurostat.

The employment rate in Radom increased markedly in years 2006-2011, however, the discrepancies between genders persist: in 2011 the employment rate for women reach 59.7% and for men 71.3%. Similarly to the activity rate also the employment rate in Radomski was higher than the average for Poland in the years 1997-2011.

Figure 3. Employment rate (population aged 15-64, males and females) in Radomski sub-region (NUTS 3, PL128) and in Poland, 1997-2011

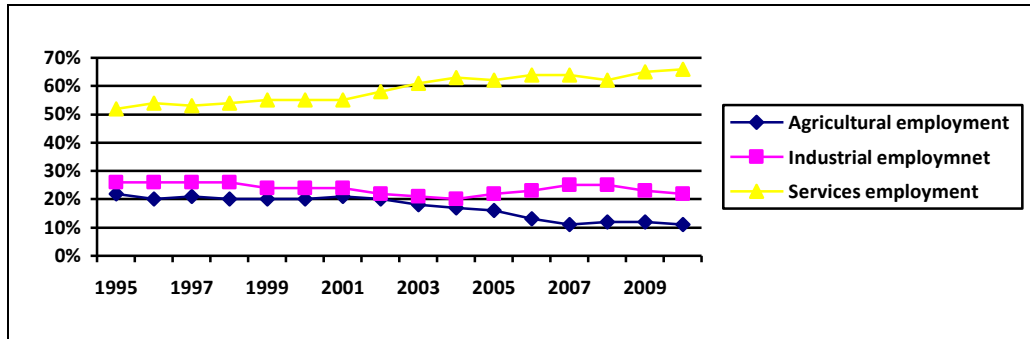


Note: Employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 15 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

Source: Eurostat (LFS).

Nowadays, the vast majority of the employed population works in services while decline in the employment in agriculture is observed. Share of the employment in industry fell to a small extent in the years 1995-2010 (Figure 4). However, it is not a modern industry. In 2007, only 1.02% of people worked in high technology manufacturing sector.

Figure 4. Employment in agriculture, industry and services as a % of total employment in Radomski sub-region (NUTS 3, PL128) 1995-2010



Source: Eurostat.

Small and medium-sized entrepreneurship is prevailing in Radom. The number of people who registered micro businesses (up to 9 people) amounted to 24 000 in 2012, which seems a large number taking into account the fact that there are 220 000 people living in city. However, the registry does not inform about actual activity of the companies. In 2012 there were 980 small and medium-sized enterprises registered and 24 large enterprises including three very large ones (Table 2). This is a crucial difference in comparison to the times of socialism, when large state-owned companies dominated in Radom offering thousands of jobs in industry.

Table 2. Registered firms in the city of Radom (LAU 1) 2009 - 2012 (party inactive)

Firms by size of employment	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	25053	25371	24263	24571
0-9 employees	23965	24274	23179	23567
10-49 employees	875	878	869	789
50-249 employees	185	189	190	191
250-999 employees	24	26	22	21
1000 and more employees	4	4	3	3

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013: http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks

Basing on the interviews we may conclude that a relatively large proportion of small companies is involved in shadow economy and that employers employ workers without contracts. The illegal employment is common among the low or medium skilled and it occurs in all age categories. The unemployed undertake mostly illegal works in gardening and agriculture, construction, light industry (especially footwear), minor services such as sewing, car service and repair and transport services. Moreover, it is estimated that approximately 1/10 of the registered unemployed perform a permanent job without any contract (Kończyk, Biesiadecka, 2007). Work experience gained occasionally (e.g. minor works for the neighbours) concerns 33% of the unemployed registered in the Public Employment Services (Kończyk, Biesiadecka, 2007).

The opinion that there is a widespread shadow economy in Radom prevails among the interlocutors: *I believe that in Radom there is a very large grey zone, and this grey zone was created in the 1990s. People have learned to cope – then in Radom, there was no industry, no factories, there was 30% unemployment and very often – unfortunately – this resourcefulness still remains. That is to say, that the father has never officially worked, the children continue. Although they live pretty good...*(NGO representative)

A large number of cars, construction development, quite big savings of the residents, well-functioning chain stores as well as work in shadow economy indicate that Radom inhabitants are coping in new reality.

1.3. Local unemployment patterns

Radom has experienced high unemployment from the very beginning of the transformation. Furthermore, several of the poviats adjacent to the city of Radom (especially south-western) are distinguished by exceptionally high unemployment rates compared to the national average.

The number of people registered as unemployed in local PES dropped markedly in years 2002-2012 – from almost 28 000 to approximately 21 100 (Table 3). Registered unemployment³ rate dropped in 2008 to 19.5% and increased gradually to 22.6% in 2012 (Table 4). Although the beginning of 2013 brought a sharp increase in unemployment (BOX 1) the situation in the second half of the year was similar to the previous year (the unemployment rate in August 2013 equalled 22.6) Unemployment rate in the years 2004-2012 for the city of Radom remained significantly higher than the national average.

³ Data regarding **registered unemployed persons** include persons who, in accordance with The Polish law are classified as unemployed. An **unemployed person** is understood as a person not employed and not performing any other kind of paid work who is capable of working and ready to take full-time employment. It is important that she/he does not receive monthly income of the amount exceeding half of minimal remuneration for work (excluding the income generated from interests or other income generated from money gathered on bank accounts).

Table 3. Unemployed registered in local PES, the city of Radom (LAU 1), 2002-2012

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Persons	27883	27737	26676	26582	23887	19963	17880	19959	21442	20020	21112

Note: Unemployed registered in local Public Employment Services according to national regulations.

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013.

Table 4. Registered unemployment rate in the city of Radom (LAU 1) and in Poland, 2004-2012

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Unemployment rate in the city of Radom	28.2	28.0	25.8	21.8	19.5	21.5	22.7	21.7	22.6
Unemployment rate in Poland	19.0	17.6	14.8	11.2	9.5	12.1	12.4	12.5	13.4

Note: Unemployed registered in local Public Employment Services according to national regulations.

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS, 2013.

BOX No. 1

The local labour market is in a worse situation than ever before. In January the Public Employment Services in Radom registered nearly 4000 people who had lost their jobs. Prediction for the next months is very pessimistic. January brought a sharp increase in unemployment in the city and in the poviát. Every day crowds of people appear in the Radom employment agency and want to register.

-Unfortunately, during the first month of 2013, 1885 more people were registered as unemployed. In January we registered in total 3800 people without work. That's a lot because in general during one month we register about 2500 people. Total unemployment in Radom and the Radom poviát amounts to 40 068 people. The situation on the labour market results from the crisis and declining of economic growth in the country. In December most temporary employment contract come to an end. In January employers do not know yet what will their income be and do not want to sign new contracts – Józef Bakula, Director of the Public Employment Services in Radom explains.

Radom is not the only city where unemployment is rising. Unfortunately, the trend is nationwide. Let me remind you that unemployment in Poland has exceeded 15 percent. We are trying to attract as a large group of investors as possible to our city, we modify the law to broaden industrial areas and develop professional education. However, bad economic situation in the country and in the European Union has a big impact on our labour market and rising unemployment – says the City Mayor, Andrzej Kosztowniak.

Source: . www.onet.wiadomosci.pl

A major issue is an increase in unemployment among people aged 55 and more. The number of unemployed aged 24 and less fell from 5474 in 2003 to 2611 in 2012, whereas the number of the older unemployed people grew in that period from 1011 in 2003 to 3152 in 2012 (Table 5).

Table 5. Registered unemployed by selected age categories, the city of Radom (LAU 1) , 2003- 2012

Registered unemployed by age	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	Number of unemployed in PES register									
24 years and less	5474	4821	4494	3697	2836	2567	3030	3157	2620	2611
55 years and more	1011	1202	1484	1687	1695	1755	2132	2520	2760	3152

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013.

The group of the older unemployed, constituted mostly by the former industry workers, has inadequate (outdated) skills and is willing to take up simple jobs (e.g. taxi drivers, locksmith) – which are, however, not available on the local market. The employment is possible in agricultural processing industry (e.g. food packaging, transport works in agriculture), but the former industrial workers refuse to take it. There is also a demand for people who could undergo some training connected with technology of CNC machine tools and start working in such sector but it requires work with computer, which is quite impossible among the unemployed of this type.

The number of the unemployed who lost their jobs for reasons directly attributable to the workplace has been regularly decreasing from 14.8% in 2003 to 6.9% in 2012 (Table 6). The employers have simply learned to use temporary contracts of employment and as a result dismissal is no longer as dominant reason for losing a job as in the 1990s.

Table 6. Dismissals reasons attributable to company, the city of Radom (LAU1), 2003-2012.

Unemployed in result of dismissals From companies as a part of total registered unemployed	Years									
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
(%)	14.8	13.6	12.7	11.9	10.9	11.1	12.7	11.2	6.9	6.9

Source: own calculations on the basis of Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013.

Table 7. Gender composition of registered unemployed in Radom (LAU1)

Men and women in registered unemployment	Year									
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
%										
Men	49	49	49	47	46	47	51	52	51	52
Women	51	51	51	53	54	53	49	48	49	48
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013.

Bringing up small children is a huge obstacle for women to take up employment. Only 2.5% men presented it as a reason preventing from taking job offered by local PES in comparison to 10 times more women (25.5%) (Konczyk, Biesiadecka, 2007). The situation could have improved slightly since 2007 due to the fact that four nurseries were opened (for children up to 3 years old), financed by the city and the rate of children aged 3-6 attending kindergartens increased from 49.2% in 2003 to 78.2% in 2011 (Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS).

1.4. Long-term unemployment patterns

Long-term unemployment is a serious social problem in Radom. In 2012, the population of the long-term unemployed people who registered in the local Public Employment Services amounted to 9550 people, among which 5234 people had been out of work for more than 24 months (Table 8). The number of the long-term unemployed dropped in the years 2004-2011 (Figure 6). The greatest drop was observed in the number of those unemployed for over 24 months.

Table 8. Long term unemployed by time spend in PES register, city of Radom (LAU 1) 2003 -2012

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Registered unemployed 12 months and more	16633	15468	14955	13778	11370	9111	8886	8717	8905	9550
Registered unemployed 12-24 months	5383	4651	4465	4190	3119	2567	3404	4336	4163	4316
Registered unemployed more than 24 months	11250	10817	10490	9588	8251	6544	5482	4381	4742	5234

Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013.

Table 9. Registered long term unemployment as part of all unemployed , 2001 -2011, Radom (LAU 1)

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Registered long term unemployment as part of all unemployed	60%	58%	56%	58%	57%	51%	45%	41%	44%	45%

Note: Long-term unemployed are unemployed registered in local PES for 12 months or more.

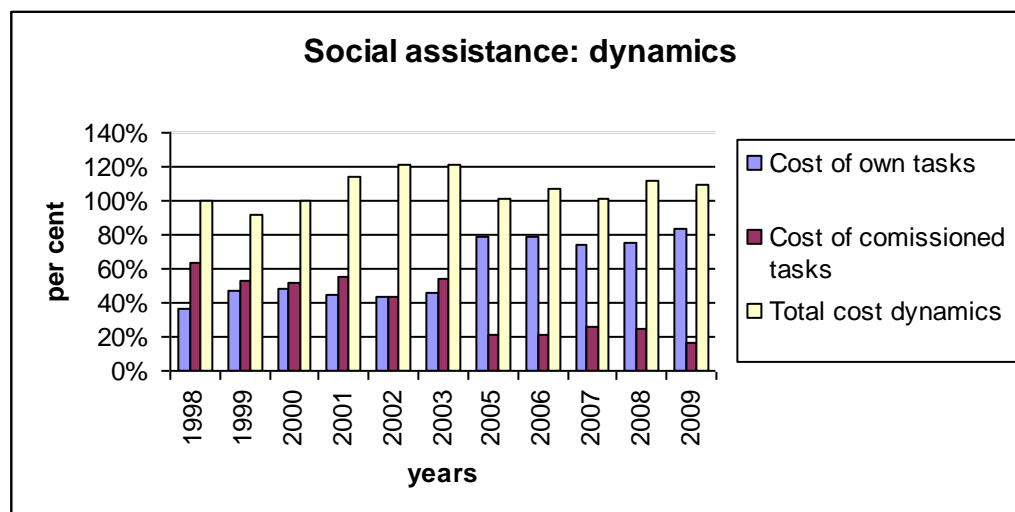
Source: Bank Danych Lokalnych, GUS 2013: http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks

1.5. Local expenditure for minimum income provision

Expenditures on social assistance oscillated changed from 21 214 417 PLN to 22 806 417 PLN in the years 1998-2009. The part of expenditures on own tasks increased in recent period and the part of expenditures on the tasks assigned by the higher state structures decreased. It is even the clear strategy "keeping in check" the expenditures on social assistance in Radom. (Figure 5)

The number of families collecting MIP benefits had been regularly growing in the years 1999-2003, then dropping until 2009 and again seriously increased (Table 9). It is also noticeable that the city has been spending more own money on social welfare in recent years, which is most likely connected to the reduction of spending on commissioned tasks, i.e. cutting of cost on social assistance in the state budget (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Dynamics of social assistance cost , and by source of funding , the city Radom (LAU 1), 1998 – 2009



Source: Gminna strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia w latach 2005 – 2010, Strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia na lata 2011 – 2015

Table 10. Average amount of selected social assistance benefits, the city of Radom (LAU 1), 1998 – 2009

Year	Average amount of the temporary benefit (tasks commissioned by the city) EURO	Average amount of the earmarked benefit (task partly commissioned by city and own task) EURO
1998	39	47
1999	32	59
2000	29	63
2001	25	69
2002	23	44
2003	19	61

Year	Average amount of the temporary benefit (tasks commissioned by the city) EURO	Average amount of the earmarked benefit (task partly commissioned by city and own task) EURO
2004	n/a	n/a
2005	27	30
2006	32	38
2007	26	34
2008	30	60
2009	31	56
2011	10	62

Note: Temporary benefit – basic cash MIP benefit; earmarked benefit – benefit granted to cover specific needs (medicine, food, electricity, clothes, etc.).

Source: Gminna strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia w latach 2005 – 2010, Strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia na lata 2011 – 2015, Sprawozdanie MOPS za rok 2012

Unemployment and disability are the main reasons for receiving social welfare (Table 12). It is very difficult to assess the changes in the forms of aid due to the changes in classifications (Table 12 and 13). Surely, the most common forms of social welfare are different cash benefits and food vouchers. The support is offered in passive (meals, accommodation, food packages, caring services for the elderly, the long-term sick and the disabled) and active forms requiring the involvement of the poor (group actions, activity of the long-term unemployed volunteers, the home environmental self-help).

Table 11. Persons benefiting from social assistance, the city of Radom (LAU 1), 1999- 2012

Years	Persons benefiting from social assistance	Part of city i inhabitants receiving benefits in Radom
1999	9349	4%
2000	10408	5%
2001	11498	5%
2002	12004	5%
2003	12526	5%
2004	n/a	n/a
2005	11293	5%
2006	11915	5%
2007	10809	5%
2008	9407	4%
2009	9225	4%
2010	20256	9%
2011	19230	9%
2012	18582	8%

Source: Gminna strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia w latach 2005 – 2010, Strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia na lata 2011 – 2015, Sprawozdanie MOPS za rok 2012

Table 12. Reasons for benefiting from social assistance in selected years, the city of Radom (LAU 1) in %

Specification	2003	2009	2010	2012
Unemployment	47.2	68	70	68
Disability	19.7	31	31	32
Long term illness	7.4	10.5	12	13
Helplessness in upbringing and home life	6.7	14.5	14	14
Maternity protection	6.4	6.6	7	7
Alcoholism	4.3	5.6	6	6
Orphan hood	4.3	n.c	n.c	n.c
Homelessness	2.1	1.3	1.6	1.5
Difficulties adaptation of former prisoners	1.2	n.c	n.c	n.c
Poverty	0.6	n.c	n.c	n.c
Others	0.4	1.6	1.6	2.0
The difficulties of integration of refugees or subsidiary protection, immigrants	n.c	0.5	2.1	0.1

Source: Gminna strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia w latach 2005 – 2010, Strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia na lata 2011 – 2015

Table 13. Type of social assistance support in selected years granted to a person/household, the city of Radom (LAU 1)

Type of support	2003	2009	2012
Financial assistance or in kind (vouchers)	31650	25714	
Meals	6650	17241	11806
Care services	663	526	
Benefits for foster families and foster children	538	569	
Services in the form of self-help centres	57	40	
Shelter in hostels		100	241
Housing allowances	8700 households	5476 households	
Legal and psychological counselling	1200	2400	
Measures in regard of social work	1721 families	2159 families	
Group activities	1800	640	
Measures of long-term unemployed volunteers	400	110	

Source: Gminna strategię rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia w latach 2005 – 2010, Strategia rozwiązywania problemów społecznych miasta Radomia na lata 2011 – 2015 , online: www.radom.pl

The interlocutors stress that average wages in Radom are quite low. The job seekers decide to take up a job when they get take-home pay of 3 euro per hour while working in shadow economy or an average take-hour pay of 350 euro a month when being officially employed. For example security guards working in the grey zone earn less than 1 euro per hour, 400 hours per month.⁴ Undoubtedly, the population of working poor is large in Radom, although there are no accurate estimates or studies of this phenomenon. According to the estimates of a consulting company Economic Advisors Group (TOR) as much as 50 000 people commute every day from Radom to Warsaw. They look for better working conditions outside the local labour market of Radom. Some of those commuters are highly qualified and well-paid staff but majority of them are working poor.

⁴ <http://www.tygodnikradomski.pl/artykul/publicystyka/5480>

As there have been many long-term unemployed in Radom, Municipal SAO and PES have had offers for them for many years, usually including activating and integrating measures as well as projects partly dedicated to the long-term unemployed but rather on small-scale. The latest project (financed from the European Social Fund) entitled "Partnership for Employment" will include 250 LTU. Since there are 9550 registered in PES it is just a drop in the bucket.

Single motherhood seems to be a stabilized aim of the social welfare in Radom. The expenditures on this purpose are referred to as the protection of motherhood. Increase in school attendance rate of children going to kindergartens in the years 2008-2012 testifies that the issue of childcare is noticeable. According to the data single mothers constitute currently 7% of people receiving social assistance—about 0.7% more than in 2003. The protection of single motherhood is an area of family policy and seems to be more socially accepted in Poland than other policies, which is also visible in Radom. The local authorities look at the situation of single mothers realistically, as such mothers quite frequently ask for compensatory alimony, which they cannot receive from the fathers.

2. The local political context and the local poverty debate

2.1. Political Power in the City: conflict and weak balance

Power in the city is divided between the authority of starosta (head of the powiat) and the mayor of the city. Starosta and the majority of the Powiat Council come from the coalition of the Polish People's Party (PSL) and local committees⁵. The city has been ruled for two terms of office by the local politicians of the right-wing "Law and Justice" (PiS) with the support of one city councillor from the Polish People's Party (PSL). It is a very delicate political balance.

As far as the city of Radom is concerned starosta supervises local PES, while the mayor is responsible for other policy areas and has a control over the Municipal SAO. This division generates conflicts: Although local PES are subject to starosta, the City Hall covers 60% of the PES expenditure and has no say in how the money is spent. There was recently a dispute between local PES and the City Hal of Radom on this topic.

The policy of the City Hall is focused on the infrastructure. Local PiS politicians, wanting to win the third term of office, are actively implementing development policies in the city and try to attract new investments (new airport, new highway, modernization of the railway lines, expanding special economic zone) (BOX No 1). However, there seems to be a general agreement among different political sides concerning the importance of such actions. According to the interlocutors, regardless of who ruled the policy would be the same, i.e. focused on investments and infrastructure.

⁵ They consist mostly of the centre-right Civic Platform-PO: PO and PSL form a coalition in the national government.

BOX No. 2

After nearly two years of effort, the Radom Airport received positive environmental decision. This means that the civilian airport in our city may start operating in September this year. This is our great success – stresses the Mayor of Radom, Andrzej Kosztowniak and adds: I also have been ensured that our airport will be entered into the revised Development Strategy of the Mazovia Region.

Source: www.radom.pl, Radomski Magazyn Samorządowy, No. 11/2003

The local structures of Law and Justice (PiS – the main political opposition in Poland) governing the city feel a little bit “as in the besieged fortress”. For two terms of office there has been an anxiety that the Civic Platform (PO, ruling party in Poland) would exclude Radom from the national investment programmes for political reasons. This sense of danger led to a greater mobilisation of municipal resources and greater activity on the part of the local authorities. It is commonly believed that low labour costs and high economic activity in comparison with other regions are the factors which attract external investors.

The parties which decide about implemented plans in the city are primarily oriented towards economic policy, i.e. to create new jobs. This is expressed in efforts to encourage private business, create a friendly environment for starting companies, take care of the transport infrastructure, create an airport and seek to extend the Special Economic Zone Europark Wisłosan (BOX No. 2). There is also great eagerness to use funding opportunities from the European Union. This approach is characteristic to all local parties including Law and Justice (PiS), Civic Platform (PO) and Polish People's Party (PSL).

BOX No. 3

The Radom subzone of the Tarnobrzeg Special Economic Zone (TSSE) is constantly growing. The fifteenth company has joined TSSE -Roboplast SP. z o.o. – *We welcome each investor with open arms. Negotiations with others are constantly taking place. I am very pleased that new vacancies are appearing and will be appearing in Radom. This is an absolute priority for us* – stresses the Mayor of Radom, Andrzej Kosztowniak.

Source: www.radom.pl, Radomski Magazyn Samorządowy, No. 7/2013

2.2. Political debate on poverty

Combating poverty, although included in the local strategies, is not defined as a direct strategic goal. The terms “poverty” or “the fight against poverty” are absent in the main strategic document of the city titled “The Developmental Strategy of Radom in years 2008-2020”. The city and the powiat authority have developed other strategic documents in which the problem of poverty is partly addressed:

"Communal strategy for solving social problems in Radom in the years 2005-2010"⁶, "Strategy for solving social problems in Radom in the years 2011-2015"⁷ and "Strategy for sustainable development of Radom poviát until 2020". These strategic documents show quite well the approach of local authorities towards social policy related issues. While the city authorities focus mainly on the problems of families and children in a difficult situations, the poviát authorities concentrate on the active labour market policy, in line with the higher administrative level strategies i.e. provincial and national. There is no single strategy that would address comprehensively the main social problems.

"Communal strategy for solving social problems 2011-2015" is declared as a continuation of the task undertaken in years 2005-2010. Similarly to the previous document, poverty is not referred to directly. The main objectives of this strategy revolve around the need to create opportunities for children, youth and families to prevent their marginalization. The activities should be directed primarily towards communities that remain on the margins of society – are socially excluded or at risk of it.

Declared activities are focused on:

- improving the financial standing of families by increasing their own activity and providing material support to families in difficult situations;
- improving the housing policy (improvement of housing conditions, support for families in obtaining their own homes, etc.);
- education of young people, including: inter alia, support for the family in the education of children and youth, increase of the educational role of schools and schools' partnership with parents to increase youth access to secondary and higher education, prevention of pathologies among children and adolescents;
- improving the health of families, including environmental education and health promotion;
- helping families with disabled people, not only in the care for these people, but also through the creation of conditions for the participation of persons with disabilities in social life, financial support, efforts to remove barriers of architecture and urban planning;
- looking after child, including the expansion of various forms of care outside the family such as: clubs, clubs, and in case of the lack of care in biological family developing and providing other forms of family care;
- support for families at risk of disabilities including the multi – range support.

6

http://bip.radom.pl/porta/ra/47/13108/Strategia_Rozwiazywania_Problemow_Spoecznych_Miasta_Radomia_na_lata_2005_010.html

7

http://bip.radom.pl/porta/ra/27/13651/Uchwala_nr_372010_w_sprawie_wdrozenia_strategii_rozwiazywania_problegow_spoleczn.html

In turn, "Strategy for sustainable development of Radom powiat by 2020" also does not apply the term "poverty" directly. One of the main operational goals of the powiat Strategy is "the development of active forms of tackling unemployment", but no innovative actions are proposed.

All interviewees diagnose the problem of poverty as primarily structural, connected directly to the situation on the regional labour market:

Dramas ... people who worked all their life in shoe or metal factory... and they suddenly became destitute and this is not - in my opinion - the campaign against these people, that they are parasites, and so on - this is absolutely not the case. Sure, the individual voices against will be found. However, a more general perception here is such that if someone is poor, this is largely a system, the state has worked badly and they are the victims of this system... (Law and Justice party Politician).

Common diagnosis of the interlocutors concerning the causes of poverty focuses on the effects of high unemployment. The fight against unemployment is interpreted as the best form of poverty alleviation. The fight against high unemployment through development of better conditions for entrepreneurship is - in this approach - indirectly influencing the reduction in poverty.

No one in the world came up with a better way to combat unemployment and economic development. Only economic growth generates jobs and scientists have calculated that only the economic growth above 5% of GDP will increase the number of jobs (PES representative).

Diagnosis of the unemployment as cause of poverty is universal and shared between the local politicians: *Unemployment. In about 90% of cases unemployment causes poverty. There are other determinants such as alcoholism, or any kind of addiction, then disability, but this is on a much smaller scale (Local Politician). However: to cope with unemployment and only from the local government level, without additional measures, it is a very difficult task (other Local Politician). Radom citizens very often, just because of high unemployment, and due to the fact that they do not have too many work opportunities, try to organize themselves and often use self-employment or organize smaller companies that allow them to earn for the daily functioning of the families (other Local Politician).*

It is locally recognised, however, that some poor people have been dependent on social assistance for many years and it has become inherited by younger generations as well.

I have been working in social assistance for many years and I can see second or third generation of clients. I try to fight it but some things never change. The clients have this habit that they bring their small children with them to the social assistance. Entering the MSAO building is not a pleasant thing but those children are accustomed to it from the beginning and then they enter, as it was a familiar place. (MSAO representative)

The interviewees notice that it is necessary to prevent the emergence of the culture of poverty in enclaves of poverty and that the fight against poverty requires comprehensive and costly expertise based on multidisciplinary knowledge. Some of the interviewees suggested that remaining in poverty becomes an individual choice and it is extremely difficult to change this attitude.

The aspects of poverty and exclusion are clearly noticed in Radom. The city spends considerable resources for the integration of the poor by creating opportunities for being active, particularly for the long-term unemployed, children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Yet, fighting poverty is not the main clear strategic goals for local political parties. In particular, this topic is avoided during the local election campaign. *Should we say that it is poverty in Radom during the election campaign? It would be for any politician shot in the head. No politician will tell you in any campaign that it is poverty in this city. Campaigns are focused on success. Maybe the voters are experiencing poverty, but it would be a political death for politician to say about.* (Local Politician)

The common opinion that the poor are mostly unemployed leads to the situation in which the working poor take part in local public debate with difficulty. The Leader of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity" (NSZZ Solidarność) Piotr Duda came to Radom at the end of June 2013 and discussed the topic of "junk" contracts. It was the first debate on this topic in Radom. A relatively small audience was present at this meeting taking in the consideration the size of the working poor population in Radom - approximately 60 persons, usually elderly!

Single mothers seem to be the legitimized aim of social assistance. The crucial interlocutors admitted that they understood the need for family benefits, assistance in kind and services profiled for such a families. Some interpret these efforts in terms of the investment in social capital. It was noted that single mothers could not find work-life balance. It is worth noting that the prevailing part of the interviewees made comments on the style of consumption of people in poverty. The theme of expenditures on pleasures in conditions of very tight budget keeps reappearing and is regarded with curiosity ("how they can afford this") and some kind of disapproval, treated as irresponsibility. None of the respondents interpreted it as a form of the social inclusion (this interpretation showed up only once in WP5 research in interview with one NGO representative in Warsaw).

There is this common phenomenon – they all smoke cigarettes, and a pack of cigarettes costs 11 PLN (2,5 euro). They can afford satellite antenna, they can afford mobile phone. Ok, is it bad that they can afford it? (City Council representative)

If you do not pay for the rent, you will get social housing, but the full packet of cable TV is a must, as well as a good mobile phone, a cigarette even if they are expensive. I can't resign from all pleasures in life, can I? (MSAO representative)

Most of them, they smoke a lot and we ask them – why don't you quit smoking, as it costs a lot? And they say – what else is left there for me? (NGO representative).

It seems that explicit moralizing about the poor is contrary to the perceiving the structural bases for it. Respondents point to the ineffectiveness of labour market policy, saying:

In reality the money is distributed without any obligations. In my opinion, if you take into account the level of unemployment, it is derogatory that the streets are dirty and full of snow in the winter. (MSAO representative)

Or:

...but if we fail to eliminate the shadow economy and to introduce the line tax, it is impossible... we should offer employers some relief otherwise (...) some people will be employed illegally .. [MSAO representative]

One of the well-oriented person estimates that:

Around 40% among registered unemployed are not looking for a job, not an official one. Among them are those who work in shadow economy, which suits them; they do not want to legalize it. There are also those who are not interested in work, they prefer to get welfare benefits and a layette for the baby, coal to heat an apartment in the winter, even a couple of other things ... [W.K. - How would you estimate it? How many??] You know, it's hard to say, I think, about 10%. (PES representative)

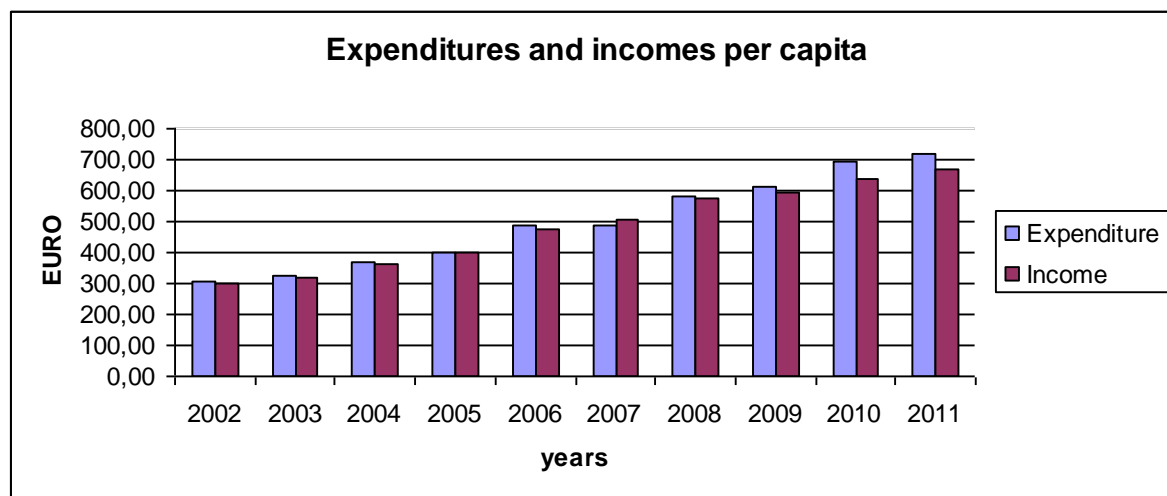
2.2. Financial standing of the city

The situation in the city is dynamic in terms of budget revenues and expenditures. In the years 2002-2011 budget revenues rose nominally by 223% and expenditures, at the same time, by 233%. The growing public debt is becoming more visible: from PLN 42 per capita in 2002 to PLN 231 in 2011. The city taking out the loan, have tried in this way to get own contribution necessary to carry out investments funded from the European Funds. The largest repayment of this debt will take place in 2013⁸ and in that year the total debt will amount to 45.25 % of the revenues. This is a typical debt of a city with powiat rights in Poland⁹. The city is hoping for the improvement in the local economic development associated with the implemented investments. The credit load of the city may, however, be an obstacle to access European funds in the next period (2013-2020).

⁸ <http://bip.radom.pl/download/69/32891/Objasnienia.pdf>

⁹ The Public Finance Sector Debt Management Strategy in the years 2012-2015, Ministry of Finance, Warsaw, December 2011:18

Figure 6. Total public expenditure and income in city budget per capita in euro, Radom (LAU 1), 2002-2011.



Source: Sprawozdania z realizacji budżetu ze strony: www.radom.pl

2.3. Cuts in social spending

The expenditures on social assistance are a large part of the budget (Table 14). The amounts are underestimated due to the fact that a lot of expenditures on social assistance are included in the category of "health care" and "education" and are in fact social expenditures. In the years 2008-2012 the share of expenditures on social assistance in the total expenditures from the budget decreased from 21.5% in 2008 to 15.5% in 2012, which is rather serious.

This relative decrease is explained by the reduction in needs i.e. higher income of the population associated with the decline in the unemployment rate. However, in absolute values, the number of the registered unemployed has begun to grow from 2010, although the unemployment rate had actually dropped before 2010. It seems, however, that the relative decrease in expenditures on social policy was possible due to long not valorised income thresholds for social benefits. Regardless of the reasons, the expenditures on social assistance have been kept in check from the year 2010 and the budget seen as insufficient.

Table 14. Total expenditure and social assistance expenditure in Radom budget 2008-2012

Year	Total city expenditure PLN	Social assistance expenditure PLN	Part of social assistance Expenditure in total city expenditure (%)
2008	518 063 380.04	111 472 418.74	21.5
2009	583 966 322.42	109 573 568.29	18.8
2010	931 685 040.29	141 679 824.20	15.2
2011	863 581 326.44	140 927 370.99	16.3
2012	917 549 822.60	142 141 852.23	15.5

Source: Dane ze sprawozdań z realizacji budżetu miasta Radomia, 2008- 2012

3. Actors involved in fighting poverty at local level

Generally the largest player, with major financial and legal resources and the formal mandate to deliver MIP, is local Social Assistance Organisation (MSAO). The role of the MSAO is essentially preventing the effects of poverty. Its task focuses strongly on groups referred to in the law on social assistance: large or single-parent families affected by the consequences of long-term unemployment. The social MSAO's approach towards these families is comprehensive and includes the provision of subsistence and many activation measures. Whereas working poor are not of particular interest to MSAO.

MSAO is a city institution but carries out also some tasks assigned by the Radom powiat. The main decision maker for the MSAO is, however, the City Hall. Our interlocutors emphasise the coordinating role of the local SAO in the area of combating poverty, the involvement of its staff, growing professionalism. At the same time, the majority of local stakeholders note that modest financial resources of MSAO – too low in relation to staff and tasks – is a huge hindrance. Employees are heavily burdened with work: One worker often takes care of 100 families. Probably the quality of this assistance is low.

The second most important stakeholder is local PES. Local PES is a powerful institution in terms of funds at disposal. Its actions can affect the stimulation of entrepreneurship and economic activity of the long-term unemployed. Unfortunately, in recent times the position of the PES weakened due to cost-cutting labour market policy.

That is to say: we are active, I am working on at the moment on 11 projects, including systemic and competitive. In the partnership,... if any institution says the project aimed at the unemployed, no matter to which fragment the market and requests asking for our partnership, I find that they doing my responsibilities in part. And then, when the employment office is a partner, there is some additional scoring, is simply easier. That's why we have so many projects and these are very different projects. We have, for example, in the framework of the Leonardo de Vinci programme, probably even today young people going on internships to Germany (PES representative).

The third important stakeholders in the area of combating poverty are Radom City Council and City Hall. City Council decides on the substantive and financial plans for social assistance. City Hall implements the plans: assigning tasks to subordinate departments and institutions. Generally the Hall and the City Council fight against poverty by creating conditions for the development of local entrepreneurship. City Hall allocated this year alone, apart from the financing of the PES, direct support to the long-term unemployed through offering them contribution (10.000 Euros) to set up business and the supportive monthly grants.

The belief that the most effective form of poverty alleviation is the support of entrepreneurship is shared also by parties other than the ruling Law and Justice: opposition Civic Platform and the Polish People Party governing the powiat. Both of these parties highlight the importance of small to medium-sized enterprises, self-employment and legal work for the reduction of poverty. Local politicians declare that they are trying to assist Law and Justice in their efforts.

The most important non-governmental stakeholders are organisations related to the Catholic Church. The largest of such organisations, Caritas, provides assistance to the homeless, the sick, the disabled, large families, victims of domestic violence. Caritas, partly on the basis of contract with the City and in close cooperation with MSAO provides housing, care, and therapeutic services. Caritas is very respected in Radom as an institution capable to provide help to the poorest, the most needy and strongly excluded from social life. It runs hostels for the homeless, canteen, distributes food, clothing, medicines, household equipment, rents medical equipment and, when necessary, finances some others relevant expenditures related to poor families' needs (e.g. arranges summer holidays for children, runs a therapeutic and environmental facilities for children). Caritas in Radom operates through parish assemblies. It also bases its actions on academic and school circles, depending on young volunteers. Caritas is a very resilient organisation although relatively new in Radom – it originated at the beginning of the century.

More than 400 NGOs operate in Radom, more than a dozen of which have special law status (the ability to obtain 1% of the citizens tax). *We have in Radom the largest scale of volunteering in Poland, we have 400 non-governmental organisations...A very large percentage of the organisation is directed towards helping those who are poor, unemployed (...)* (NGO representative). Indeed, this is a big number of NGOs but it is also close to Mazovian region's average. Probably more important is their public visibility on Radom website.

The two organisations were often indicated in interviews as particularly active: Radom Food Bank and Dobry Duszek (Good Sprite Foundation).

Radom Food Bank acts as a distributor of food in honour of Programme PEAD founded by UE, allowing the other 110 non-governmental organisations to provide food to poorer families. These families may receive 60 kg of food per year if their income is up to 200 Euros per month per capita. This support includes 50 thousand families in the large area around Radom and in Radom city. Not only SAO clients but also working poor families are beneficiaries of this program. This families prefers food packages instead of hot meals offered in the canteens: *Working poor – because they are working – do not come for a meal, not come, but, for example, they will take food.* (NGO representative).

The Good Sprite Foundation finances meals for poor children at schools. All pupils coming from working poor families, large and single-parent, and from families with disabled persons have the opportunity to eat hot meals at school every day (300 meals daily). Good Ghost receives food from the Food Bank but is funded mostly by private donors.

The cooperation of non-governmental organisations is well coordinated within the framework of the NGO Centre, founded by City Hall: *NGOs always say to me: "it was crucial for the development of these organisations here". Today we have consultation and so on. But, what I am getting at - it was the incubator for NGOs, there gathered the inhabitants, initiators of new NGOs, which were provided with technical support and substantive support. Today these organisations already work together, are already working, already acquire external resources, we teach them to raise external funds; they raise the money and influence to the city* (Local Politician). Access to NGO Centre is voluntary and based on mutual gains.

NGOs receive a legal assistance and expertise, how to apply for projects, City Hall City may outsource tasks at low prices to the trusted NGOs. Moreover, these voluntary organisations cooperate closely with each other, informing about the beneficiaries and their needs. Apart from that also social control between NGOs proves very important.

The fight against poverty in Radom has some elements of a multilevel approach and integrated mode of governance. Three levels of state, two levels of local government, non-governmental organisations, organisations of the Church take part in this struggle. Private companies provide some services (vocational training, soft training via PES), and volunteers provide some services in cooperation with SAO or on their own.

Doubtlessly, greater cooperation between all stakeholders would be beneficial. However, this is currently not possible because of the local political conflicts. There is also weak understanding for inter - institutional cooperation partly in result of the political struggle in the local context.

4. Local governance structure of MIS

The responsibilities for MIS are shared between the central level and three territorial levels – regions (NUTS II), *poviats* (LAU1) and *gminas* (LAU 2). Territorial governments have been from the beginning relatively independent from the central government in shaping social policy, but – at the same time – limited by state’s financing in the area of labour market policy and – to a smaller extent – social assistance, especially if their own incomes were low.

Gminas (LAU 2) are responsible – among other things – for managing social, family and housing policy at the local level. They are supervising local social assistance offices (local SAO), which are the institutions responsible for the provision of MIP and social assistance services such as social work, counselling, support groups, etc. They are often obliged by the local authorities also to prepare local strategies for solving social problems and preparation of needs assessment in the area of social policy. Municipal SAO in Radom prepared twice the local strategies for solving social problems (in 2004 and 2010) Moreover, they are often providers of family benefits and sometimes housing benefit (depending on the system developed in a *gmina*. Municipal SAO in Radom is responsible for providing family benefits and housing benefits as well. *Gminas* finance social assistance benefits (earmarked allowance, special earmarked allowance, not obligatory part of temporary allowance) accept from the guaranteed part of the temporary allowance and the permanent allowance (paid for people incapable to take up work), which are covered by the earmarked grant. Those are Municipal SAO responsibility in Radom.

Table 14. Municipal SAO cost in local budget of Radom (LAU1)

Specification	%
Radom budget expenditures	100
Expenditure on social assistance in budgetary spending	15
The cost of task implemented by the MSAO on social assistance budget	14
Expenditure on MAO in social assistance budget	12
Expenditure on MSAO in cost of the task implemented by MSAO	13

Source: Sprawozdanie MOPS za rok 2012: www.mopsradom.pl, Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu Radomia za rok 2012: www.radom.pl

Powiat (LAU 1) are responsible mainly for specialized services, such as care for the physically or mentally disabled, support of people having problems with adjustment (especially young people leaving children's homes and other facilities for youth), organization of adoption matters, support of foster families, management of specialised facilities (also homes for under-age single mothers and pregnant women, sheltered flats, care facilities) and crisis intervention centres, etc. They are also bound to prepare powiat strategies for solving social problems aiming at social inclusion of people from vulnerable groups (the disabled, the long-term unemployed).

What is important, powiat is also the administrative level at which local public employment services (local PES) operate. They are responsible for the delivery of employment services, i.e. payment of unemployment benefits, provision of ALMP job agency (employment consultancy, job seeking support, vocational trainings, apprenticeships, etc.). Local PES in Radom is the largest in Mazovian region employing 258 persons. The subordination of the PES to powiat causes some tension with a municipality on the basis of different views on expenditures and strategies, which will be explained in further part of the report.

Local governments of poviats and gminas perform the most important implementing functions. They are responsible mainly for specialised services, such as care for the physically or mentally disabled, support of people having problems with adjustment (especially young people leaving children's homes and other facilities for youth), organisation of adoption matters, support of foster families, management of specialised facilities (also homes for under-age single mothers and pregnant women, sheltered flats, care facilities) and crisis intervention centres, etc. Those tasks are performed by Powiat Family Assistance Centres (SAC). They are also bound to prepare *powiat* strategies for solving social problems aiming at social inclusion of people from vulnerable groups (the disabled, the long-term unemployed).

In case of city with a powiat status like Radom, *powiat* family assistance centres are joint with local social assistance office in an institution named Municipal Social Assistance Office. It performs tasks of the former and the latter. Municipal Social Assistance Office (MSAO) located in Radom is responsible for implementation of the tasks defined in the social assistance act, called commissioned tasks and other own tasks, including: housing benefits, family benefits, alimony fund benefits, social works. MSAO is

dependant to Municipal Department for Health Care and Social Policy, which is supervised by Vice president responsible for health care and social policy.

In 2013 the municipal office agreed that part of the municipal budget would be debated and discussed by the citizens of Radom. 3 million PLN (710 900 euro) will be earmarked to goals proposed by citizens. At the first step the citizens present their ideas, then the municipal office administration verifies the possibility of implementation within the budget and presents a list of possible choices, which will be voted by citizens. So far, there were no demands for social assistance.

MSAO is responsible for the decision-making process and is enabled to contract-out certain services to private sector or third sector organizations. Three types of services have to remain under the competence of due public institutions: 1) deciding about the entitlements to allowances and conducting social interviews; 2) payment of social and health insurance contributions; 3) payment of allowances.

In my opinion, many of the obligations of social assistance should be transferred to NGOs. NGOs usually have recognition of various social problems and better understanding. Even if I have professional knowledge, I do not have a child with disabilities and I do not know this pain, I am just an administration employee. That is why the therapeutically workshops organized by us are run by NGOs. (MSAO representative).

Other – especially care services and specialised care services, management of care facilities may be contracted out (Balcerzak-Paradowska, Golinowska 2009). The system of selecting partners was based on open contests. Cost-efficiency defined as the best quality for the lowest price – was the main logic of selecting contractors and no outcome-based payments were taken into consideration. MSAO contracts out certain services to private companies – for example delivery of warm meals was contracted out to two and then four private companies and the psychological advisory services were contracted out to a company.

However there is a visible difference in views on cooperation with NGOs that are treated as experts in their domains, and the procedure of contracting out care services, presented by MSAO. The procedure of contracting out, based on public tender and lowest bidder, presents many negative features, especially concerning low quality of services and lack of support for local labour market, as often the companies that participate in the tender are from other cities and offer suspiciously low prices. Their offer cannot be rejected by MSAO. The procedure is also stressful due to the possibility of accusation of corruption if MSAO would choose higher bidder.

Since 2000 MSAO runs own project called Centre for Local Activity, localised in various districts of Radom, in 18 localisations. It is based on multiple activities that integrate local communities and it aims to enhance local social development. The main task of CLA is building local partnership and institutional networking. There are various possibilities for different partners: government administration, local government administration, NGOs, organizations for profit, churches and local citizens. Each project centre in district focuses on local social problems and needs and seeks for solutions in the manner of local social dialogue and consultations that aim to integrate local community. The members of CLA agree on local goals – sports activities for children youth, cultural events, and support for the poor.

There are possibilities of workshops for families with problems. Children with difficulties at school may obtain educational support.

The main partners in the project are: City Hall, City Council, schools, police, kindergartens. It is lead by MSAO which sees it as an opportunity to present social work as a form of social inclusion and integrity, and not only distribution of financial support.

Volunteers' Club "Friends" gathers persons who want to support other without payment. The volunteers help children with lessons, take care of disabled children, provide support in contact with municipal or tax administration, organize informal meetings – for a chat or a walk in a park. They help children cross the street near schools, help at day care centres and information points.

In 2012 there were 102 volunteers in the Club and the average age is about 40 years old. Fifty per cent of them are unemployed, often long-term unemployed.

Every year in mid-December the Municipal Office organizes "Radom Christmas Eve", which is an event for citizens located on the main street. There is a contest for a most beautiful Christmas tree for public schools, a catholic mass, carols singing and a warm dinner organized in open air. In 2012 3500 warm meals were distributed (traditional Christmas meals). It is treated as a chance to integrate Radom community besides the economic differences. It is quite significant because in many other cities there are similar events although dedicated only to the homeless or people without families. In case of Radom it is dedicated to all citizens.

Municipal SAO organizes:

- 9 self-support groups for long-term unemployed, numerous families, single parents, mothers of children of special treatment, alcohol addicts. The groups integrated 88 people in 2012. Their aim is to give mutual support, regain self-confidence.
- 10 educational groups for unemployed, single parents and foster families. They learn how to increase their chances on labour market, how to manage home budget and how to contact local administration. 110 people participated in educational groups in 2012.
- 3 mini clubs for seniors, which offer recreation and educational activity. 49 persons participated in 2012.

The room for local interpretation and discretionary powers

The room for local interpretation is in the proportions of delivery, which are limited by the budget obtained from central government. The local SAO and local PES can set priorities and seek for additional funding in case of tasks, which are underfinanced. The local SAO and PES cannot exclude any social group defined in the social act or add additional criteria.

In case of MSAO, all the respondents unanimously repeat that it works according to the social assistance act and provides the allowances and services for the entitled claimants. However it is not always seen as

a best solution because as almost all respondents point out, there are many cases of poor persons with incomes slightly above the threshold.

The working poor sometimes pose a case when some kind of discretionary powers come into action. The representatives of MSAO point out that in case of working poor sometimes they try to find “dysfunction” which would serve as an argument to grant benefits regardless WP incomes. In case of impossibility of obtaining benefits, the WP appeal to municipal authorities and according to the city officials sometimes it is an efficient strategy. The emergency funds are activated or, very informally, the officials are able to find better job for a needy person. However these are rather exceptions than regular cases.

The significant theme that recurred in many interviews was the difficulty of proving that a person that is formally entitled to benefits, in reality should not obtain them. The respondents varied in evaluation of the scale of problem. The MSAO representatives present their position as bound to the legal obligations. The NGOs admit knowledge about cases of frauds but usually decide not to inform the administration. Perhaps they do not want to lose social trust in the community. However it is worth mentioning that the Radom Food Bank is not bound to the legal obligation of providing food for everyone under certain income threshold. Therefore they can decline a claim if they suspect a fraud and this situation is presented as very comfortable.

Social workers would like the right to greater discretion, to whom to assist, because now they must strictly stick to the rules. As a result: *Social workers also notice that most of the aid, most funding goes to the people, who should not get this help. And by virtue of the provisions they have to give them, because they simply are eligible, but social worker knows that there is “grey” income. There are no instruments in this respect. I think that social worker should have a position in this respect, but of course, I am aware of the fact that it is very dangerous. But in other countries it works (...). However, we are aware of the fact that we go to a house and there is the car, well furnished apartment and so forth and the person that all the time, every month, takes on a variety of allowances. And she writes and says that this man, who sleeps in the other room, well dressed, and so on, that this is a second household and not her partner.* (MSAO representative).

The role of NGOs in local governance structure of MIS

The third sector is very developed in Radom: almost 400 organizations are registered. The municipal office organized Centre for Non-Governmental Organizations to integrate their activities and enable them to exchange experiences and plans. According to municipal official the NGOs are quite satisfied with cooperation within the Centre. There are other institutional bodies that are aimed to facilitate cooperation between municipal government and third sector: Consultation Unit for Cooperation between Local Government and NGO, Powiat Social Council for Disabled Persons and Gmina Sport Council. However in the process of research we talked to the NGOs more involved in the cooperation with MSAO than the units listed above.

They provide a separate room for newly formed NGOs, where you have access to computer and telephone. You can register the NGO on that address. The Centre offers workshops, training, and legal advisory for free. (NGO representative).

The formation of Centre for NGO was very warmly welcomed by local NGOs. It is associated with the strategy of current local government, which is openly friendly to NGOs.

With the former president of the city, we used to feel quite... dispensable (NGO representative).

What seems to be important, the municipal government provides resources - access to facilities, but does not provide financing of NGO activity. The NGOs can compete in open contests with goals set by the municipal office. Therefore the NGOs have more difficulties in shaping their own strategies of activity because they are dependant on the financing i.e. from municipality. In effect they adjust their ideas about activity to the goals set by municipality. It may be assumed that it is a way that municipal office and government solves social problems using NGOs as tools. This situation is quite criticised by larger NGOs that have bigger financial and infrastructural needs. This model of open contests for certain goals instead of direct financing is seen as an obstacle for organization development.

Basically I see a widening gap between our needs, what we do provide and what we get from the city. (NGO representative)

NGO representatives point out that they are regularly invited to common meetings with the municipality representatives, where they can discuss the priorities and goals of the city. They play more advisory role and their views can be taken into account but it is not obligatory.

Almost 60 NGOs cooperate with Radom Food Bank and distribute food for the poor in form of food provisions and warm meals. They are verified regarding income threshold, which is set by MSAO on the level of 150% of social assistance allowances threshold. MSAO provides initial verification of the clients and afterwards they contact the NGOs.

MSAO cooperates with NGOs in projects focused on distinguished social groups (long term unemployed, homeless) in forms of projects usually financed by ESF. The MSAO in Radom in partnership with Caritas Roman Catholic Diocese of Radom runs a system project "Radom – strength in partnership" funded by PO KL, ESF. The project is focused on promotion and information social campaign and is aimed at long-term unemployed. It promotes active attitudes and pro-social activities. The project is planned for 6 months, using methods like leaflets, posters, billboards, and advertisements in local media, information office, meetings, conferences, and exhibitions.

Although the NGOs are not directly involved in the decision-making on local MIS schemes, they play a role of informing the MSAO about the local social problems, point out the local communities that need support. They provide expert knowledge about social problems. MSAO plans to cooperate more intensively with NGOs and to transfer as much of the social work to third sector as it is possible, in a form of contracted out tasks. MSAO points out that NGO work closely with the social problems therefore have recognition of problems and best solutions. The cooperation with NGO and more tasks

contracted out would be helpful for MSAO because of the bureaucratic work overloads at the social assistance office, which prevents social workers from substantial work with the claimants.

However it is worth noting that contracting out services to NGO is cheaper than financing them within MSAO budget. The lower costs of NGO often mean more temporary jobs in projects instead of job stability offered by MSAO.

There are several NGOs significantly active in the field of social problems:

- Arka, a catholic NGO for youth, which organises day care, sports activities and warm meals for youth.
- Caritas, a national catholic charity organization very active in Radom with a broad range of activities for socially excluded persons and poor families: warm meals, distribution of food (administration of PAED program), shelter for homeless, day care centres for children 3-15 years old with socio-therapeutic and artistic workshops, streetworking. Caritas organizes “Caritas Parish Units”, voluntary groups of socially engaged Catholics who provide support for the poor and socially excluded in their parish. The Caritas Parish Units prove to be a valuable source of information for the social workers at MSAO. At the moment there are 98 Units in Radom and area around the city.
- There are many NGOs dealing with needs of children who need special care. One of the examples is the Karuzela Society, which focuses on autistic children – they formed a kindergarten for autistic children and at the moment are in the process of forming nursery and elementary school for autistic children. The Society organizes therapeutic holidays for children.
- Radom Food Bank and NGOs that provide warm meals and food provisions, like “Dobry Duszek”

Regarding LTU, WP and SP, NGOs in Radom play an important role. They provide meals, clothes and food for persons who face difficulties with maintaining on the very low allowances from MSAO. Some of the NGOs, like “Dobry Duszek”, are directly focused on single parents and numerous families. They offer mostly warm meals and food parcels however their activity has a very participative and supportive perspective. All the childcare facilities are very useful for single parents, as there is a constant problem with the public childcare offer.

NGOs are a solution for working poor who officially are excluded from MSAO support, as their incomes are higher than the income threshold. Even though there are not many propositions for adult working poor, there are various proposals for the children – warm meals at schools, clothes and food, day care centres, workshops and sports activities, sometimes low-cost holidays.

4.1 Funding structure for local MIS

In the annual documents presented by MSAO in Radom the issue of insufficient finance resources to cover all the tasks is repeated. MSAO officials point out that with such a high number of claimants and growing number of tasks it is impossible to cover all the formally required obligations. According to annual report presenting 2012 activity, MSAO budget is financed: 28% from city budget (gmina and powiat), 72% from state budget.

MSAO realizes tasks that are defined in the occupational and social rehabilitation act and employment of disabled persons, which is funded by National Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons. In 2012 MSAO supported 8763 entities (individuals and families), with 18 582 persons, which makes about 8 % of citizens of Radom. Some of the clients participate in several forms of allowances.

The main reasons for their difficult situation were:

- unemployment – 68% of all
- disability – 32%
- helplessness in the care of children and home care – 14%
- long-term illness 13%
- alcoholism 6%
- protection of motherhood 7%
- homelessness 1,5%
- difficulties in integration of migrants – 0,1%
- other 2%

Table 15. Sources of MSAO expenditure in 2012, Radom (LAU 1)

Expenditures	Financed by Gmina	Financed by State budget	Financed by ESF	Number of benefits	Average amount
Permanent allowances	30000 PLN (7109 euro)	6 428 513 PLN (1 523 344 euro ¹⁰)	0	17471	368 PLN (87 euro) per month.
Temporary allowances	0	11 998 875 PLN (2 843 335 euro ¹⁰)	0	6687	

¹⁰ 1 euro = 4,22 PLN (June 2013)

Expenditures	Financed by Gmina	Financed by State budget	Financed by ESF	Number of benefits	Average amount
		euro)			
Earmarked allowances (food, clothes, medicines, fuel for heating)	2756211 PLN (653 130 euro)	0	0	7945	
Contribution for health insurance of beneficiaries	99 000 PLN (23 459 euro)	471 840 PLN (111 810 euro)	0		
House allowances	1 054 500 PLN (249 881 euro)	0	0	8849	206 PLN (48 euro)
Family allowances	8 107 PLN (1921 euro)	53 291 582 pln (12 628 336 euro)	0		Child up to 5 years old: 77 PLN (18 euro) 5-18 years old: 106 PLN (25 euro) 18-24 years old: 115 PLN (27 euro)
System project EFS "Activity as a chance for better tomorrow" (ESF, PO KL)	10,5%	4,5%	85%	166 participants	
Total value	1 488 500 PLN (352 725 euro)				

Source: MSAO documents 2012.

4.2. Individual complaints and co-decision

The project “Centre for Local Activity” is aimed to give opportunity to local communities and clients of social assistance to voice their ideas and concerns about the local social services. The CLA project enables them to engage in problem-solving process in their local community, for example creating activities for children, workshops etc.

The municipal office organizes Centre for Social Communication and encourages citizens of Radom to participate in social consultations. The consultations may regard issues on city level, local level or community level. The Centre organizes meetings with citizens, NGOs and other organizations active in Radom.

In 2000 MSAO organized a Citizen Information Point, which was active and open to Radom citizens ever since. The Information Point provides information about individual rights, support and help in writing documents and applications, knowledge about local institutions and their statutory obligations. The citizens seek for information about family law (alimony, divorce), criminal law (domestic violence), social insurances, unemployed rights, housing law (evictions, debts, tenants’ rights), disabled rights and benefits, information for families of alcohol addicts, information for arrested persons, information about ecology in everyday life.

Each family or individual who obtains benefits from MSAO is assigned to a caseworker, who is responsible for both – social work and assessment of eligibility for allowances on the basis of social interview. Generally, it comes down to the net payments received in the previous month (income minus PIT, health insurance and social insurance) – reduced also by maintenance paid for someone, if this is the case. Except from financial transfers and savings also financial situation in general (e.g. valuable things and real estate) is assessed by a social worker – if he or she decides that a person or a family may overcome their difficulties on their own thanks to their resources, allowances may be denied to them. This provision is aimed at counteracting cases in which people have unregistered incomes (e.g. from illegal work) and decide to apply for allowances. However, it generates the risk of unequal and unjust treatment, which may be difficult to act against because of lack of clear regulations. Second of all, some of the additional criteria for allowances (see above) also leave space for arbitrary decisions.

It is important to mention that in case of Radom the number of claimants is especially high, which means great workloads for the social workers. The number of social interviews that are needed to grant an allowance, may reach 4 000 per month per worker. The decision made by social worker has a legal character.

Employees at the MSAO start to question the workloads, because sometimes they have to do 4000 interviews in a month and then to print that number of decisions. Sometimes the number of decisions is even higher because during one interview several needs arouse. People are overworked. (MSAO representative)

Claimants have the possibility to appeal to the local government boards of appeal, if allowances are not granted to them. Most of the appeals consider certificates of disability, the second are family benefits

and alimony fund, and the third is social assistance. Some of the claimants may appeal if in their opinion their life situation matches the criteria defined in the social assistance act. However a structural problem occurs here.

The MSAO is financed by the central government and has to manage the allowances within a relatively tight budget. There are situations that the number of claimants raises and there is no sufficient budget to cover all the needs. Therefore there are cases of claimants whose situation matches the criteria for allowances but they cannot receive any from MSAO because of the lack of money.

Formally, they appeal to boards of appeal. In everyday life practice they visit municipal office and seek for help and financial support. The municipal office may intervene and seek for additional emergency funds to cover the needs of claimants.

4.3. Changes in the local governance system

The central level retained competences in the areas of policy planning, budget planning and general supervision. Local authorities were given freedom to shape those fields, which are not regulated by higher levels. The idea was to better adjust social policy (and other policy areas) to the local circumstances and demands. However, it triggered a cost-avoidance strategy from both sides, which has been limiting the process of policy planning and implementation. *Gminas* have been gaining more tasks over time, but with no additional financial resources transferred from the state and income discrepancies between them revealed territorial inequalities (Herbst, Herczyński, Levits 2009).

I have 100 social workers but what about it? They have from 90 to 100 families. Additionally they have the burden of so many new duties. Everyone thinks that social assistance will cope with everything. There is an obligation in the family allowances act, that's an obligation for social workers. Everywhere you look they give new duties to social workers. How can they work? (MSAO representative)

Due to the overload of work, MSAO applied for apprenticeships from PES but eventually the answer was negative. Regarding the fact that MSAO has more and more duties, the situation is very tense.

5. Local minimum income provision

5.1. Local and national standards

National standards

The national standard for eligibility is formulated in the social assistance act. People and families are formally eligible for temporary allowance if they fulfil income criterion and at least one additional criterion from those defined by law¹¹ (see Box No. 4.).

¹¹ The act on social assistance from 2004.

BOX No. 4

- unemployment,
- orphanage,
- homelessness,
- disability,
- chronic illness,
- domestic violence,
- human trafficking,
- need for the protection of maternity (and numerous families),
- helplessness in the performance of up-bringing functions and in running a household (especially in case of single-parent or numerous families),
- problems of young people leaving childcare facilities with adjustment to everyday life requirements,
- need for inclusion of foreigners with refugee status or with right to supplementary protection¹²,
- adjustment problems after leaving prison, alcoholism and drug addiction,
- random incident or crisis situation, natural or ecological disaster

However, only in four of those cases payment is – in practice – obligatory: if someone is unemployed, chronically ill, disabled or awaiting an administrative decision about some other type of benefit (Wóycicka 2009, Szarfenberg 2009). It is probably connected to the fact that those particular situations have administrative confirmation (from local labour office, health care services, commission certifying disability, or public administration). In other cases the decision is left to the discretion of social services as it is based on social interview performed by a social worker.

MSAO follows national standard defined by the social assistance act. The local standards are not different from the national standard.

In practice the social work plays an important role in the activity of MSAO. Since 2004 it is an obligation of the city. Social work is a professional activity aimed to help individuals and families on their way to social inclusion. Social workers cooperate with individuals and families to develop and strengthen their life activity and self-reliance. In 2012 the social workers in Radom worked with 1197 individuals or families, helping with issues of unemployment, addictions, childcare and child raising problems, medical treatment neglecting, domestic violence. In 515 cases the implementation of social work was based on social contract, which defines rights and obligations of both sides to counteract the difficult life situation.

MSAO has a field for local interpretation of MIS standards in case of earmarked allowances. They are financed locally and the decisions of proportions of allowances for clothes, food, medicines and fuel for heating are made on MSAO level.

¹² It is granted to those people who were refused the refugee status, but coming back to their country of origin could result in putting them in danger.

BOX No. 5

Claimants may receive:

- permanent allowance: maximum 529 PLN (125 euro)
- temporary allowance: maximum 418 PLN (99 euro)
- family allowances:
 - o child up to 5 years old: 77 PLN (18 euro)
 - o 5-18 years old: 106 PLN (25 euro)
 - o 18-24 years old: 115 PLN (27 euro)
 - o numerous families benefit (80 PLN for third child and next children) (19 euro)
- Additionally: school books in the beginning of school year – up to 100 PLN (23 euro)
- Housing benefits: average 206 PLN (48 euro)

Housing benefits are means-tested benefits covering partly the costs of housing. They are granted to persons and families below a certain income criterion (higher than the poverty threshold): not more than 175% of the lowest pension for a single-person household and not more than 125% of the lowest pension per head for the multi-person household¹³. It is paid provided that the floorage of the flat/house does not exceed the norm defined by law. The level of allowance equals the difference between real costs of flat of certain surface and 10-15% family income (depending on income per person).

BOX No. 6

Single parents:

- 170 PLN (maximum 340 PLN for all children) (40 euro, maximum 80 euro)
- alimony fund up to 500 PLN (118 euro), if income per person in the family is less then 725 PLN (171 euro)

The local standards do not differ from national standards and their aim is to cover basic needs of claimants.

The MIS support is aimed to provide help to Polish citizens and migrants with a refugee status, immigrants who were the victims of human trafficking and immigrants with a tolerated stay status. In 2012 MSAO in Radom provided earmarked and temporary allowances and Polish language courses to 12 persons. Three migrant children were placed in foster families.

Local standards

The local MSAO has some liberty in setting local standards in case of the income thresholds for warm meals and food provisions, on the level of 150% of the threshold for social assistance benefits.

¹³ The lowest pension in 2012 equals 799.18 PLN.

The MSAO cooperates with local NGOs that distribute warm meals and food provisions. It is formed as a chain, with international program of food provision PAED that distributes food to Food Banks, which therefore distribute it to the local NGOs. The NGOs offer free food parcels and warm meals at schools or at eating-houses but only to persons whose incomes were verified by MSAO.

Food provision and warm meals are widely used by WP and SP, since very often they cannot obtain any material or financial support from MSAO due to their incomes, which are slightly higher than the threshold. The NGOs admit this kind of service becomes more popular and needed. They express their anxiety about planned closure of the PAED programme.

LTU, WP and SP and minimum income provision

The local standards for minimum income provision regarding LTU, WP and SP do not differ from the national standards, which basically means that working poor are not covered by minimum income provision.

Working poor can obtain food provisions from NGOs and their children are entitled to cheap or free warm meals at schools.

5.2. Local sanctions

The sanctions defined in social assistance act apply to situation when a person who obtains earmark allowances does not fulfil the obligations of social contract. In that case the earmark allowance can be withdrawn. However the practice of MSAO activity proves that is usually very weak.

Even if the social assistance act says that if someone rejects job offers or the social contract, we can refuse to help them. However the same social assistance act states that if in the family there are members who need help – we cannot refuse. (MSAO representative).

It is due to the fact that MSAO is supposed to support families and the eligibility rule of helplessness in the performance of up-bringing functions and in running a household (especially in case of single-parent or numerous families) applies.

Employment in the shadow economy, without a contract can be an argument to withdraw the allowances – since the real family income is higher than the official one presented at MSAO. However no precise information about this kind of allowances suspension appears in the MSAO documents.

Working poor are basically excluded from the system of temporary and earmarked allowances.

In case of a city with such high unemployment there is a high possibility of availability of work in the grey economy. Therefore there might be persons working in grey economy and obtaining allowances and persons who work legally with very low earnings, who cannot be entitled to allowances.

Another form of sanction can be pointed out – if the claimant receives allowances even though his or her income is higher than eligibility criteria, he or she is supposed to give back all received money. The work overload experienced by social workers can make possibilities of mistakes and wrong calculations.

In case of persons whose incomes are just slightly higher than the income threshold this sanction proves to be severe.

5.3. Changes in the minimum income standards

According to data collected by MSAO, since 2006 the number of claimants decreased successively – from 2007 to 2012 the number lowered for 2046 entities. The decrease of number of families and individuals (entities) supported by MSAO is an effect of freezing of the income threshold – less and less families and individuals were entitled to allowances even though their incomes were very low. The threshold was increased in late 2012.

According to MSAO annual document 2012, the decrease in number of claimants is due to the fact that the permanent allowances and contributions for health insurance are financed by state budget. The level of financing is insufficient therefore it limits the possibility of granting more allowances.

The cuts in state budget prevented from raising income thresholds in 2009 (three years after they were set). Although the financial crisis did not have a direct influence, it affected the state budget and therefore – the resources dedicated to MIS.

Views on the minimum income provision and local needs, rights and duties

The interviewees representing various organizations – local administration, NGO, political parties or trade unions, are quite unanimous in the critical view of system of in minimum income provision and sanctions.

They do not question the activities of MSAO acknowledging that those activities are subject to national standards

They agree that the system promotes individuals who are working in the shadow economy and claim very low incomes against individuals who are working poor. The cases of abuses and misuses of benefits were a repeating theme in almost all interviews – stories of persons who receive benefits while they have unregistered incomes, cases of single mothers who in fact are in informal relationships. The interviewees vary in the opinions on the scale of this phenomenon however it is very significant that those cases come up immediately in the process of interviews.

I always say, there will be about 5% of those who are frauds. But I cannot exclude the rest 95% just because of it. (NGO representative).

The opinions on the efficiency of minimum income provision can be viewed as a continuum, from general opinions formed by political parties representatives, by local administration, MSAO and PES representatives, to NGO representatives, whose views are based on everyday life experience and many real life stories.

We came across an interesting case of a numerous family, which was related to both by MSAO and NGO. The different contexts of those quotations form an important example of local definitions on needs, rights and duties in relation to minimum income support. The MSAO representative presented a case of

a father of numerous family who does not want to take up a job and declines job offers from PES, intentionally preferring to rely on social assistance benefits. This was to show the irresponsibility of claimants and their lack of motivation. The similar case was presented by NGO that provides food for single parents and numerous families. However this time the story was different – the father was afraid to take up a job because due to the effects of the cancer his face was horribly transformed.

This example shows that minimum income provision system is overloaded so individual cases are lost in the masses, and also that it lacks services that would provide more individualized approach to the claimants and their needs.

A person from PES told me once that he met a crying woman standing next to his office. When he asked what was going on, it turned out that she was offered a job and she did not know what to do: it was just 200 PLN more than what she obtains in allowances but she would have to pay for the bus tickets and arrange care for her children (City Hall representative).

The relation of level of benefits to the possibilities on the labour market is an important issue for the respondents. Although the level of benefits is very low, the job proposals are not always an opportunity of increasing the standards of living. The respondents point out that in many cases it is a matter of changing the status of unemployed only for the status of working poor. In cases of families with children it causes more problems because WP cannot claim benefits and have to arrange childcare, which is expensive.

Generally an interesting paradox can be seen in the interviews. All respondents agree that the poverty in Radom is an effect of unemployment. Therefore the efforts of local authorities, PES and MSAO are focused on placing the social assistance claimants back on the labour market. However they all agree that wages in Radom are generally low and minimum wage is offered very often. They agree that many of the employees in the city are earning very low wages and unlike the unemployed, cannot obtain any benefits and often have less social security (if they work on contract of mandate instead of contract of employment). None of the respondents used the term “working poor”. Therefore the paradox is that lack of work causes poverty but work does not overcome poverty.

It seems that respondents do not view this situation as paradox, and rather more like a “sad reality”. The local authorities are pressing for creation of jobs in the Radom Industrial Cluster, without taking into account the possible poor quality of jobs, which are usually offered in the special economic zones in Poland, despite the vast tax reductions for employers. It can be interpreted that the creation of jobs will decrease the problem of unemployment but not necessarily the problem of poverty in the city.

The problem is recognized by NGOs that provide food on the basis of higher income threshold (150% of benefits threshold). They point out that there are many working poor interested in food provision and that their number is growing. Their opinions about working conditions and the level of minimum wage are very severe – perhaps due to the fact that they provide support for the social group that is formally excluded from minimum income provision regardless its poverty.

The general view of the system of minimum income provisions is that it is not sufficiently addressed. It provides opportunities of cheating it and it excludes working poor. The respondents try to approach the question of relation between level of benefits and services, pointing out that there should be more services available for the claimants and not necessarily more money transfers.

Respondents working more directly with claimants and working poor point out that the services should go beyond basic biological needs. The food provisions are necessary but it is just the beginning. The system should be based on more participative approach, enabling inclusion of the voices of the claimants.

The representatives of local administration underline the need of more motivation workshops for the claimants that would enhance their will to change their life situation. However due to the work overload experienced by MSAO the more individualized approach is very difficult.

This was for her, for this woman. Her children will go sometimes for a school trip and she does not go anywhere. So when she went for holidays, everybody thought that she would not come back. And she had this opportunity to look at her life from a different angle. She decided that she has to carry on and do not worry that much. When she came back, her husband waited with the dinner. He was so scared that she would not come back at all! (NGO representative).

The NGOs offer holidays for poor families and see it as a good instrument of positive change, especially for those family members who are mostly burdened with managing the households. As they emphasize, the possibility to spend some time apart from the household, poverty and sometimes abusive relationships enables to get a new perspective on life. The holidays can be viewed as a good practice however the scale of it is very limited and is available only to several families.

6. Minimum income systems and active inclusion policies

6.1. General structure

The local activation structures are mainly managed by Poviats Public Employment Services. However the Municipal Social Assistance Office offers the large programmes that have to be also counted as activity projects.

The Poviats Public Employment Services is organizational unit that is subject to the Starosta of Radom Poviats. Poviats Employment Council is an advisory body for Poviats PES appointed by the Starosta. Council analyses situation on local labour market and evaluates the rationality of Labour Fund management. Although chairman of Poviats PES is Vice-President of Radom, the city does not have much sense of the impact on PES. Poviats PES is a strong institution in Radom: with the big budgets, and independent from the local authorities.

The ties between Poviats PES and Provincial PES can be described as very strong although formally there is no direct submission. The voivodeship supervises Poviats PES regarding labour market policy, management of Labour Fund resources, implementation and contracting out of PES obligations in form of projects.

As already emphasised in WP5 Report on national system of combating poverty, Polish system of MIS and active inclusion is very divided. The activities managed by SAOs are not coordinated with PES activities. The relation between those two important institutions relies often on informal cooperation between the employees and managers. On the local level certain sympathies and interests come into play. The relations between SAO and PES are dependant on political links and territorial interests, especially when it comes to division of financial resources and the territorial scope of activity.

The Poviats PES in Radom is responsible not only for the city area but also for the nearby region. In last several years a quite heated debate about the possibility of organizing a municipal PES was taking place however no significant changes were implemented. As we know Ministry of Labour and Social Policy refused to create a Municipal PES in Radom. It would be a precedent in Poland.

Formally, clients of both institutions (PES and MSAO) are being informed about their rights and in case of need of social assistance will be notified about available support from MSAO. Nevertheless, there is a visible division between the Poviats PES and MSAO. Both institutions have a very scarce and superficial knowledge about the activity of the other institution.

The financial centralisation and problems with distribution

The Poviats PES is financed from various sources. Labour Fund created by employers' contributions and state subsidies covers the main expenses. Therefore the Poviats PES is dependant on state budget and decisions of Ministry of Finances, which has been limiting the resources of Labour Fund in last years. The regional government finances part of the project operated by PES. The Poviats PES is supported financially by the city budget (2 936 217 euro in 2012). Radom government wants to determine what the money will be dedicated. It is a source of tension between the institutions.

The idea of creation a municipal PES reveals a serious conflict, which aroused between the municipal authorities and Poviats PES. The sides enumerate various lacks and failures of the opponent.

According to PES, the structure of financing, which was created in the beginning of 2000s, is based on the assumption of good cooperation between municipal authorities and PES, since the city receives money for PES services from the state budget and is obliged to pass them to PES, perhaps with some addition from the municipal budget. However there are cases that instead of addition, the amount of money transfer is lower. According to PES, the municipal authorities try to run their own employment policy. According to municipal authorities, PES activities are insufficient and ineffective.

6.2. Activation offers – views on active inclusion strategies

The Poviats PES offers job advisory, trainings and employment agency services. Since 2010 a Centre for Occupational Activity operates within Poviats PES. It is a unit responsible for employment services, job advisory and organization of trainings. The Centre was created to facilitate the services for unemployed, with a special aim to support LTU in the activation process. The Centre cooperates with employers, organizes job fairs. It provides the advisors individual services such as diagnosis of skills and qualifications, job preferences and individual predispositions and barriers and opportunities on local

labour market. The Centre offers financial support for postgraduate studies, training loans and organizes trainings as well.

PES offers refunds of costs of creation a job post for employers who will maintain the post for 24 months. Unemployed persons who want to create self-employment may apply for financial support. PES covers the costs of public works.

Since the long-term unemployed make 61,5% off all unemployed population, the PES official admits that the trainings pose some kind of challenge. This year a new project, with a new approach is being implemented in cooperation with Voivodeship.

At the moment we have a pilot project of the Regional Employment Office, 250 people – just the long-term unemployed. There are still indicators: 125 people long-term unemployed, 50 people I guess over 50 years old, 8 women returning to the labour market after the childbirth and the disabled. A total of 250 people of those in most difficult situation. Selected Job Placement Agency has to lead to employment. We are curious. We have been cooperating with this agency for a longer time but usually they work with the best segment of labour market, the best educated and this case is different. (PES Director).

The project titled “Partnership for Work” will be conducted by a professional private employment agency. The agency is known for successful activity with short-term unemployed with higher qualifications. The project is quite innovative. Usually the training projects provide LTU with various qualifications and skills but skip the part of finding employment. In this case employment is the main goal.

The participation in activation services is not obligatory to receive unemployment benefits. Currently according to PES official only 18% of unemployed are entitled to unemployment benefits and this is similar to national scale and due to the same reasons – very strict rules of granting the unemployment benefits.

All the unemployed have the possibility to participate in trainings and employment services provided by PES. The access may be various in more indirect ways. For example, single mothers face more obstacles to participate in trainings because of the low provision of childcare. Some of the trainings include special needs of single parents and provide childcare or financial support for it, but the offer is quite narrow.

Due to the fact of very high unemployment in Radom, many unemployed are interested in participation in trainings and advisory workshops. Sometimes the number of applicants is higher than the number of places in the project. In that case, occupational advisors analyse applications and choose unemployed who are most appropriate for the project. The criteria of evaluation are not clear so it leaves a room for discretionary decisions.

Municipal SAO offers “socially useful works” for unemployed who are not entitled to unemployed benefits and obtain social assistance allowances. The aim of socially useful works is a social and labour market inclusion. These are usually physical works for local community and MSAO departments. MSAO

covers the wages of participants and social workers involved in the project and Powiat PES covers the costs of work wear and tools.

In 2012 the MSAO realised an activation program financed by PO KL, titled „Activity - a chance for a better tomorrow” for 166 clients of MSAO, mostly LTU. The total expenditures amounted 767.750,65 PLN, the programme included socially useful works and different forms of active inclusion: individual and group training and workshops, psychological support, home budget management, auto-presentation, benefits for childcare during workshops, foreign languages courses and computer courses.

The forms of active inclusion tend to be a point of conflict in the city that is recognised by various stakeholders. Although the conflict is mostly between PES and municipal government, it is manifested in various forms and from on the basis of interviews it can be said that it influences the relations between MSAO, PES, municipal government and NGOs. It is visible that different NGOs have various contacts with MSAO and PES and depending on which institution they cooperate with, they show much distance to the other one.

With MSAO... well, we are not close to MSAO, we do not know what do they offer. We cooperate with PES, the director of PES is such a helpful person (NGO representative).

There are many things that we need from PES but are difficult to be carried out. [...] Please ask the president about the situation with PES, because there is a strong conflict in the city. (MSAO representative)

The opposition between PES and municipal government is based in the financing issues. Although PES is subject to powiat, the financing that is distributed centrally, and part of it goes through the municipal government, which manages it. The mechanism was thought to be helpful for PES and based on idea that municipal governments will add extra financing to the central funds. However in case of Radom it works differently and PES points out that the city runs its own active inclusion policy financed from funds that were assigned to PES. The municipal government answers that the city needs are specific and that PES is inefficient in creating a strategy for the city because it is responsible for all region around the city as well. The municipal government tried to create a City PES but was rejected by the ministry of labour and social policy.

The status of PES states that it is an institution for the city and for powiat but it is subject to Starosta. I think it is a strategic error. We provide 60% of funding for PES but [...] our opinions are not taken into account. (Municipal government representative)

The city takes part of our money. It has been two years since the conflict aroused. There is a formal dispute in administrative procedure, there was a decision of Starosta, a decision of Voivode, then we applied to Voivodeship Administrative Court. There is a dispute because the city transfers not enough money to us. (PES representative).

The conflict between PES and municipal authorities also concerns forms of active inclusion since both sides have different views on this subject. The point of conflict is in the public works. According to

municipal authorities it is a good instrument of activation for persons who were long term unemployed. It offers the routine of work and new organization of everyday life, which is crucial for persons who did not have any work duties for longer time. In the view of municipal authorities, PES should assign more funds on public works instead of ineffective trainings.

The PES offers training that do not guarantee any work. (Municipal government representative).

Nobody really cares about effectiveness of trainings. Nobody, really. They only care about taking money for active inclusion but do not evaluate it afterwards. (PES representative)

PES presents different opinion – the public works create dangerous phenomenon of free of charge work, which is never transformed into more stabile employment. PES points out that there are instruments of inclusion that enable the employees to get back to work routine – the first is socially useful work for the benefit claimants and the second is creation of job position which are refunded by PES and financing of self-employment. The efficiency of those instruments is very high. According to PES, 87% of persons whose job posts were refunded by PES, continues employment.

6.3. Activation service providers - contractualisation

Both Municipal SAO and Poviatic PES rely on the cooperation with non-public actors. MSAO organizes regularly contests for NGOs, however they are usually focused on social inclusion. In the annual reports published by MSAO it is presented as cooperation that is aimed to better understanding and solving of various social problems. Contracting out certain services like psychological assistance, is practised in programs like „Activity - a chance for a better tomorrow”, which are focused on active inclusion.

Poviat PES is obliged to organize open tenders for private companies and associations, according to Public Procurement Law if the value of the project exceed 14 000 euro. The private companies operate as activation services providers and organize training projects and catering.

The training companies are the biggest beneficiaries of the training for unemployed system. They earned a lot over the years. (MSAO representative)

There are opinions that the training are waste of money. The ministry wants to evaluate the efficiency after only 3 months and for some training it is too short period. (PES representative)

The trainings have a dubious reputation in Poland since they are seen – as it was described in Poland’s WP5 report – as quite ineffective, poorly monitored and not sufficiently evaluated. In case of Poviat PES in Radom, the trainings are quite common. The PES announces a tender for private companies chooses the best offer according to the Public Procurement Law. It is worth to mention that the Public Procurement Law indicates the lowest bidder. The participation of private providers is seen as a common practice by PES - the best example is the newly planned training and job-searching program for LTU that will be all run by a private company.

Although not contracted for active inclusion trainings, NGOs can play a two-fold role in the process. First they inform their clients about possibilities of trainings and make a useful “pre-selection”, addressing

various trainings to persons who would really benefit from them. Second, NGOs acting as employers may apply for a refunded job post and employ their clients however they can hardly afford maintaining the job post.

6.4. Integrated activation services

The relations between PES and MSAO, as it was described earlier, are formal and without deeper cooperation. The conflict between municipal government and PES influences the relations between MSAO and PES and there is a visible distance manifested by both sides, which prevents from forming any kind of informal cooperation. The various obligations of both institutions, resulting in work overload, form additional obstacle. The representatives of PES point out that from rational point of view some of their obligations, like registering the health insurance of unemployed, should be transferred to MSAO, as they are generally not directly connected to the employment issues. However we may assume that in current situation it would be not welcomed by MSAO as this institution is heavily overloaded with duties.

Currently MSAO and PES await a new common IT programme that will enable both institutions to exchange data about the clients. The programme should be introduced nation-wide. At the moment one claimant may be registered in several places as a beneficiary of various benefits – the IT system would simplify the database and could be a tool of overcoming the “sectoral” character of the system. However the distance between the two institutions have to be shortened also in the informal way. Regarding the fact that the same managers have run both institutions for a long time, much of the responsibility for active cooperation is linked to those two important individuals. Both of the institutions have quite rich experiences in cooperation with NGOs and are evaluated as positive and supportive, which can be seen as a opportunity for better cooperation between PES and MSAO in the future.

7. Europe and the local fight against poverty

The local activists appreciate the opportunities offered by European programmes. The programmes – IRDF, ESF and PEAD – were often mentioned in the interviews. One of the better-informed activists claimed: *We have received somewhere between 650 to 700 million euros for investment since Poland's accession to the EU. It is ...in the Mazovia we are probably second to Warsaw. These are big money. For example there is still quite a sum left for the local action groups to use. And a lot of resources is allocated to trainings – which have variable efficiency – and to cultural events. Those events have some integration value, but is it a proper way to use it? Will it help anyone? (Local politician, PSL)*

NGOs representatives are anxious about the plans to abolish PEAD. City decision-makers criticize the European principle to build social homes, which in their opinion creates enclaves of poverty, *“and you cannot buy individual flats in the property market for poor or refugees”*. Also the annual short horizon is criticised.

The flow of financial resources is appreciated, and many of the respondents point out that it supports job creation and improvement of standards of living (new roads, support for schools etc).

The European debates on poverty are not visible in the local context. The objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy are not known, as well as the National Strategy of Reform Programmes and National Social Reports. The Interlocutors rarely use the terms social exclusion or inclusion but in fact they understand what exclusion and inclusion means.

Conclusions

In the mid-1990s the community of Radom has been affected by the mass unemployment, up to 40% of the working population, which resulted in deep poverty. In the era of socialism the population of this industrial city had low incomes that had not allowed the accumulation of material resources.

Among the political elite of Radom there is a perception that citizens affected by unemployment respond to it in many ways: develop dependence on social assistance, work on the shadow labour market, combine illegal work with unemployment benefits, search for official employment, or start entrepreneurship. For years the most active and young people have had an alternative: work in Warsaw, just 2 hours away from Radom. After 2004 opportunities have expanded to labour migration to the European Union's countries or taking advantage of the opportunities provided within the framework of European programmes.

Despite individual efforts, the majority of the unemployed are still in difficult situation. Local community could not remain indifferent to the phenomenon of poverty as a result of persistent unemployment. The fight against poverty in Radom was institutionally multidimensional: first of all, from the beginning two fundamental institutions: acting on the basis of State funding: MSAO and PES. In Radom both MSAO and PES are very strong players. MSAO is committed to combating the effects of poverty, offering mostly benefits, and leading social work. Since 2004 MSAO customized the administrative concepts of social inclusion and developed numerous activation measures. Radom PES is a very large institution, offering comprehensive programs addressed to the de-favoured groups on the labour market. Just like MSAO, PES has significant funds. PES staff is able to assess the effectiveness of programmes on the labour market, preferring grants for job creation. The recognized and experienced managers, with a recognised position in the country, managed both institutions for many years. Both of the institutions remain in tight bond with provincial and national structures.

Catholic Church, having a very good orientation in the scale of problems caused by poverty, in order to fight against poverty launched in the Diocese of Radom Caritas. This organisation helps the poor in emergency and misery situations.

Citizens of Radom fight against poverty through a number of NGOs. Their activities are multifaceted, not limited to meeting the existential needs. In particular, there are activities for children from less resourceful families. At the moment, one can say the network of these organisations exists.

Some of the NGOs deal with the most severe cases of poverty and try to provide more profiled support for the needy. The activity of NGO is widely supported by city authorities, by provision of legal advisory and workshops in the Center for NGOs. The NGOs activate local community and have access to external sources of funding, which is suitable for local authorities.

Local government is convinced that the fight against poverty should be aimed at combating unemployment through support for entrepreneurship and investment in infrastructure: construction of highways, roads, airports, modernization of the railway line, and creation of the economic zone. Local government fails to recognise that the creation of favourable conditions for entrepreneurship does not translate directly to the creation of good quality jobs. There is no local prevention against the shadow market, the junk job agreements and expanding the scope of the working poor.

The study shows that Radom is trying to cope in many ways with the phenomenon of poverty caused by structural unemployment typical for a transition from employment in industry to employment in services. This is not a moment when the working poor are the goal of social policy. Radom is a city that tries to develop active policies to combat poverty in its own right basing on the activity of the people on the labour market as well as basing on the local NGOs and the community activities. Undoubtedly, the unstable political situation makes the development of stable rules, standards and aid standards difficult. Law and Justice (PiS) governs the city, whereas Polish People's Party (PSL) governs the powiat, which makes the inter-institutional cooperation for the improvement of the social welfare difficult. Polish People's Party (PSL) is more orientated on people who make their living while working on agriculture area, Law and Justice (PiS) is more orientated on workers and entrepreneurs and generally on the right-wing urban and rural population. Polish People's Party (PSL) sees Law and Justice (PiS) as a significant political threat. Both parties start to learn how to gain support of the local voters – also through appropriate social policies. Law and Justice (PiS) while ruling the city have developed an original programme for social assistance.

The law provisions that are applicable in Poland strictly regulate the system of social assistance in Radom. Public money in this city is spent very sparingly: the MSAO workers have a number of duties. As a part of those duties, they must secure existential needs of the families, which are in need for help and activate those who are willing to be activated.

Social workers try to follow the basic standards for the national social assistance although they find the lack of funding a major obstacle in fulfilling all their obligations.

The MSAO and PES workers are expected to adequately match the instruments with the needs while not having diagnostic tools, which require time. The employees of both institutions recognize the need of deep individual contact with the clients but have no such opportunity due to the work overload.

The ideas of decentralisation of the aid system and individualisation of the service are hardly visible in the local scheme.

The studied target groups (LTU, SP, WP) are selectively present in the system of social assistance. SP is the most present group, then there is LTU and finally there is WP, which is barely present.

The idea of active inclusion in conjunction with social assistance is an ambitious objective of the local politics in Radom. Unfortunately, the tasks associated with achieving this goal are institutionally separated from each other. There are two institutions operating within this scope, which retain their own areas of competence. The situation in Radom seems to be even worse than average in Poland:

probably if the employees of those two institutions wanted to contact informally they would have to hide from their superiors.

The SAO employees provide the social assistance services and the employees of PES provide the services connected with the labour market. Non-governmental organisations operate rather in the social assistance services, whereas private companies operate rather in the labour market. Marketization of both types of services is very limited but at this stage it does not seem to be a shortcoming of the system. Under-funding needs of the poor could in fact lead to malpractice in the name of profit. Underdeveloped standards for the services could contribute to the formation of significant pathology.

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