Spis treści

Słowo wstępne 9

Arkadiusz Babczuk: Miękkie ograniczenia budżetowe jednostek samorządu terytorialnego 11
Grażyna Borys: Świadectwa pochodzenia jako instrument wspierający kogenerację 26
Martina Černíková: The Most Considerable Changes of the Tax Legislation in the Context of the Public Budgets Stabilization in the Czech Republic 35
Jarosław Dziuba: Wykorzystanie przychodów zwrotnych w gospodarce finansowej powiatów w Polsce 41
Andrzej Koza: Wsparcie ze środków publicznych przedsiębiorczości bezrobotnych osób niepełnosprawnych 53
Damian Kubiak: Zmiany na rynku pracowniczych programów emerytalnych w Polsce 62
Alina Majczyna: Rola Funduszu Dopłat w realizacji programów dopłat do kredytów mieszkaniowych 72
Martina Prskavcová: Tax Policy in Taiwan (Republic of China) 82
Ivana Šimíková: Mundell-Fleming Model and Maastrichts Fiscal Convergence Criteria: Fiscal and Budgetary Stabilization Need in the Context of EMU 91
Jana Šmídová: Is Contemporary Tax Book in the Czech Republic Really Tax Book? 96
Melania Bąk: Wartości niematerialne i prawne w aspekcie prawa bilansowego i podatkowego oraz Międzynarodowych Standardów Rachunkowości..... 102
Zdeněk Brabec: The Financial Evalutation of the Capital Project (Construction of the Minibike Circuit) 118
Šárka Čechlovská: Project Finance – an Alternative Method of Corporate Financing 127
Marketa Dubová, Helena Jáčová, Marie Šimonová: Analysis of E-learning Materials Benefits of Course „Selected Problems of Financial Management" for Different Target Groups of Users 132
Olga Hasprová: Comparison of Selected Items of Company and Insurance Company's Liabilities Balance Sheets 150
Josef Horák: Development of Czech Accounting from the End of 19th Century until the Present Time 156
Radana Hojná: Costing and Its Usage in Product Management 162
Helena Jáčová: Assessment of Suitability of Selected Indicators for Specification of Economically Depressed Areas in the Liberec Region 169
Joanna Kogut: Wpływ zmian projektu ustawy o rachunkowości na rachunkowość jednostek gospodarczych 182
Olga Malíková: Leases of the Asset and its Depreciation – Differences in Reporting under the Czech Legislation and Standards IFRS 195

Šárka Nováková: Economic Aspects of the Ecological Risks Assessment of the Industrial Accident 205
Magdalena Swacha-Lech: Istota finansów behawioralnych 211
Jacek Adamek: PLS i jego odwzorowanie w produktach bankowości islamskiej na przykładzie kontraktu *musharakah* 221
Elżbieta Hajduga: Przeglad uwarunkowań rozwoju działalności reasekuracyjnej w Polsce 232
Alicja Janusz: Ekonomiczne przesłanki tworzenia sieci bezpieczeństwa pośredników finansowych 241
Wojciech Krawiec: Realizacja polityki inwestycyjnej polskich funduszy nieruchomości 252
Robert Kurek: Rezerwy techniczno-ubezpieczeniowe zakładu ubezpieczeń – nowe podejście w Solvency II 265
Teresa Orzeszko: Zasady funkcjonowania rezerw na straty kredytowe w argentyńskich bankach 273
Beata Owczarczyk: Analiza porównawcza rozwoju działalności bancassurance we Francji, w Niemczech i w Polsce 289
Agnieszka Ostalecka: Metody przezwyciężania kryzysu azjatyckiego – wybrane aspekty 300
Małgorzata Solarz: Upadłość konsumencka w wybranych krajach 311

Summaries

Arkadiusz Babczuk: Soft Budget Constraints in Municipalities 25
Grażyna Borys: Certificates of Origin as the Cogeneration Supporting Instrument 34
Martina Černíková: Istotne zmiany w prawie podatkowym w kontekście stabilizacji budżetu Republiki Czeskiej 40
Jarosław Dziuba: Implementation of Recovered Revenues in Financial Economy of Districts in Poland 52
Andrzej Koza: The Public Funds for Support of Self-employment Among Handicapped Persons 61
Damian Kubiak: Changes on the Employee Pension Programs' Market in Poland 71
Alina Majczyna: The Meaning of Subsidy Fund in Financial Programmes to Support National Housing 81
Martina Prskavcová: Polityka podatkowa na Tajwanie (Republika Chińska) 89
Ivana Šimíková: Model Mundella-Fleminga oraz fiskalne kryteria konwergencji z Maastricht: potrzeba stabilizacji fiskalnej EMU 95
Jana Šmídová: Czy współczesna książka podatkowa w Republice Czeskiej jest rzeczywiscie książką podatkową? 101
Melania Bąk: Intangible Assets in View of Balance and Tax Law and International Accounting Standards 116
Zdeněk Brabec: Finansowa ocena projektu kapitałowego (konstrukcja toru do minimotocykli) 126

Šárka Čechlovská: Finansowanie projektowe jako alternatywna metoda finansowania przedsiębiorstwa 131
Marketa Dubova, Helena Jacova, Marie Simonova: Analiza korzyści materiałów kursu e-learning „Wybrane problemy zarzadzania finansowego dla różnych grup docelowych użytkowników” 149
Olga Hasprová: Porównanie wybranych elementów pasywów bilansów przedsiębiorstwa i firmy ubezpieczeniowej 155
Josef Horák: Rozwój rachunkowości w Czechach od końca XIX wieku do czasów obecnych 161
Radana Hojná: Kalkulacja kosztów i jej wykorzystanie w zarządzaniu produktem 168
Helena Jáčová: Ocena stosowności wybranych czynników do wyodrębnienia regionów słabiej rozwiniętych w regionie Liberca 181
Joanna Kogut: The Influence of Changes in Accountancy Act Draft on the Accountancy of Business Entities 194
Olga Malíková: Leasing aktywów i ich amortyzacja – różnice w sprawozdawczości według ustawodawstwa czeskiego i standardów IFRS 204
Šárka Nováková: Ekonomiczne aspekty pomiaru ryzyka ekologicznego wypadków przemysłowych 210
Magdalena Swacha-Lech: The Essence of the Behavioural Finance 220
Jacek Adamek: Profit and Loss Sharing and its Representation in Islamic Banking Products Based on the Example of *Musharakah* Contract 231
Elżbieta Hajduga: A Review of Reinsurance Development Causations in Poland 240
Alicja Janusz: Economic Indications for Creating Safety Networks of Financial Intermediaries 251
Wojciech Krawiec: The Realization of Investment Policy of the Polish Investment Fund 264
Robert Kurek: Technical-Insurance Provisions of an Insurance Company – New Attitude in Solvency II 272
Teresa Orzeszko: Loan Loss Provisioning in Argentinean Banks 288
Beata Owczarczyk: Comparative Analysis of the Development of Bancassurance Activity in France, Germany, and in Poland 299
Agnieszka Ostalecka: The Methods of Asian Crisis Overcoming – Chosen Aspects 310
Małgorzata Solarz: Consumer Insolvency in Selected Countries 322

PRACE NAUKOWE UNIWERSYTETU EKONOMICZNEGO WE WROCŁAWIU
Nr 16 2008
Finanse i rachunkowość – teoria i praktyka

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ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY OF SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SPECIFICATION OF ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS IN THE LIBEREC REGION

1. Introduction

The aim of the contribution is to carry out an assessment of suitability of selected indicators, which were taken for the specification of economically depressed areas (EDA) by the Regional government in the Liberec region. This issue is also a part of solution in the framework of the project WD-37-01-1 „The Innovative Approach to Disparities Solution at a Regional Level" of the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic. This project has been solved in the framework of the programme Research for Solution of Regional Disparities and in the programme of Support of Regional Development. As the main objectives the identification of key factors has been set up to characterize the problematic development of regions, ability of absorption of supports given to running business in regions which need the support from the state. The identification of brownfields as a potential of the regional development, description and quantification of regional disparities have been also set up.

2. Specification of economically depressed areas

On the basis of territorial arrangement the Czech Republic consists of 14 main regions. In the framework of every region there are smaller regions, territorial units specified by means of:

- administrative boundaries of regions, districts;
- administrative districts of municipalities with accredited municipal authority;
- administrative districts of municipalities with extended activities;
- municipalities or associations of municipalities.

From historical point of view and social-economic standard of individual regions the territory of the Czech Republic does not create the integrated unit. Every region has different natural conditions, different infrastructure, different quality of human resources etc. These different conditions result in arising of various regional disparities among individual regions which relate either to whole areas or only to some towns in the given region and therefore some regions can be specified as economically depressed areas. The government is particularly aimed at the economically depressed areas and provides them with various forms of subsidies and grants with the aim to settle all the regional disparities.

The government makes every effort to settle the uneven development of regions. It approved a bill No 248/2000 Coll. on support of regional development for the settlement of disparities. In accordance with this Act the fundamental division of regions with concentrated support of the government was carried out and according to its backwardness nature is divided into:

- economically depressed areas;
- structurally affected regions;
- rural regions.

To assess the type of backwardness in the region the following criteria have been given in the Act.

The structurally affected regions according to the Ministry for regional development are characterized as follows: negative expressions of structural changes are concentrated within the region, there is also the damping of industry and production enterprises and it consequently results in increasing unemployment. The Ministry for regional development uses for the specification of structurally affected regions indicators relating to the labour market and entrepreneurship development.

The rural regions are characterized as localities with low density of population, decrease of population, higher rate of employment in agriculture. There are indicators for the specification of the rural regions that especially characterize the development of number of population; the structure of its employment; the rate of population in rural municipalities.

The economically depressed areas according to the methodology of the Ministry for regional development show substantially lower level of development than there is the average level in the Czech Republic. For the specification of the economically depressed areas the Ministry for regional development uses following indicators: labour market, economic standard, structure and income level of municipalities and population. As economically depressed areas we can consider territories with low standard of living (measured by average salary), high rate of em-

ployment in primary sector, low density of settlement and above-average unemployment. The following economically weak regions were specified according to the methodology of the Ministry for regional development.

Table 1. Economically depressed areas in the Czech Republic specified by Ministry for regional development

Region	Economically depressed area (EDA)
Liberecký	Former military territory Ralsko
Jihočeský	Český Krumloy
Jihomoravský	Hodonín, Vyškov, Znojmo
Moravskoslezský	Bruntál
Olomoucký	Jeseník, Přerov, Šumperk
Pardubický	Svitavy
Plzeňský	Tachov
Středočeský	Rakovník, former military territory Mladá
Ústecký	Louny, Most, Teplice
Kraj Vysočina	Třebíč

Source: own elaboration based on [17].

According to the methodology of the Ministry for regional development there is the only one economically depressed area in the Liberec region, which is the former military territory Ralsko, although some other municipalities in the Liberec region show high rate of unemployment, low tax yield etc. This fact resulted in working up the own methodology for specification of economically depressed areas by employees of the regional government in the Liberec region. This methodology was used at the creation of the long-term document – Strategy of the Liberec Region Development, where the economically depressed areas and endangered localities were specified on the basis of following six indicators:

- rate of unemployment – as of 31 December 2001 higher than 10%;
- intensity of entrepreneurial assets – number of entrepreneurial bodies to 1,000 inhabitants lower than 170 entrepreneurial bodies;
- tax yield – tax incomes of municipalities to 1 person lower than 4,000 CZK;
- density of population – lower than 50 people/km^2;
- ratio of economically active population employed in services;
- ratio of population without school leaving examination.

The regional government in the Liberec region has specified on the basis of above mentioned indicators six economically depressed areas, which are shown in Figure 1: Podralsko, Hrádecko- Chrastavko, Frýdlantsko, Cvikovsko, Západní Českolipsko and Centrální Semilsko.

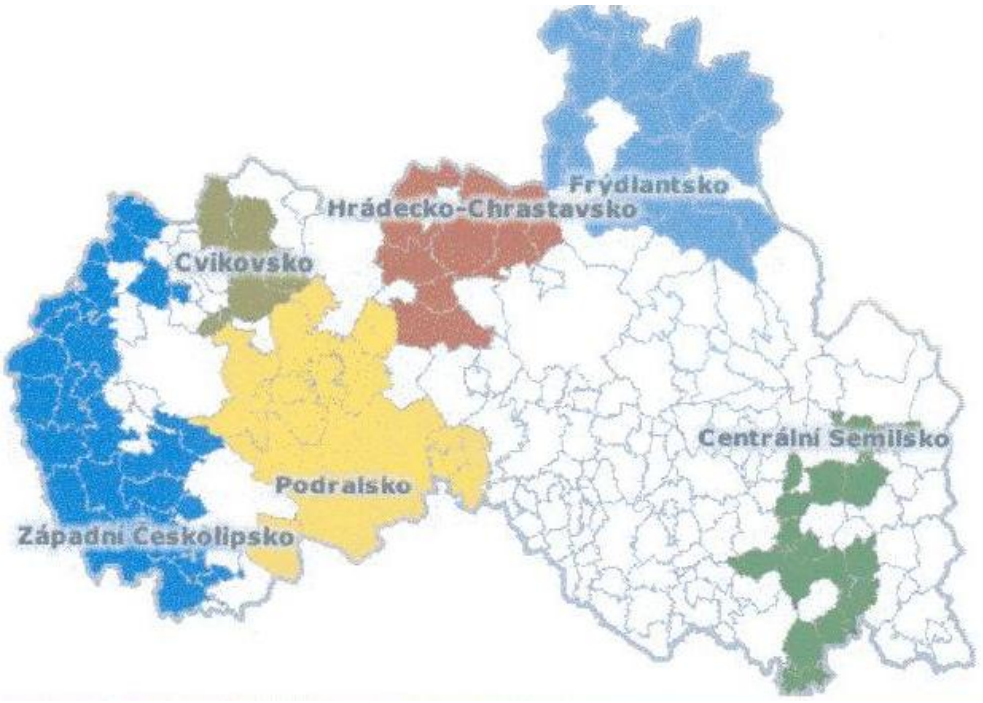

Fig. 1. Map of Liberec Region with marking of economically depressed areas

Source: Regional Government of Liberec Region, Department of economic development.

For evaluation of the situation in every above mentioned economically depressed area (EDA) the Regional Government of Liberec set a project „Programme of Development of Economically Depressed Areas in the Liberec Region“, which was worked up in the years 2005 and 2006. The research team consisted of representatives of the Faculty of Economics of the Technical University in Liberec, the Agency for Regional Development, Ltd. in Liberec and the Town Planning Studio SAUL, Ltd., was working on the project for two years. The objective of the project was to work up a study for every economically depressed area that will characterize the present situation in individual economically depressed areas (EDA) according to the selected indicators, which were divided into four pillars: economy, society, environment and public administration. The study contains a text and a data parts. The text part consists of two parts: analytic and a part of proposal. The analytic part depicts the economically depressed areas (EDA) according to the above mentioned four pillars and selected indicators for individual pillars. The part of proposal serves for formulation of proposed measures for five priority areas: economic development, infrastructure, tourist industry, human resources and living environment. Further, the study also contains a data part that serves for the docu-

mentation and depiction of all indicators including primary sources, which were used for calculations given in the text part.

3. Fundamental characteristics of individual economically depressed areas (EDA)

The first economically depressed area is Podralsko, which consists of 14 villages: Bezděz, Bohatice, Brniště, Cetenov, Dubnice, Hlavice, Mimoň, Noviny pod Ralskem, Pertoltice pod Ralskem, Ralsko, Stráž pod Ralskem, Velký Valtimov, Všelibice and Zákupy. EDA Podralsko infringes on two districts: Česká Lípa and Liberec. The economic development of EDA is to a certain extent affected by the fact that the military space of land was on its territory, which caused not only bad traffic access, but also, at present, big ecological encumbrance. As of 31 December 2004 19,329 citizens lived on the territory of the EDA Podralsko.

The whole economically depressed area Hrádecko-Chrastavsko consists of 7 villages: Bílý Kostel nad Nisou, Hrádek nad Nisou, Chrastava, Křižany, Nová Ves, Rynoltice and Zdislava. All villages in this EDA are situated in the district Liberec. 16,622 people lived in villages on the territory of the EDA Hrádecko-Chrastavsko as of 31 December 2004. A certain advantage of this area is close proximity of German and Polish cross-border areas, which brings foreign tourists.

The economically depressed area Frýdlantsko consists of 17 villages: Bílý potok, Bulovka, Černousy, Dětřichov, Dolní Řasnice, Habartice, Hejnice, Heřmanice, Horní Řasnice, Jindřichovice pod Smrkem, Krásný Les, Kunratice, Nové Město pod Smrkem, Oldřichov v Hájích, Pertoltice, Raspenava and Višňová. This territory is a part of the region Český sever (Czech North) and belongs to the area Frýdlantsko. A considerable part of the territory area of the EDA Frýdlantsko is formed by the Jizera Mountains. A cross-border area with Poland has a certain advantage. As of 31 December 2004 16,935 people lived in villages on the territory of the EDA Frýdlantsko and only four villages had more population than 1000 people.

The economically depressed area Cvikovsko consists of 4 villages: Cvikov, Kunratice u Cvikova, Svojkov and Svor. The area Cvikovsko creates a part of a tourist sub-area Lužické hory – Novoborsko. A certain advantage can be close surroundings of the Lužické hory and Mácha`s countryside, which are interesting from the tourist point of view and it is possible to consider a certain visiting potential to the place. As of 31 December 2004 5,746 people lived in villages on the territory of the EDA Cvikovsko.

The economically depressed area Západní Českolipsko consists of 25 villages: Blatce, Blíževedly, Dubá, Holany, Horní Police, Chlum, Chotovice, Jestřebí, Kamenický Šenov, Kozly, Kravaře, Luka, Nový Oldřichov, Provodín, Prysk, Skalice u České Lípy, Skalka u Doks, Stružnice, Stvolínky, Tachov, Tuhaň, Volfartice, Vrchovany, Žandov and

Ždírec. The whole area is situated in the district Česká Lípa. As of 31 December 2004 17,253 people lived in villages on the territory of the EDA Západní Českolipsko.

The economically depressed area Centrální Semilsko is situated in the district Semily and consists of 16 villages: Bělá, Benešov u Semil, Bradlecká Lhota, Bystrá nad Jizerou, Jablonec nad Jizerou, Košťálov, Kruh, Mříčná, Nová Ves nad Popelkou, Poniklá, Příkrý, Roprachtice, Roztoky u Semil, Slaná, Svojek and Syřenov. The whole EDA is located between the tourist districts Český ráj and Krkonoše mountains in picturesque countryside Podkrkonoší. As of 31 December 2004 9,583 people lived in villages on the territory of the EDA Centrální Semilsko.

Table 2. Overview of basic indicators in individual economically depressed areas (EDA) in Liberec Region

Indicator	EDA Podralsko	EDA Hrádecko-Chrastavsko	EDA Frýdlantsko	EDA Cvikovsko	EDA Západní Českolipsko	EDA Centrální Semilsko
Area (km^2)	379,4	170,1	320,4	79,1	360,3	152,3
Population (as of 31.12.2004)	19 329	16 622	16 935	5 746	17 253	9 583
Number of towns in EDA	14	7	17	4	25	16
Density of population (number of inhabit. /km^2)	51	98	53	73	48	63
Rate of employment as of 31.12.2001	9,5	9,8	17,5	14,8	13,0	8,8
Rate of unemployment as of 31.12. 2004	10,3	10,8	17,7	12,7	15,0	9,4
Number of entrepreneurial bodies	3 186	3 771	3 405	1 129	3 375	1 957
From which: very small – No	3 086	3 683	3 341	1 112	3 306	1920
very small – ratio in %	96,86	97,67	98,12	98,49	97.96	98,11
small – number	77	73	50	11	63	32
small – ratio in %	2,42	1,94	1,47	0,97	1,87	1,64
medium – number	19	13	11	6	5	5
medium – ratio in %	0,6	0,34	0,32	0,53	0,15	0,26
large – number	4	2	3	0	1	0
large – ratio in %	0,13	0,05	0,09	0	0,03	0
Number of entrepreneurial bodies to 1000 population	164,8	226,9	167,6	196,5	195,6	204,2
Tax yield	7 447	7 213	6 718	6 683	7 422	7 422
Number of economically active population	9 661	8 490	8 553	2 879	8 875	4 665
Ratio of economically active popul. in total No of popul. (as of 1.3.2001in %)	49,9	51,1	50,5	50,1	51,4	48,6

Ratio of econ. active popul. employed in services in total No of population	16,6	18,9	16,8	19,2	16,8	16,5
Number of popul. without school leaving exam	7 663	9 949	10 677	3 462	10 942	4 583
Ratio of population without school leaving exam in %	39,6	59.9	63,0	60,3	63,4	47,8
Number of population with university education	582	494	324	150	346	223
Ratio of population with university education in%	3,1	2,9	1,9	2,6	2,0	2,3

Source: own elaboration based on [3; 4; 6; 9; 10; 11; 12].

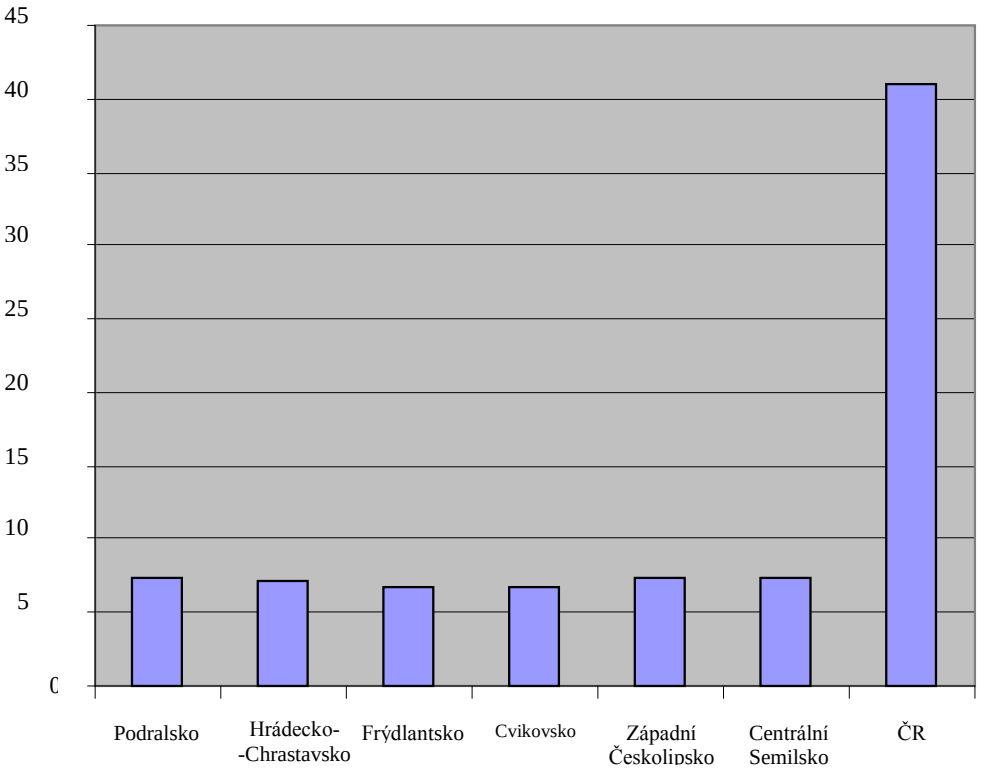

Fig. 2. Tax yield in individual EDA and in CR as of 31 December 2004

Source: own elaboration.

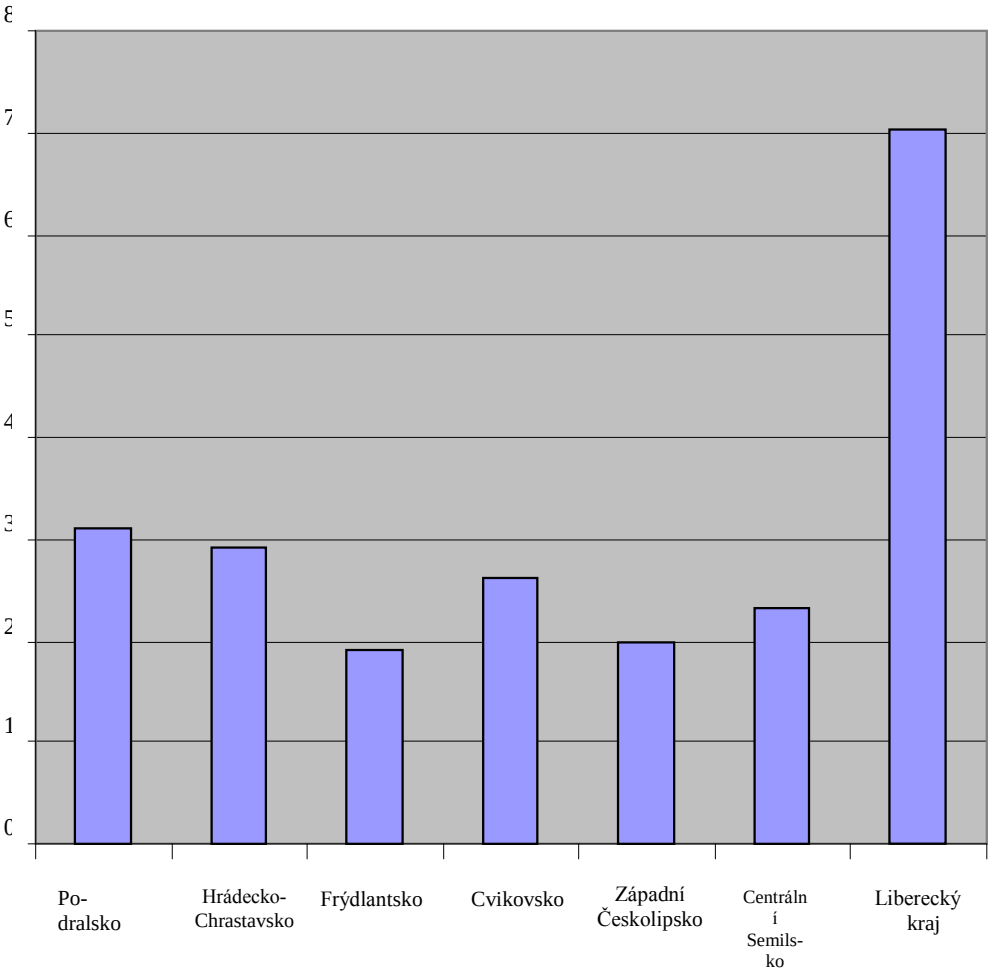

Fig. 3. Ratio of population with university education in individual EDA and in Liberec region as of 31 December 2004

Source: own elaboration.

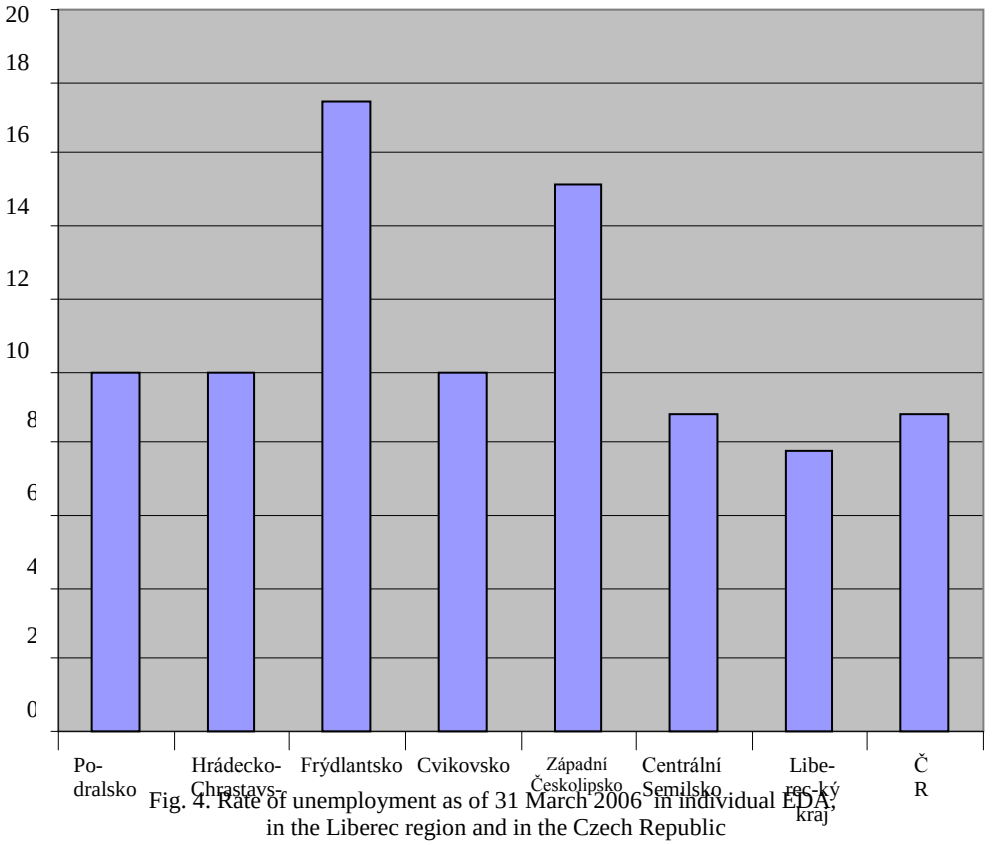

Fig. 4. Rate of unemployment as of 31 March 2006 in individual EDA, in the Liberec region and in the Czech Republic

Source: own elaboration.

4. Evaluation of selected indicators for specification EDA

For the specification of the economically depressed areas six basic indicators were set up. The rate of unemployment as of 31 December 2001 higher than 10% was taken as the first indicator. The value of this indicator was between 8.8-17.5% in individual EDA in the year 2001. If we compare this indicator with the value of the Liberec region (shown in fig. 3) where the rate of unemployment is somewhere about 8% we can see that some of the economically depressed areas show almost twice higher unemployment. For the assessment of the EDA it is suitable to use this indicator because its value is influenced by a couple of factors. For example, the rate of unemployment is influenced by a number of job offers which are very limited at present because of closing lots of entrepreneurial bodies (agricultural companies, textile and glass factories etc.) in the monitored EDAs. Further indica-

tor influencing the rate of unemployment is an education structure of population according to which people without school leaving certificates represent the biggest part in all EDA.

Further indicator is a number of entrepreneurial bodies for 1000 people smaller than 170 entrepreneurial bodies. The analysis of individual EDA results in a fact that the amount of entrepreneurial bodies falling on 1000 people is fluctuated from 165 up to 227. Although in two EDA the number of entrepreneurial bodies is just under the fixed limit (EDA Podralsko 165 and EDA Frýdlantsko 168) we can recommend also this indicator to use after the specification of EDA. This indicator informs us about the given area and the number of small and very small businesses, which started their business after closing bigger companies. In individual EDA there are from 1 to 4 big companies where low interest of investors in these areas is caused by bad traffic access, low education structure and insufficient age structure.

Another indicator – tax yield per capita lower than 4,000 CZK was set up for the classification of the economically depressed area. From the calculations given in table 2 is obvious that individual EDAs are above the limit. If we compare these data with the fact given for the Czech Republic (shown in fig. 2), where the tax yield is 41,085 CZK, it is evident that average tax incomes in monitored EDAs are several times lower. However, we must not forget that the revenue collection average per capita in the Czech Republic considerably suffers from bias because of the capital Prague, and also other „ rich“ areas (such as large municipal agglomerations). At the volume of revenue collections the influence of the law on budget assessment of taxes (it specifies the method of their allocation to regional self-governing units and to some state funds). No doubt that this law gives priority to the solidarity principle, but as a consequence it is only for some size categories of localities. Villages up to 100 population are in considerable disadvantage, on the contrary, cities with more than 100,000 population and, above all, the capital Prague have tax yield much higher than the other municipalities (in case of villages up to 100 population 0.4213; in case of cities from 100,001 to 150,000 population 1.0393; large cities with more than 150,001 population 1.6715; the capital Prague 2.7611). Further reasons for the difference we can see not only in a different coefficient of the size category of the municipality for sharing revenue collections, but also in higher yields from real estate tax and from income tax of free-lances. This indicator is also suitably chosen for specification of EDA, but its limit should be higher.

Density of population lower than 50 people/km^2 was set up as another indicator. The value of this indicator is between 51 and 98 people/km^2 in individual economically depressed area. In the Liberec region the value of this indicator is 135 people/km^2. The magnitude of this indicator depends on a whole range of factors. The job offer in the given area belongs to the main factors. Further, the value of the indicator also depends on transport infrastructure and on transport services,

which would facilitate the people in EDA to commute to work in more distant places. Further substantial factor is to secure social services for older people (there are health care, old people's homes, home nursing and services for elderly citizens etc.). Further essential factor is also the offer for housing. The individual EDAs mostly show the old available housing, there is a very low housing construction, insufficient social services, very bad transport services, because a lot of transport connections were cancelled for reasons of low efficiency. This indicator is also possible to take for specifications of the economically depressed areas.

The ratio of economically active population employed in services is also at a very low level in individual EDAs. It fluctuates between 16.5% and 19.2%. This indicator also reflects the education structure of population, which is not satisfactory and also the possibility to commute to work. A number of people in the EDA cannot find a job in the tertiary sphere, because they do not have required qualifications, the possibility to commute to work is very complicated for the reason of insufficient transport services and the EDA itself offers very limited number of jobs in the tertiary sphere. This indicator I would evaluate as a non-essential for the specification of the EDA.

The last indicator for the specification of the EDA is a ratio of population without school leaving certificate, which fluctuates between 39.6% and 63.4% from the total number of population living in the EDA. In graph 2 you can see the ratio of population with university education, which shows the low educational structure of individual EDA. It is most of all caused by the fact that in the given areas there were job offers mainly in big agricultural cooperatives, state farms or in textile, glass and uranium industries. It means that it was not necessary to have a university degree or even secondary school education for such kinds of jobs. At present this problem is reflected in the higher level of unemployment, because for the people, who have low education without school leaving certificate, it is very difficult to find a job at present labour market and most of them are not able to run their own business. This indicator is useful to follow for the specification of the economically depressed areas.

5. Conclusion

The economically depressed areas involve 83 small towns and villages from the total number of 216 in the Liberec region. Furthermore, the economically depressed areas cover almost a half of the area of the Liberec region and about 20% of population live in the EDAs.

On the basis of the above mentioned indicators it is possible to say that problems of individual EDAs are very similar to one another. The essential problem of all the EDAs is their weak economic base. This situation is caused by the end of activities of many economic bodies (eg. agricultural enterprises, enterprises of tex-

tile industry, uranium mining etc.). However, the enterprises have not been recompensed by new ones. As a consequence of it is a high rate of unemployment, decrease in revenue collections per capita, decrease in economically active population. Further consequence of closed down enterprises is a rise of so called brownfields and also a rise of lands, which are not cultivated and developed.

The above mentioned problems are very serious and it is necessary to solve them. But the financial situation of the smallest villages on the basis of the given data is very complicated. With regard to very low local budgets it is not possible to realize bigger investment activities, which are also tied to various subsidies. In case that a town finds money in the form of a loan for various investment activities, its future repayment including interests considerably burdens the town budget. Between small municipalities and big cities there are big differences in fiscal policy where the small towns and villages are placed at a disadvantage. These small municipalities are more dependent on subsidies for their development, but regarding the complicated subsidy system and its administrative machinery it is not possible to consider this situation satisfactory. The solution can be found in modification of statutory budgetary determination of taxes with arrangement of higher motivation for a support of entrepreneurial environment with the aim to increase revenue collections on one hand, and on the other hand, in support for voluntary village integrations (or creation of associations of villages), which make the realization of bigger development projects possible in case of dependence reduction on subsidies and bank loans. In conclusion we can say that the given state is an obstacle for more dynamic development of small villages and it results in deepening the difference between the small villages and municipal agglomerations.

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OCENA STOSOWNOŚCI WYBRANYCH CZYNNIKÓW DO WYODRĘBNIENIA REGIONÓW SŁABIEJ ROZWINIĘTYCH W REGIONIE LIBERCA

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest ocena stosowności wybranych czynników zastosowanych do wyodrębnienia przez władze lokalne regionów słabiej rozwiniętych w regionie Liberca. Władze lokalne wypracowały swoją własną metodologię dla specyfikacji słabiej rozwiniętych regionów, na podstawie której wyodrębniono sześć następujących: Podralsko, Hrádecko, Chrastavsko, Frýdlantsko, Cvikovsko, Západní Českolipsko i Centrální Semilsko. Metodologia ta została wykorzystana w aspekcie długoterminowym przy tworzeniu „Strategii rozwoju regionalnego Liberca".

Zgodnie z metodologią Ministerstwa Rozwoju Regionalnego wyróżniono tylko jeden słabiej rozwinięty region Liberca, którym jest były obszar militarny Ralsko.

Kwestia ta jest tylko częścią rozwiązania w ramach projektu Ministerstwa Rozwoju Regionalnego w Czechach „Innowacyjne podejście do rozwiązania problemu dysproporcji na poziomie regionalnym" (WD-37-01-1). Problem ten został rozwiązany w ramach programów: „Badanie dotyczące rozwiązania problemu dysproporcji regionalnych" i „Wsparcie rozwoju regionalnego".