

## **PARTICIPATORY BUDGET IN POLISH LEGAL SYSTEM AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE 2014 CITIZEN BUDGET IN BIALYSTOK**

### **Introduction**

The paper aims at discussing the mechanism of citizen participation in the budget of a local government unit, referred to as participatory budgeting, or, especially in the public discourse, a citizen budget.

In Poland, this form of public consultation is gaining popularity at the level of local public administration. In 2013 civil budget procedures were launched in a number of Polish communes and the relatively high level of funding, reaching PLN 5-10 million, resulted in a considerable growth of citizens' interest in local government affairs. As a result of those growing achievements of administrative practice the authors find it reasonable to research and comment on the aforesaid issue from the perspective of public finances and financial law.

For the aforementioned purpose the text is divided into three parts. In the first, the authors discuss the basic assumptions of participatory budgeting, developed in practice of many countries, with particular emphasis on the essence of the mechanism and its origins. The second part refers to legal regulations on public consultation concerning a local government unit budget in the scope of Polish financial law and the regulations of constitutional and international law. The third part discusses the example of implementation of the citizen budget, which in 2013 was organized by the local authorities of Białystok in order to finance the investments selected by local community in the financial year 2014.

The first part of the article was based on the literature on public consultation and participatory budgeting. The second issue was analyzed on the basis of the provisions of national and international law, including noteworthy opinions of Polish doctrine. The third part is based on the results of the study of local regulations, public documents, and applications submitted in Białystok by citizens and non-governmental organizations.

Due to the established timeframe of the analysis concerning practical issues, as well as the overall volume of the text, selected topics, especially in the part focused on implementation of citizen budget by Polish public administration, are only sketched.

### **General characteristics**

The participatory budget (also referred to as "citizen budget") is a decision-making process, in which residents are given the opportunity to influence the development of the budget of their local government unit<sup>1</sup>. It provides an instrument involving citizens in the decision-making procedure relating to the destination of local government budgetary expenditures. In this perspective of the notion under analysis it should be noted that the specific shape of the consultation procedure in the local public administration of particular countries, as well as in particular local communities belonging to the same legal system, is dependent on a number of variables.

In the South American literature on participation suggests that the specific implementation of the participatory budget depends on the answers to seven key questions: 1) whether the consultation process is based on the forms of direct democracy, or is implemented by representative bodies, 2) who ultimately decides on the formal adoption of the budget after it has

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been consulted with the residents, 3) whether the participatory and decision-making process takes place at the level of the authority of the local government unit, or its auxiliary units or other local political bodies, 4) to what extent and by what methods the local community has the insight into local budget and the possibility of social control over the implementation of expenditures developed in consultation procedures, 6) what part of the local budget is subject to consultation and open to the development in accordance with the will of the residents, 7) is the participatory process formalized and regulated by strict rules or the stress is placed on the dynamics, openness and commitment of the residents<sup>2</sup>.

In principle, the participatory budgeting mechanism is based on an assumption that in the consultation procedure residents decide over a separate, specifically allocated amount of public funds. Participatory budget means an isolated part of commune budget that is spent on the implementation of public tasks selected by the residents.

According to B. Wampler, participatory budgeting should be identified as a situation in which members of a local community join the discussion on the distribution of public resources<sup>3</sup>. The role of citizen contribution is reduced to co-participation in the creation of local budget expenditures. The essence of the civil budget is therefore a dialogue between residents and public authorities<sup>4</sup>. The participants in the consultation process are primarily local residents, members of non-governmental organizations and representatives of local authorities<sup>5</sup>.

The described idea can manifest itself in granting citizens both a greater role in the control of public expenditure and an initiative in submitting applications and projects. Therefore, participatory budget can be identified as a form of public consultation. It should be noted, however, that, in contrast to the general principles of public consultation, if the process of dialogue between the local authorities and citizens meets the requirements of participatory budgeting, it remains a binding procedure<sup>6</sup>. As a result, the adoption of participatory budget is a form of declaration by the authorities that the objectives affirmed by the local community will be accomplished.

The concept of participatory budget was created in the city of Porto Alegre, the state capital of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil in 1989 and was to be a remedy for the corruption and lack of public trust in the local authorities<sup>7</sup>. By 1997 the success of this initiative resulted in the dissemination of solutions adopted in Porto Alegre throughout other countries of South America, including Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Venezuela<sup>8</sup>.

Since that time, the mechanism of participatory budgeting has spread around the world and its variations can now be found in Europe (especially in Spain, Belgium, Italy, Germany, France, Portugal, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom), Asia (for instance Sri Lanka), Africa (e.g. Cameroon), and in North America<sup>9</sup>. A decade ago, the popularity of this mechanism was estimated at the level of approximately 250 cities around the world<sup>10</sup>, whereas presently various calculations note 795-1500 municipalities<sup>11</sup>.

The first attempt to introduce the mechanism of participatory budgeting in Poland took place in 2012 in Sopot<sup>12</sup>. Currently, a budgetary consultation procedure is used in towns such as Dąbrowa Górnicza, Olsztyn, Poznań, Jaworzno and Łódź. The mechanism<sup>28</sup> Annual Center Review '13 introduced in Białystok, which is herein described, was the first attempt to use public consultation in budgetary matters at the commune level in the Podlasie region and across the whole north-eastern Poland<sup>13</sup>.

It is worth noting that, due to, among other things, the emphasized significant number of criteria for differentiating the actual shape of participation between different municipalities and legal systems, the concept of participatory budgeting is relatively broad and heterogeneous<sup>14</sup>. The result of this is the existence of different models of the participatory (citizen) budget. Types of the aforementioned budgeting in the world are varied, which results from, for example, the specificity of different local communities, various political systems and traditions etc.<sup>15</sup>

The main difference between the particular types of participatory budget is the scope of the direct impact that residents have on the final outcome of consultation procedure. In decision-

making part of the process it can may occur via direct participation or by indirect means of representation, e.g. through non-governmental organizations<sup>16</sup>.

Among various types of participatory budget some are commonly distinguished<sup>17</sup>:

- the European version of the Porto Alegre model,
- participation of organized interests,
- local community fund the at the local and municipal level, - public-private negotiations
- participating neighborhoods,
- consultations of public finances.

Despite a number of differences between them, there are significant common features. In essence, every form of participatory budget requires constant and regular meetings of residents with those representatives of a public authority who are focused on financial and budgetary matters of the municipality. Moreover, the decisions conceived in such debates have to be binding and the participatory concept should be used in a long term perspective<sup>18</sup>.

The adoption of participatory budget brings benefits to all participants: residents, non-governmental organizations and local authorities<sup>19</sup>. The consequences of introducing the procedure are not only of political, financial and economic, but also social and educational significance. Among the most important advantages of participatory budget the following are emphasized: it supports the process of decentralization of power, builds civil society and increases the integration of local community; it promotes innovation and entrepreneurship, and develops competences of non-governmental activists. It also increases the social awareness and builds a local sense of responsibility for the common good<sup>20</sup>.

Participatory budget increases the possibilities of constructing public expenditures in accordance with the principle of social justice and to ensure their transparency and clarity<sup>21</sup>. A dialogue between members of local community and representatives of municipal authorities may significantly increase the level of public confidence and understanding other decisions taken by local authorities. As a result, participatory budgeting promotes the legitimacy of local government<sup>22</sup>.

Simultaneously, the aforementioned mechanism increases cohesion within the local community and allows to respond more effectively to the expectations as well as identify the most important needs of the residents. Thus, it increases the efficiency of the processes of public funds allocation<sup>23</sup>.

### **Legal regulation of participatory budget in Poland**

Neither the notion of “participatory budget” nor the “citizen budget” has formal, legal definitions<sup>24</sup>. Neither the act of 27 August 2009 on public finances<sup>25</sup> nor any other publicly mandatory and effective Polish legal act directly regulates this issue. Any detailed comments on the legal basis of this form of public consultation should begin with international law.

The basic international agreement governing the functioning of local self-government in Europe is the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG)<sup>26</sup>, which in Poland was ratified in 1993. The Charter is based on the assumption that local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population, which is exercised by councils or assemblies composed of freely elected members (Article 3 Section 1 and 2 of ECLSG).

Simultaneously the Charter does not restrain from referring to assemblies of citizens, referendums or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute (Article 3 Section 2 of ECLSG). This issue, however, was left to the decision of the national legislature – the provisions of the Charter do not regulate in detail the inclusion of citizens in the specific decision-making procedures in local public affairs. They also omit the issue of participatory budgeting.

Participatory procedures at the local level were not introduced explicitly also in the current Polish Constitution of 1997<sup>27</sup>. In accordance with its Article 4 the supreme power in the Republic of Poland shall be vested in the Nation and is exercised directly or through their representatives. In this context it is worth noting that the widespread form of participatory budgeting uses forms of direct democracy, just as citizen initiative to adopt resolutions or the local referendum.

Polish administrative courts and public administration emphasized, inter alia, that “in the Constitution and in the Act of 1990 on commune self-government there are no provisions granting local community members the right to address the commune council with drafts of resolutions”<sup>28</sup>. This is important for participatory budgeting since in the doctrine a view is presented, according to which if there is no legal basis for a particular method of decision-making by the local government unit, there is no possibility of introducing such method by the commune, e.g. in the form of a council’s resolution. Lack of legal regulation on participatory budgeting would then prevent Polish communes from introducing this procedure by an autonomous decision of each local government unit.

In the absence of an explicit legal basis and, as emphasized earlier, significant discrepancies regarding the possible model of participatory budget, according to the Polish legal system citizens can formally influence the local government expenditures in several ways<sup>29</sup>:

1. In some circumstances, residents participating in the so-called rural meeting (Polish: *zebranie wiejskie*) summoned under the provisions of the Act of 20 February 2009 on the rural fund<sup>30</sup>, can autonomously indicate to commune authorities expenditures that should be fulfilled in the next financial year. It is an uncommon example of a mechanism by which the self-organized local community has the statutory right to formally influence a local government unit in budgetary matters.

2. The provisions of the commune’s statute, the statute of a commune’s auxiliary unit or a resolution of the commune council on budget draft proceedings may entitle auxiliary units or local residents to participate in the preparation of the budget. In this case, the basis for the competence of residents is an adequate provision of local law, previously passed by the commune council pursuant to Article 234 of the act on public finances.

3. In accordance with the provisions of the act of 15 September 2000 on the local referendum<sup>31</sup>, in the procedure of commune referendum local residents, as members of the local community, by means of voting may express their willingness to resolve issues concerning their community and remaining within the range of tasks and competences of the commune, as well as other significant issues relating to social, economic and cultural bonds within the community. During the budgetary procedure, it is possible to organize a referendum, which, if its results are binding, will influence the local government expenditures.

4. In the light of Article 5a section 2 of the act of 8 March 1990 on commune self-government<sup>32</sup> in matters of importance to commune, the procedure of public consultation with the residents of the commune may be carried out on its territory. In this case, the rules and procedures for its implementation, and thus the implementation of a participatory mechanism, are defined by the resolution of the council. The budget resolution and its draft are important communal issues, therefore there are no barriers to the implementation of variously structured consultation procedures in this area. Polish law does not regulate their detailed form or course. On the other hand, such consultations are fully non-binding and there is no obligation for the local government to take their results into account in the budget proposed for next year.

With regard to resolution of the commune council on participatory budgeting, which becomes popular in Polish local government, another important question in the nature of competence should be emphasized. It is the executive authority of the commune that has the exclusive right of initiative on drafting the budget resolution, as guaranteed by Article 233 of the act on public finances. Therefore, from a formal point of view, only the mayor may perform the statutory tasks, such as starting work on the budget draft and its final preparation. This means that both the residents and the council may affect the executive authority by any lawful means, to

form a specific shape of commune's expenditures in the next financial year, but they cannot replace the mayor in the performance of his obligatory legal actions.

In practice Polish local authorities adopt resolutions on the citizen budget, which provide for compulsory consideration by the executive body, during the preparation of the budget, the will of people expressed in the public consultation organized on the basis of Article 5a of the act on commune self-government. From the above causes they should be considered inadequate for the current legal status, which allows Polish doctrine to formulate views about the need to regulate this issue at the central national level, in the act of parliament<sup>33</sup>.

### **Participatory budget of Białystok for 2014**

On 25 June 2013 the City Council of Białystok adopted resolution No. XLVIII/534/13 on conducting in the city of Białystok public consultation on the citizen budget as part of the budget of Białystok in 2014<sup>34</sup>.

Councilors decided that the participatory mechanism would include a part of the city budget in the amount of PLN 10 million (§ 1 section 2 of the resolution). On a scale of total municipal expenditures, emerging at the level of 1.5 billion PLN, the aforementioned amount accounted for approximately 0.67% of the annual budget of Białystok. Public consultation was to take the form of a citywide plebiscite in which members of the local community would vote for "investment projects" (§ 2 section 2 of the resolution) submitted by authorized entities. In this group the municipal council saw Białystok inhabitants who had the right to elect (active voting rights) as well as non-governmental organizations seated in Białystok (§ 2 section 3 of the resolution).

The submitted projects of commune expenditures were to be verified by the "Commission for the citizen budget", whose composition was to be determined by the mayor (§ 5 of the resolution). Its task 31 was to: 1) verify the projects in terms of formal, legal and technical feasibility, as well as of the possibility of securing the financial resources for next years in case of any further costs that the project generates in the future, and 2) put projects on the qualified list that would be subjected to community's vote (§ 3 of Appendix 1 to the resolution).

Appendix 1 to the aforementioned resolution stipulated that projects could relate to investment matters that fall within the competence of the commune; their minimum value was not set and the maximum value could not exceed PLN 10 mln, i.e. the total amount of the city's citizen budget (§ 1).

Applicants were to fill out a form indicating the contact details of their representative, title, location and theme of the project, and then in the narrative form: the objectives of the project (maximum 100 words), description (max. 400 words), justification (max. 200 words), range (max. 100 words), the impact on the nature and environment (max. 150 words), as well as an approximate budget. An example form was stipulated in the Annex 2 to the above resolution; it could be submitted in paper, as well as in electronic format.

Among the additional requirements imposed on the applicants, the resolution introduced, inter alia, an obligatory consent to the verification of personal data in the electoral roll and consent to the placement of information about who is the originator of the project on the official city website (§ 2 section 4 of Appendix 1 to the resolution).

In the Appendix 4 to the resolution municipal council set a schedule of civil budget:

- from 19 August to 20 September 2013: submission of project proposals,
- from 23 September to 4 October 2013: review of submitted applications,
- from 7 October to 25 October 2013: a vote on the proposals (the plebiscite),
- until 8 November 2013: announcement of the results of public consultation.

In accordance with the adopted formula of public consultation, submitted applications after their verification were to be put to a vote ongoing for three weeks, held both in paper and electronic form. Each eligible member of local community could vote for one to five projects listed

on the ballot. It contained the titles of the selected projects and their approximate cost – indicated previously by the applicants.

In accordance with Appendix 3 to the above resolution, containing an example of the ballot, the ballot was to be declared invalid if at least one of the following circumstances would occur: 1) the ballot is not completed with any task or is completed with more than 5 tasks, 2) a resident filled in more than one ballot, 3) first name, surname or PESEL number<sup>35</sup> listed on the ballot is indecipherable, 4) PESEL number is incorrect, 5) a statement included on the ballot is not signed.

At the stage of submitting proposals for expenditures, which that ended on 20 September 2013, in Białystok the authorized entities submitted 192 proposals, their total value amounting to about PLN 320 million. This corresponded to more than 20% of the total municipal budget and more than 30 times above the total value of the citizen budget projects indicated in the resolution of the city council.

The mayor of Białystok issued two enactments for the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution concerning the citizen budget. In the first one (No. 3789/13 of 23 September 2013) a group of 14 members of the “Committee for the citizen budget” was appointed; only the municipal officials, under the leadership of the deputy mayor of the city, were selected. The aforementioned enactment contained also two examples of protocols: of the verification of submitted projects and of the whole process of public consultation.

The second enactment of the Mayor of Białystok (No. 3790/13 of 23 September 2013) appointed four members of the “Returning committee for the civil budget” that also was entirely composed of officials. It stipulated that the plebiscite shall take place by casting marked ballots into one of four ballot boxes placed in municipal office buildings all over the city (opened in office hours) or by sending it during voting days to a special email address.

Verification of submitted projects and potential city expenditures ended in the first days of October 2013. From the total of 192 applications, 51 initiatives were positively verified, i.e. 26.5% of the total. Relatively frequent causes for disqualification were: an indication of the investment on a property not belonging to the municipality or municipal but currently subsidiary to third parties, as well as lack of the nature of “investment” (the word itself defined neither in communal document nor in Polish legislation). Eligible projects were placed on the ballots which were made available in a paper and electronic form.

During the three weeks of plebiscite, a total of 40 952 votes were cast, including 27 549 over the internet (67.3%) and 13 043 in the ballot boxes. In the above, only 32 461 ballots were considered valid (79.2%). This meant that only one third of voting members of local community made use of the paper form, while every fifth vote cast was considered invalid. Among 295 thousand of city inhabitants and 228 thousand of people eligible to vote, the turnout roughly exceeded 17%, i.e. in the plebiscite every seventh entitled resident voted<sup>36</sup>.

As the returning committee later officially announced, among roughly 8 thousand of invalid votes 5,558 were cast by ineligible participants in the plebiscite and 1436 were double votes. In the case of 461 ballots the citizens’ data were indecipherable, in 401 wrong PESEL number was presented, 73 ballots were unsigned and in 56 cases voters chose none or more than five projects<sup>37</sup>.

As a result of the aforementioned public consultation process city officials singled out seven investments, which were formally qualified and most supported by voters. Their value by almost PLN 400 thousand exceeded the anticipated total of PLN 10 million; however, as the authorities emphasized, due to the expectations of the residents expressed in the plebiscite the mayor decided to increase the amount of citizen budget funds previously stipulated by the councilors<sup>38</sup>.

For the implementation in the Białystok commune budget for 2014 the following project and expenditures were selected:

- Project No. 61 “Boulevards of St. John, the Theologian”: 5,899 votes (PLN 1.4 million),

- Project No. 57 “The social concept of Wę-głowa – phase I”: 4,187 votes (PLN 3.83 million),
- Project No. 140 “Construction of a footbridge across the river Biała and pavement constituting access to the footbridge”: 3,514 votes (PLN 365 thousand),
- Project No. 145 “Street Sports Center”: 3,009 votes (PLN 224 thousand),
- Project No. 3 “Construction of an estate road on Bacieczki Street, connecting Armii Krajowej Street with Bacieczki Forest”: 2,700 votes (PLN 300 thousand),
- Project No. 154 “Tourism, sport and ski-bicycle recreation in the Pietrasze Forest”: 2,612 votes (PLN 1.26 million),
- Project No. 139 “Construction of football center and local sport fields”: 2,418 votes (PLN 3.0 million).

All the aforementioned projects one may be conventionally divided into two “huge” ones of the value of PLN 3-4 million, two “medium” estimated at PLN 1-1.5 million, and three “small” budgets calculated at the level of PLN 200-400 thousand. Three of them have been submitted by non-governmental organizations, four others were formally brought in by individuals.

Among the projects selected by the local community in Białystok, investments in public space proved to be the most popular – development of the valley of the river flowing through the city and the revitalization of the former military area. They won a total of over 10 thousand votes (31.1% of valid ballots) and are aimed at spending on urban space more than half of the entire expenditures included in the citizen budget (PLN 5.23 million).

Placed second, investment in sports infrastructure were chosen – three projects with a total value of PLN 4.48 million, which won a total of 8,000 votes (24.8% of the ballots found valid by the returning committee). The third group of initiatives to be financed in 2014 cover public communication – two projects with cost estimated at a total of PLN 665 thousand, supported by 6.2 thousand of the plebiscite participants (19.1% of votes).

After completion of the above consultative procedure, seven selected projects were taken into account when constructing the Białystok municipal budget for 2014 and, pursuant to official declarations, included in the draft created by the mayor of the city.

### **Final Remarks**

Participatory budgeting is a relatively new mechanism involving citizens in deciding on the functioning of the local political community, which was developed mainly in response to the lack of public trust in the lowest levels of administration and low legitimacy of the authorities of the basic units of territorial division. All over the world it is becoming increasingly popular, the effect of which is the introduction of relevant procedures in more and more cities in many countries on all continents, including Europe.

In Poland, the participatory budget has no explicit legal basis in any generally applicable provisions of national law. In practice, it is derived from Article 5a of the act on commune self-government, while the doubts are raised as to the obligatory applicability of such consultations, formulated in the resolutions of the decision-making bodies in many Polish communes. The aforementioned uncertainty relates to a strictly applicable rule resulting from Article 233 of the act on public finances that the commune executive authority has an exclusive initiative on drafting the commune budgetary resolution.

Citizen budget procedure in Białystok, as well as analogous public consultations organized in other Polish cities, as a form of non-binding plebiscite, involving residents in decision-making processes concerning the finances of the commune, cannot be regarded as a classic form of participatory budgeting. The aforesaid conclusion stems from the fact that there is no effective mechanism to ensure that self-government authorities do not withdraw from the investment chosen by the people (for example, the commune will refrain from performance of the adequate part of its budgetary expenditure).

The procedure organized in 2013 in the capital of Podlasie based on a mechanism of direct democracy, yet the imprecisely formulated evaluation of submitted projects was left entirely to city officials. The consultation process was held at the commune level – in Białystok there are no auxiliary units. Moreover, the resolution of the city council did not divide the aforementioned PLN 10 million between any form of districts, circuits or settlements (that would separate decision-making processes over lesser amounts of funds in several particular parts of the commune).

Inhabitants of Białystok could choose the way of spending less than 1% of the municipal expenditures for 2014, therefore the formula of participating in the formation of commune budget should be considered more than illusory. The present practice of spending commune finances on investments shows that such amount of expenditures may be successfully transferred to selected investments during the implementation of the budget, so the impact of local community on the creation of city expenditures was rather symbolic.

Perhaps due to the pioneering nature of the consultation procedure in Białystok, the participatory process was developed in a relatively rigid formula. However, it was not fully formalized. An example of the loophole in the regulation was the unclear concept of “investment” nature of the projects and the reasons for exclusion of many submitted projects by the “Committee for the civil budget”. On the other hand, during the plebiscite, both the city authorities and citizens involved themselves in the promotion of voting and submitted projects thanks to which every seventh entitled inhabitant voted.

It is not clear to what extent and by what means members of a local community will have an insight into the implementation of the seven selected projects and the extent to which citizens will be able to perform the civil control over the commune budget. As it was noted, local self-government authorities have no legal obligation to spend funds indicated in the participatory procedure. The actual way of implementing the first citizen budget in Białystok will therefore be impacted primarily by non-legal reasons, including the subject of upcoming local elections.

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29 See K. Bandarzewski, Opinia prawna dotycząca prawnych uwarunkowań udziału społeczności lokalnych w procesie konstruowania i wykonywania budżetu gminy, online: <http://www.maszglos.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Ekspertyza-dotyczaca-budzetow-obywatelskich-dr-K.Bandarzewski-.pdf> (accessed on 08.01.2014).

30 Journal of Laws No. 52, item 420 as amended.

31 Journal of Laws No. 88, item 985 as amended.

32 Consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2013, item 594 as amended.

33 Further reading: R. Trykozko, Ekspertyza prawna dotycząca uwarunkowań funkcjonowania budżetu obywatelskiego w miastach i zakresu możliwości przyznania miejskim jednostkom pomocniczym uprawnień do określania finansowanych z budżetu zadań w sposób wiążący organy gminy, na zasadach zbliżonych do funduszu sołectkiego, p. 6; online: <http://www.maszglos.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Publikujemy-ekspertyze-prawna-autorstwa-Rafala-Trykozko-dotyczaca-mozliwosci-wprowadzania-budzetu-obywatelskiego-w-miastach-.pdf> (accessed on 08.01.2014).

34 Official Journal of Podlaskie Voivodship of 2013, item 2914.

35 PESEL (Polish: Powszechny Elektroniczny System Ewidencji Ludności, Universal Electronic System for Registration of the Population) is the national identification number used in Poland since 1979. The number is mandatory for all permanent residents of Poland and for temporary residents living in Poland for over 2 months.

36 Budżet Obywatelski 2014 – wyniki głosowania, online: <http://www.bialystok.pl/154-szczegoly-aktualnosci/newsid/4431/default.aspx> (accessed on 08.01.2014).

37 Information by A. Kurluta, Director of the Department of Social Affairs, Municipal Office in Białystok, presented during the proceedings of Ad Hoc Committee for the Citizen Budget, established by the Commune Council of the City of Białystok, held on 22 January 2014.

38 Budżet Obywatelski 2014 – wyniki głosowania, op.cit