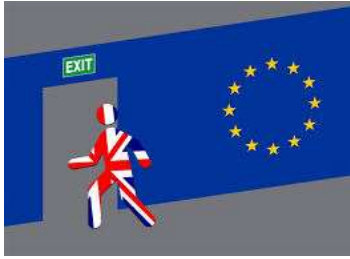


## Brexit may harm Poland's regions: opinion



### **A Polish local government official is warning that Britain's divorce with Europe could cause Poland's regions to lose some of the funds they normally receive from Brussels.**

Brexit will lead to changes in Europe's economic statistics that could harm Poland, says Adam Struzik, chairman of Poland's central Mazovia province. He recently voiced his view at a meeting of the EU's Committee of the Regions.

Struzik argues that it is crucial that average GDP per capita is "calculated correctly" once Brexit happens. GDP per capita is the main criterion for the allocation of EU funds, and Poland will become statistically richer after Britain leaves the bloc even though its national income will not increase in any way, according to Struzik.

"If a certain statistical effect occurs, the group of transition regions might turn out to be a lot larger," Struzik told the EU's Committee of the Regions in December. He was referring to regions with a GDP per capita ranging from 75 to 90 percent of the EU average. The highest EU structural funds are available to regions with less than 75 percent of the EU average.

Consequently, it is important to apply objective criteria when assessing the affluence of individual regions, Struzik argued.

He also suggested that the EU average often "blurs the real picture," and the allocation of EU funds should take into account social indicators such as unemployment, in addition to the GDP criterion.

The latest data from Eurostat, the EU's statistics agency, shows that two Polish provinces have already passed the 75-percent GDP mark. These are Mazovia, which was recently split into two statistical areas, and the Lower Silesia in the country's southwest. The latest forecasts indicate that three other provinces—Wielkopolskie in the west, Silesia in the south and Pomerania in the north—may soon follow suit. All EU regions are covered by the 28-nation bloc's cohesion policy, but most structural funds go to regions whose GDP per capita is under 75 percent of the EU28 average.

Source: The Warsaw Voice