History of the Polish region of Nemoland

Until the 10th century the area has been an unknown border area with primeval forests and traces of pre historic (Celtic?) settlements and primitive mining activities. From the beginning of the Polish nation in the 10th century, the region has been Polish under the rule of the Silesian Piast dukes. The ruins of a Piast stronghold in Stara Kamienica testify to this. From the twelfth century onwards the Silesian dukes invited German colonists to the area, mainly for glass industry and agrarian (flax) industry. Under de rule of their vassals, like the German Schaffgotsch family, these colonists founded towns and villages around the Karkonosze/Riesengebirge and Iser Mountains. In the 14th century, the Piast dukes came under Bohemian rule, and Habsburg Austria inherited the region in 1526. In 1741, the Prussian Frederick the Great conquered the area and the protestant majority gained freedom of religion. Until 1945 Stara Kamienica was part of Germany, known as Alt Kemnitz. From the 15th century till 1946 the Schaffgotsch family were the main large land owner in the area, and also the founder of the hamlet of Ramberg. After the war this family and all Germans had to leave the area, as a result of the Yalta Conference in 1945, when Stalin moved Poland to the west, incorporating Poland as a satellite state of the Soviet Union. Most Poles who now live here originate from former East Poland that is now a part of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania. The Polish migrants were forced to live under communist rule, leaving no space for community building, adaptation to the new land and use of the German agrarian knowledge. The catholic church offered cultural continuity, by neglect of cultural diversity and social injustice of the communist system. There have been few recent investments in employment and (tourist) infrastructure because of the fear that Germany would reclaim the area. In 1991, both countries fixed the borders in a final treaty.

In communist time all memories to the German history, land use and knowledge were wiped out and often destroyed. All German names were replaced by new Polish names, and all cemeteries were cleaned. Many houses disappeared to serve the need for building materials in east Poland. In Stara Kamienica many monuments got demolished, like palaces and estates at Stara Kamienica, Nowa Kamienica, Barcinek and Kopaniec; all monumental Lutheran churches (except in Kromnów and Wojcieszyce) and the famous sanatorium in Rybnica.

After the collapse of communism and Polish EU-membership, unemployment has even increased because many large industries and agricultural enterprises shutdown and monuments got even more ruined because the economic crisis. In the cities relative prosperity grew, but the rural areas hardly benefit from this. There are many problems with unemployment, low wages and insufficient social services. Large-scale tourism is limited to some monumental cities in the Jelenia Góra valley, the Karkonosze Mountains and the health resorts in Cieplice and Swieradów Zdrój; but there is hardly any rural tourism. There is almost no recognition of the typical cultural-historical and ecological value of regions like Stara Kamienica. This neglect lessens its attraction to tourists. Furthermore, there is substantial environmental damage caused by surrounding heavy industry and open mines. Not long ago the area was known as the “black triangle." In the meantime, there has been a lot of investment in cleaning up polluting factories and reforestation.

After Poland became member of the EU mining companies got very active in the area, and wanted to explore an huge open stone mine in Mala Kamienica and an uranium mine in Kopaniec. By protesting, local inhabitants were able to stop the plans temporarily, but the companies are still threatening the area by their plans and continuous juridical efforts to realize them. Because of these protests the local inhabitants became much more beware of their cultural and natural heritage and started all kinds of initiatives to protect nature and value the history of landscape and culture. The local government of Stara Kamienica is strongly supporting this sustainable development by setting up community centers, facilitating village organizations, rejecting the mining plans, organizing cultural events and promoting rural tourism by presenting the area as eco-museum. Meanwhile village organizations, local artists, (Dutch) NGO’s, ecofarms and small enterprises are very active setting up all kinds of innovative activities, as a challenge to the ‘big economy’, restrictive laws and EU supported politics of mining companies, industrial food industry and big supermarkets, which threatens the local economy, the historical and natural landscape and the social conditions of the local community; like David to Goliath, or Asterix to the Romans. Who will win?

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLISH REGION OF GÓRY IZERSKIE / ISER MOUNTAINS

Localization and reach

Góry Izerskie (Iser Mountains) form the western member of Sudety mountain range. From east and south-east they border the Kotlina Jeleniogórska (Jeleniogórska Basin) and Karkonosze, from south and south-west through the basin of Nysa Łużycka they are continguos to Łużyckie Mountains and in the north they connect with Iser Foothills (Pogórze Izerskie).The eastern border forms the lowering of Zimna Przełęcz (525 m), the south-east border follows the Kamienna basin from Piechowice to Szklarska Poręba (886 m) and continues south along Mielnica, Mumlava and Izera till Rokytnic and Jizerou. The south border is conventionally following from Vysokeho nad Jizerou in the west through Pencin and Dlouhy Most till Liberec. The western border is a tectonic fault following from Liberec in the north through Mnišek, Detřichov to Frydland. The northern border follows from Frydland northwest through Dolni Řasnice to Jindřichovic by Smrek and follows till the national Polish border. From there towards east through Pobiedna, Krobica along Stary Trakt Handlowy Zytawsko-Jeleniogórski (Old Commercial Route) through Gierczyn and Przecznica till Kwieciszowice and on the border of Stara Kamienica Basin to Kromnów at the foot of Zimna Przełęcz.

Góry Izerskie create an expanding and branched orographic system reflecting the complex geological structure of the entire mountain complex with granite central part and metamorphic aureole. The mountain ridges and massifs forming this system are mostly laying evenly with a parallel of latitude. They are characterized by wide, sometimes concave hilltops with domed tops, covered by peat lands and often grown with forest. They constitute fragments of old tertiary surface planation which in earlier tertiary period underwent tectonic partition and irregular, askew up thrust till the present height, seldom exceeding 1000-1100 m above sea level. In the area of Czechoslovakia beginning from the west a short Oldřichovsky Hřeben with Špicak (724 m) stands out and connects from south-east with the wide-spread with several heights among which Holubnik (1070 m), Černa hora (1084 m), Smědavska hora (1084 m) stand out and the highest Jizera. (1122 m). North of the valley of Směda and south of Nove Město under Smrek Vlaŝsky hřeben follows towards south-east with the heights: Smrk (1124 m), Černy vrch (1023 m) and Zamky (1002 m). Střědni jizersky hřeben with Česky vrch (912) is adjacent from the east, parallel but much shorter. In the south , distinctly separated from the rest of the mountain complex, parallel situated tops in the area of Jablonec nad Nisou and Tarnavald reach culmination in Cisařsky Kamen(637 m), Černe studnice (869 m) and Hvězdě (958 m).

The Polish part of Góry Izerskie includes two parallel ranges, built from metamorphic rocks: a lower northern one, called Grzbiet Kamienicki and a higher southern one, called Wysoki Grzbiet. They are divided by valleys: in the western part of the river Kwisa flowing through Obniżenie Świeradowa (Lowering of Świeradow) and in the eastern part of Mała Kamienna. The nipple of both ranges is the saddle pass Rozdroże Izerskie (767 m).

In Poland Wysoki Grzbiet begins from the west with Smrek height (1123 m) through which it connects with Vlaŝsky hřeben in Czechoslovakia. Towards the east over a hilltop levelled to 1000 m the following heights arise: Stóg Izerski (1107 m), Łużec (1035 m), Podmokła (1001 m) and finally the broad range of Zielona Kopa with the culmination of Góry Izerskie, Wysoka Kopa (1126 m). From here a separated arm with Krogulec (1001 m), Kozi Grzbiet (933 m) and Tkacka Góra (880 m) heads towards south. The granite range of Krogulec subsides easily towards Przełęcz Szklarska (Szklarska Pass). East from Wysoka Kopa Wysoki Grzbiet becomes distinctly narrower and the top parts more rocky. Here Izerskie Garby (1088 m), Zwalisko (1047 m) and Wysoki Kamień (1058 m) stand out. Towards the east Wysoki Grzbiet easily subsides towards Zbójeckie Skały (686 m) towards Górzyniec.

Grzbiet Kamieniecki begins in the west with a lofty top of Sępia Góra (828 m) just above Świeradów Zdrój and then follows towards the east through Dłużec (867 m) and Kowalówka (888 m) from which an arm ending with Wygorzel (518 m) heads towards south. Grzbiet Kamieniecki through broad top of the tallest Kamienica (973 m) subsides to Rozdroże Izerskie behind which it follows as a distinctive ridge through Jastrzębiec (792 m) and a number of smaller culminations till the shallow Babia Przełęcz (646 m). Behind Babia Przełęcz an isolated Ciemniak (699m) rises subsiding through Bobrowe Skały towards Zimna Przełęcz (525 m).

Geological structure

The Polish part of Góry Izerskie belongs to the unit named Iser metamorphit which constitutes the north western shield of Variscan granite intrusion of Karkonosze-Iser block. It is composed of different types of metamorphic rocks: gneiss, clusters of granite and mica slate, created mainly during the Caledonian orogenesis. There are three basic types of gneiss categorized according to structural and textural features: gneiss, fine

grained gneiss, and gneiss*. A separate category is composed of rumburski granite (called iser granite) occurring as lenses in gneiss. Locally leuko granite occurs as well. Within gneisses and granite-gneiss parallel narrow ranges of metamorphic mica slate occur. These ranges include: range of Szklarska Poręba constituting the eastern part of Wysoki Grzbiet and the range of Stara Kamienica extending from Wojcieszyce to the east through Kromnów, Stara Kamienica, Kwieciszowice, Gierczyn, Krobica till Czerniawa Zdrój in the west, constituting the northern slopes of Grzbiet Kamieniecki. Metamorphic slates occur in several varieties. Typical medium and coarse-crystalline mica slates occur in Grzbiet Kamieniecki. These are grey, silver grey and green grey slates muscovite-sericite-chlorite, locally enriched with biotite, garnet, rarely turmaline and disten*. Also cassiterite and sulphide minerals can be found here. Nodules and lenses of quartz and fluorite were discovered. Massive, thermically transformed and very resistant slates called hornfels* can be found in Wysoki Grzbiet in contact with Karkonosze granite, in a range 6 km long from Izerskie Graby till Zbójeckie Skały. The occurrence of veined quartz is connected to the complex of metamorphic rocks, mainly in the area of Świeradów Zdrój (Rozdroże Izerskie) and cassiterite in the area of Gierczyn-Krobica and cobalt in the area of Przecznica-Gierczyn. At the northern foot of Grzbiet Kamieniecki a tectonic fault follows (fault Kamienica-Rębiszów), active in the later Tertiary (neogea). The occurrence of basalt, mainly in the form of dikes is related to the fault.

Mineral resources

Precious but few mineral resources can be found in Góry Izerskie. In the whole range of Grzbiet Kamieniecki from the state border till Stara Kamienica area in the ore-bearing areas 1-5 m wide stannum ore occurs (Sn).These are mainly cassiterites (stannum oxide SnO) containing 0,15-0,6 % of pure metal. The traditions of stannum ore extraction in Gierczyn date back to the XV century. The mines were active with intervals till the end of XVIII century and in the most favourable period (end of XVII century) the production amounted to about 20 tons of stannum per year. In the beginnings of XIX century cassiterite was extracted also in Krobica. After the II World War an evaluation was made confirming the possibility to resume extraction. These deposits are connected also to cobalt ores. These are cobalt and arsenic sulphides (smaltyn and safloryt*) and cobalt-manganese compounds extracted in the area of Przecznica and Krobica since the half of XIX century for ceramic manufacture.

Among rock minerals only gneiss, leuko granite and mica slate deserve attention. Gneiss with practically unlimited deposits was extracted earlier locally to be used as road metal and for construction materials. Leuko granite occurring in the southern side of slate range, mainly in the area of Kopaniec can be used in ceramic industry to produce technical porcelain and faience. Mica slate extracted in the region of Krobica can be used after grinding as carrier of chemical substances for agriculture and as powder for building (roofing) paper.

In the area of Świeradów Zdrój veined quartz occurs. It is used in ceramic industry and in metallurgy. The biggest quart vein extends with a range of about 10 km long and 10-80 km wide. It is extracted in the mine Stanisław in Izerskie Garby.

In the area of tectonic displacement by Świeradów-Czerniawa medicinal water occurs. These are acidic waters, acid carbonate, calcium-magnesium and ferruginous, considerably radioactive (10-50 n/Ci/l) and with different grade of mineralization. Since a long time they are used in balneotherapy. Balneotherapy uses also peat from Iser peat bogs extracted for THE precious therapeutic mud. These are extracted in two deposits: Jakuszyce in the area of Szklarska Poręba and Izera in Hala Izerska. Sporadically occurring jeweller's and decorative stones: garnets, amethyst, rock crystal (quartz), turmaline and others do not have economic importance.

Climate

The climate conditions similarly like in Sudety mountains are formed according to global radiation and atmospheric circulation, depending on the local factors: mountain barrier orientation, altitude and topographic features. In the lowest belt of Góry Izerskie, at the altitude of 450-600 m the average annual temperature is 6,5°, the growing season (with average temperature above 5°) lasts about 200 days and begins half April. The thermic summer (with average annual daily temperature above 15°) is short and lasts only 20-25 days. The belt of 600-800 m is characterized by average annual temperature of about 5,5-6°. The growing season lasts about 190 days and begins at the end of second decade of April. There is no thermic summer. The highest belt above 800 m covers the plateau of Góry Izerskie. The average annual temperature amounts to only 4,5°, the growing season is shortened to approximately 175 days beginning at the end of April, and average daily temperature of this period does not exceed 10°.

A distinguishing feature of Góry Izerskie climate is the high level of precipitation whose annual total

in the top belts exceeds 1200 and even 1500 mm, with maximum peak in July and minimum in February.
The snow mantle on the northern plateaus and slopes remains longer than on the same altitude in other parts of Sudety, on the average above 110 days.
The dominant winds are south-west, with the exception of May, June and July when northern winds prevail. In the course of the year there are over 5 times more cloudy than sunny days. Fogs and mists are frequent, especially in October. The least misty month is June. The most sunny days are in September.

Water
Through the central part of Góry Izerskie runs the European watershed, dividing the basins of the Baltic and North seas. The main rivers dewatering Góry Izerskie and discharging into Odra are: Nysa Łużycka with the tributary Smeda and Bóbr with Kwisa and Kamienna. The rivers Izera and Ploucnice discharge into the river Łaba. The sources of rivers and brooks flowing from Góry Izerskie are alimented by underground waters, mainly of fissure and debris type as well as the rainwater stored in high peat bogs on plateaus. The high level of precipitation occurring irregularly during the year and a considerable inclination of the slopes with weak soil permeability favour violent flow of waters, causing catastrophic floods in the valleys and intermontane basins. These floods occur as a result of violent snow melting in spring, and because of torrential rains in the summer. After a series of big floods at the end of the XIX century most of mountain brooks were regulated and built up with various constructions regulating the water flow.

Flora
From geobotanical point of view Góry Izerskie are included in the mountain province as part of the western Sudety area. The major part of the area is occupied by a belt of lower mountain region (401-1000 m). A small part covering Wysoki Grzbiet over 1000 m and the area extending south has upper mountain region flora and occasionally subalpine.
As in the past, woody complexes prevail here which however, as a result of economic activity in the XIX century turned artificially from broadleaved forest with big share of European beech (Fagus silvatica) and sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) or mixed forest in the lower mountain region into black coniferous acid forest. It is composed of densely growing Norway spruce (Picea excelsa) on acid soil, strongly shadowed and for this reason does not allowing the development of bushes and green undergrowth. This monoculture of spruce trees (Piceetum) and weakened resistance resulting from strong air pollution in the last period was the cause of frequent wind blows and catastrophic disaster of dinghy larch bell (Zeiraphera griseana) (from 1979) which consumed hundreds of hectares of Izery forests.
The broadleaved species constitute presently only a small addition, with several complexes of maintained beech wood (Fagetum): on the southern slope of Wysoki Kamień , at the road from Świeradów Zdrój to Czerniawa (close to Pobiedna) and on the slope of the Czarny Potok valley. In those complexes richer undergrowth developed in which dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis), squinancy (Asperula odorata), (Galeopsis tetrahit), yellow archangel (Galeobdolon luteum), violet (Viola silvestris), bedstraw (Galium saxatile) and Turk's cap lily (Lilium martagon) occur.
In the upper mountain region coniferous forest Norway spruce (Picea excelsa) is the almost exclusive species, with rarely occurring small patches of mostly bilberries (Vaccinium myrtillus), wavy hair grass (Deschampia flexuosa) and tufted hair grass (Deschampia caespitosa) and crowberry (Empetrum nigrum). By the brooks Carpathian birch can be found (Betula pubescens v. carpathica), silesian willow (Salix silesiaca), monkshood (Aconitum callibotryon), (Mulgedium alpinum), buttercup (Ranunculus platanifolius), meadow rue (Thalictrum aquilegifolium).
Small top parts of Wysoki Grzbiet belonging to the mountain pine belt (Pinus mughus) are situated on the altitude of 1000-1100 m. Subalpine meadows dominate here with undergrowth similar to the meadows in the Izera valley . Especially prominent are: garden angelica (Archangelica officinalis), rock cress (Arabis Halleri), milkweed gentian (Gentiana asclepiadea), hawkweed (Hieracium aurantiacum), and (Hieriacium prenathoides) , cinquefoil (Potentilla aurea), (Meum anthamanticum), narcissus anemone (Anemone narcissiflora) and (Pencedarium ostruthium).
Thanks to high precipitations and concavities of the land on different altitudes highmoor peat bogs formed, as well as suspended peat bogs situated on flat areas and occurring more often on slopes. Bigger ones can be found on Hala Izerska and close to Świeradów Zdrój. The following rare species in its rich plant complex attract attention: longleaf pine (Pinus uliginosa), dwarf birch (Betula nana), mountain juniper (Juniperus communis), sundew (Drosera), deerhair bulrush (Trichophorum caespitosum), cloudberry (Rubus chamaermourus). A great peculiarity is rarely spotted glistening moss (Schistostega osmundacea).

In the area of Góry Izerskie two nature reserves are situated. These include: “Izery Peat Bog” and “Crocuses in Górzyniec”. But practically entire area of Góry Izerskie is worth of protection, especially the Izera valley and numerous, dispersed rock forms with very diverse shapes. By the decision of WRN in Jelenia Góra in 1986 the area of Protected Ladscape Karkonosze-Góry Izerskie was created. It covers entire Góry Izerskie constituting a buffer zone for Karkonoski National Park.

Fauna

The fauna composition in Góry Izerskie does not differ considerably from the remaining parts of Sudety even if more species of Atlantic origin can be found here. Bigger mammals such as bears, wolf, wild cat, and beaver were killed off in XVIII century. Presently game species such as deer (Cervus elaphus) and roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) and closer to the fields wild pigs (Sus scrofa) feeding on mixed forest and on cropland can be found in bigger numbers thanks to weak land development. Sometimes mouflon (Ovis musimon) arrives from Karkonosze area – wild mountain sheep from Sardinia, brought into Karkonosze in the years 1912-1913.

Small mountain mammals like shrew (Sorex), vole (Microtus agrestis), bank vole (Clethrionomys glareolus) are numerous. As for birds capercaille (Tetrao urogallus) should be named and black grouse (Lyrorus tetrix), and among smaller species Alpine accentor (Prunella collaris), water pipit (Anthus spinoletta), dotterel (Eudromias morinellus), black redstart (Phoenicurus ochruros), nutcracker (Nucifraga caryocactes), ring ouzel (Turdus torquatus), dipper (Cinclus cinclus aquaticus), wood lark (Lullula arborea), red crossbill (Loxia curvirostra), grey-faced woodpecker (Picus canus), three-toed woodpecker (Picoides tridactylus), which is a great rarity.

The waters of brooks, in most cases too small for fish habitats and peat bogs are inhabited by different types of invertebrates, including quite rare crustaceans. A big national peculiarity was pearl oyster (Margaritifera) fished for precious pearls from at least XVI century. Because of robbing fishing practices in the XVIII century and progressing pollution of the river Kwisa and its upper tributaries, the pearl oyster became extinct probably in the beginning of the XX century. In 1965 an attempt of regeneration took place in the upper Kwisa with individuals from Czechoslovakia but without positive outcome.

History and settlements

Occasional news about Sudety mountains appeared already in the ancient times, although the mountains were named different then. Together with contiguous areas for many centuries Sudety constituted a border between Silesian and Czech-Moravian tribes. The role of the border was facilitated by vast, difficult to cross primeval forests. In the areas around the river Bóbr north of Góry Izerskie one of the Silesian tribes - Bobrzanie has been living since centuries. The western neighbour was the Lusatian tribe of Bieżunczanie. This country was called Zagost. Already in the medieval ages permanent settlements reached the Depression of Stara Kamienica. Przedgórze Rzębiszowskie and Kotlina Mirska – somewhere on the altitude of the village Rybnica, Stara Kamienica, Grudza and Kamień, in broadly understood foreland of Grzbiet Kamieniecki. Farming on woody, submontane and montane soils required hard effort, great energy and perpetual care of entire generations.

About the year 900 a powerful state of Przemyślidzi grew in Bohemia. Its influences reached Odra and included the forest areas of Góry Izerskie. In the second half of the X century the Polish state was born. During the reign of Mieszko I the entire area of Silesia was incorporated into Poland. Bolesław Chrobry incorporated the southern part of Lusatia – Milsko. This land was occupied by the emperor Konrad II in 1031. Then probably for the first time the river Kwisa functioned as border between Silesia and Lusatia; Góry Izerskie were located within the borders of Bohemia, Lusatia and Silesia. In the XIII century, especially in its second half after a terrible Mongol invasion a big settlement reform begun, based on western models. New settlers arrived from the west, including the German lands. A part of them begun to settle in Góry Izerskie. The villages located between the foot of Góry Izerskie and Gryfów Śląski with time grew into so called gryfowski estate, belonging for centuries to the noble Schaffgotsch family.

In the XIII century Silesia was fragmenting into a growing number of independent duchies. In that time świdnicko-jaworskie duchy was founded. Also the Silesian part of Góry Izerskie was included in its territory. The independence of this duchy ended with the death of duchess Agnieszka, widow after the last Świdnica duke, Bolek II. The duchy passed under the Czech reign. For long centuries also the kwiski region located at the left bank of Kwisa river belonged to Bohemia. Only in 1635 the region became incorporated within Saxony.

In the years 1740-1741 most of Silesia was seized by Prussia. The same happened to the Silesian part of Góry Izerskie.In this time administrative district lwówecko-bolesławicki and jeleniogórski were created. They formed part of głogowski cameral department and from 1809 of a

newly created Legnica regency.
After Vienna congress in 1815 a piece of Góry Izerskie belonging up till now to the Saxon part of Łużyce was incorporated into Silesia. In the same year changes were introduced to the administrative division of Silesia. The hitherto existing administrative district lwówecko-bolesławiecki was divided into two districts: lwówecki and bolesławiecki. In 1819 lubański district was reshaped, including the western part of Góry Izerskie. This administrative division remained in force with minor modifications till 1973.
A major turning-point for the described area – similarly as for the entire Silesia – was the year 1945 when the land after long centuries became incorporated again to our state, initially in dolnośląskie district, since 1950 in wrocławskie voivodship, and from 1975 in jeleniogórskie voivodship.

Economy and land use
Difficult climate and soil conditions account for the fact that almost entire area of Góry Izerskie is covered with forests (over 70%). Because of this forestry is of utmost importance. As a result of many years' irregularities and forest damages occurred in the last years caused by air pollution and subsequent attack by dinghy larch bell, forestry struggles with big difficulties related to maintenance and exploitation. Huge tracts of forest in Wysoki Grzbiet and partially in Grzbiet Kamienicki are dead, and additionally destroyed by xylophages.
Agriculture is significant only on the peripheries, mainly in the northern part of the region. Taking into consideration the surface within administrative borders of localities, there is 13 137 hectares of arable land (45,3% of the entire area). These are mainly *soils with high content of rock frame, classified as mountain complex: cereal-potato and oat-pasture. Only at the border with Pogórze Izerskie and Kotlina Jeleniogórska mountain cereal complex can be found and even more rare wheat mountain complex. The possibilities to achieve higher crops are considerably limited and for this reason a gradual egress of population occurs from higher situated villages. In the remaining ones stock-breeding is important, less frequent is sheep breeding. Green land, mostly weak cover over 70% of arable land.
Industry is limited to towns situated on the fringe of the region. Only quartz exploitation advanced high in the mountains (Izerskie Garby). Apart from those, sericite slate are exploited in Krobica and therapeutic mud in Izerska Hala. More important is wood treatment in sawmills (Piechowice and Świeradów Zdrój) and furniture factory (Piechowice). The tradition of centuries is continued by Cristal glass works Julia in Szklarska Poręba and its workshop in Piechowice. There the only plant of machine industry is situated and in Pobiedna a textile plant.
For economy as a whole most important is recreation ad therapeutic services. The recreation infrastructure is well developed; apart from FWP (Workers' Holiday Fund), companies recreation facilities and sanatoria there is a vast network of pensions. They are mostly located in Szklarska Poręba, Świeradów Zdrój and Czerniawa Zdrój. The tourism infrastructure is much weaker, limited to PTTK facilities in Szklarska Poręba and in Stog Izerski. Accomodation facilities are to be found only in Szklarska Poręba and Świeradów Zdrój, as well as ski lifts.

Material culture and art
Material culture of the part of Góry Izerskie belonging to Poland did not create individual features but forms a mix of many elements characteristic to the whole Sudety area. The cause can be attributed to the fact that Góry Izerskie are mostly northern, once densely wooded slopes of difficult to access mountain crests, which since centuries constituted a natural barrier and a border of Silesia. As a result settlements in this area occurred very late. Originally shepherds' huts and forest settlements appeared. Till half of the XV century the region was explored to recognize its natural resources. Exploitation of discovered gold, silver and copper ores and glass melting constituted the main reasons for settling in this area. The XVI and XVII centuries belonged to mining and glass period. In that time almost all of the present villages and settlements located in the lower ranges of Grzbiet Kamieniecki were founded. The settling action was supported by groups of Bohemian colonists settling mainly in the neighborhood of Unięcice following religious persecution in Austria.
The oldest known monuments of the area date to this period. These are mostly churches, partially built on the spot of earlier, wooden predecessors. They possess gothic features but in their present form underwent considerable reconstruction. These include a church dating from the end of the XV century in Proszowa and churches from the XVI century in Kopaniec (original from the XIV century), Kromnów and Kamienica Mała. In spite of development of mining, metallurgy, crafts and later weaving craft, not many material monuments remained due to war destruction in the XVII and XVIII century. The most durable trace of development is the settlement network from that time preserved till today, consisting of 40 units: 2 towns, 15 villages and several hamlets. The older villages are characterized by a concentrated form. These are mostly chain villages located along

river valleys. Younger villages and hamlets were founded on mountain slopes.
The second phase of activity in Góry Izerskie dates from the moment of incorporating Silesia to Prussia. In this time development and reconstruction took place. Many new processing workshops were founded, crafts and trade developed. Efforts were undertaken to reconstruct agriculture meant to support weaving craft through flax crops and increase in sheep breeding.
In the beginning of the XIX century a considerable development of industry and craft took place. The existing villages became centers of crafts and manufacture. A new surge of natural resources exploitation took place related to dyeing trade and glaziery. At that time numerous houses were built and the main occupation of its dwellers was weaving craft. These were wooden buildings of characteristic construction* which allowed to use the attic not only for flax storage purposes but also to contain a higher number of weaving looms in one room. This type of dwelling houses apart from dwelling and farming buildings of similar construction constitutes the most numerous and characteristic groups of maintained architectural objects in all villages of the region. The oldest buildings of this type date from half of the XVIII century and the most numerous group constitute XIX century objects dominating in the area. The most interesting are complexes in the following villages: Krobica, Kopaniec, Chromiec, Antoniów and many groups of buildings within Szklarska Poręba, Świeradów, Czerniawa and Pobiedna.
Another characteristic element of the culture are specific features of sacral and palace architecture appearing from half of the XVIII century and realized according to the Prussian trend. The best example is the church and palace in Pobiedna.In that time many protestant churches were built as well as houses for clergymen and chanters.
Simultaneously attention was drawn to the useful values of many mineral springs whose therapeutical properties were known previously. In the XIX century further springs were discovered and as a result change occurred in the direction of the region development. It happened after the natural resources were exploited and forests devastated. Since that time the region became oriented towards rest and therapy function. Health resorts in Szklarska Poręba, Świeradów and Czerniawa developed. As a result of railway and road network development these centres grew and begun to dominate in the region.
At the turn of the century numerous spa resorts, baths, sanatoriums, well-rooms were built. One of the most interesting from architectural point of view is Dom Zdrojowy (Spa Resort) in Świeradów built in 1899 with the longest in Poland roofed wooden walk gallery. Many pensions were built then, mostly in Secession style. But the spa style is shaped mostly by pensions in Norwegian-Swiss style with many wooden porches and galleries. The most interesting include complexes of spa resorts: Odrodzenie, Zacisze, Perła and Szarotka in Szklarska Poręba and Narcyz, Wrzos, Neptun in Świeradów Zdrój.
Currently further industrial activity is pursued in the region as well as rest and therapy function development. Apart from a number of investments new spa houses and sanatoriums of interesting design were constructed followed by many pensions. New sport and recreation objects were built as well mainly for skiing purposes.
Because of peripheric location of the area, low population density and lack of bigger urban centres on the one hand and with a developed rest and therapy function on the other, artistic life did not develop here. Only Szklarska Poręba has attracted distinguished writers and painters in the past. Cultural initiatives are undertaken for visiting spa guests for whom lectures, exhibitions, artist performances and presentations are organized. For them also the Days of Blooming Rhododendrons are organized in Świeradów Zdrój. At the end of the year military artistic groups meet here as well. The only cultural center of the region has its seat in Świeradów Zdrój. In Szklarska Poręba tourist song festival takes place.
The local inhabitants, mainly the older generations originate from different region of the country. For this reason there is no local folklore which did not develop after 1945 and the vernacular culture of the immigratory population is not cultivated. The region lacks marked folk artists, amateur groups and folk customs.

A mine behind the window - the residents' drama

Do you think that a mine behind the window is a nice view? Isn't it burdensome to hear the noise of excavating and transporting stone? Is it permissible to destroy the beauty of the Izerskie Mountains landscape? Apparently, it is so. Nowadays, everything is possible if you have money.

This drama takes place in Mała Kamienica, in the south-west of Poland, where a small firm called EuroMarket bought 77 hectares of ground from Agricultural Agency 'Exchequer' and from private owners. The grounds are situated around 4 villages: Kopaniec, Chromiec, Antoniów and Mała Kamienica. The area was bought on the pretext of opening a horse stud there. Nobody was protesting and the inhabitants sold their pieces of land willingly. These people thought that they had made a good deal. Soon afterwards EuroMarket sold the above mentioned area to a Pol Skal company.
This year in May the company from Cracow applied to the Department of Province in Wrocław in order to obtain a concession for testing the rock raw material. Only then did the people realize what was going on, so they started protesting. The leaders of the protest were Lucjan Markindorf and Katarzyna Andrzejewska.
The students of Norwid Secondary School in Jelenia Góra decided to support those people. On November 5th, 2003 some students from our school and three teachers: Małgorzata Sobas-Drzazga, Mrs. Agnieszka Machalska and Mrs. Renata Kędzior took part in the meeting at our school, where we got to know that if the concession for the research was approved it would cause disastrous ecological and economical results for the municipality, such as:

- the mine would be established on the area of 77 hectares and with the depth of 70 m down to the core of the mountain slope,
- it would be a feldspar opencast mine in the close neighborhood of the houses, farmlands and it would even occupy a part of National Park,
- the exploitation might cause lowering of subterranean water and finally the widespread lack of water,
- it would cause the uncovering of old cemented mine tunnels, where uranium was excavated in the fifties and finally lead to the increase of radiation.

The economical aspect for the municipality is also very important. Site Planning Project is prepared for the Municipality and its settlements for the years 2002-2012. This project emphasizes development of agro tourism and business tourism. The mine would annihilate this undertaking, because it would destroy the landscape, which fascinates not only the local people but also foreigners, who have begun to settle down there.
Mr. Kotowski, Pol-Skal's chairman, assures the municipality, that it will only bring advantages. The mine and the factory will provide new places of work for approximately 30 people. In addition, for each tone of stone taken out of the ground the mine is going to pay 2,03 zł tax. 60 percent of this amount will be given to the local budget.

The mayor and the municipality council are against the mine, too. A special local protest committee was set up, supported by the municipality. The protest was joined by the international associations and fundations, such as the Polish- Dutch fundation of wanderers and nature fans-Nemo. They were collecting signatures, writing letters, sending petitions and making demonstrations. Their petitions reached even the European Union Institutions, newspapers and German and English websites.
At the end of July the committee went to the mayor of Lower Silesia province, who had to make the decision concerning permission for the research of the ground. They hoped that psychological and economical aspect would work, but they were wrong. The only argument that was left was the legal aspect. 8 mistakes were made by the firm Pol-Skal, such as excavations 1 km from the protected zone. Those crucial faults didn't make any impression on the mayor of the province and on the geologist. The mayor of the province claimed that the research concession didn't mean immediately building of a mine. However, if such operation was performed, the area of 77 ha would be dug through with the ditches 2 km long, 3 m deep and 8 m wide. In this case this piece of land would turn into the battle-field. From this statement everyone could draw a conclusion that Pol-Skal was backed up by the mayor of the province. At that moment the company withdrew its application. The protesters speculate that it had happened because they had informed the media about this case.
In the area of Jelenia Góra district there were already established similar opencast mines. We can mention a basalt quarry (PRI- Bazalt) in Kwieciszowice, basalt mine Kozia Górka (NCC- Kruszyna) in Kłopotnica and opencast mine (also Pol-Skal) in Karpniki.
For the time being people from Stara Kamienica area won the dispute as the company withdrew its application, but the case has not been concluded yet. The protesters gain time that they should now use to prepare new arguments.
We, as the younger generation brought up on the ideas of nature preservation and respect for the environment, do not want to stay aside and watch passively what is happening. We intend to join the protest and assist those people fighting for their and our future, better future.

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