

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS OF KEY ARTICLES

Michaela Havrdová, Regional Managing and Monitoring Committees at NUTS 2

On 26 October 1998 the Czech government approved to the delimitation of the NUTS units (Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques) in the territory of the Czech Republic, in order to meet the needs of statistics and analyses required by the European Union. The NUTS system (at levels 1 to 5) has been launched by the EU Statistical Office to maintain a relatively unified structure of territorial units. The regions covered by NUTS 2 and 3 are directly connected to structural funds, while the levels 1, 4 and 5 are not obligatorily corresponding to these funds, being mainly a tool of statistical research within the EU.

Michaela Havrdová, Development Programme of Regions

The 248/2000 Act of Regional Development Support defines the Development Programme of Regions in the Czech Republic as the basic document of spatial development on the level of the Region. The basic references for these study were the Development Strategies of Regions and the Regional Development Strategies, approved by the government earlier this year.

Vera Mayer, Theoretical and Methodological Thoughts on the Suburbanization of Housing in the Vienna Agglomeration; New Prospects and the Importance of Basic Research

The process of extensive peopling of the backgrounds of big cities meant to establish new industrial zones, large shopping areas, and new neighbourhoods for permanent or temporary housing are well known from almost every American or European agglomeration. As consequences of the expansion, the background of Vienna is witnessing some positive changes, such as economic growth and increasing quality of housing in the area. Above all, though, negative repercussions can be seen, like heavy traffic, immense growth of settlement areas, dissipation of settlements (*Zersiedelung*) and, as a result, negative impact on the land and environment. The most intense suburbanization process takes place in the south of Vienna, some Districts in this area (e. g. Mödling) having reached the limit of their urbanization capacities as early as in 1991.

Zdeněk Szczyrba, Retail Trade in the Country under Economic Transformation

The previous development of the quality and quantity of retail trade in Czechia has mainly been focused on towns and cities, while rural areas, in spite of representing a significant settlement system, have been neglected. There are almost 5,000 country settlements in the Czech Republic, constituting 80 % of all municipalities and occupying 75 % of the area of the state. However, a mere quarter of the population live there, their purchasing power being relatively low and their shopping behaviour specific, thus keeping the country in an "economic isolation". The article describes the past transformation process of small businesses in the country, focusing on the system of cooperative businesses and illustrating the present situation on particular examples. It is a contribution to the debate on the transformation of rural areas, as seen through a significant part of their functional structure.

Erich Vrtiš, Improving Land and City Environment; Notes on the Controversial Standpoints of Environmental and Technological Activities

Civilizing processes are accompanied by the deterioration of the environment. The consequences of spatial and technological actions are now being followed closely by the population. Controversial standpoints of civil self-administration, environmental activists, and state administration are emerging. Positive trends, helpful to a civilizing process, are in many cases rejected by environmental activists, not seldom due to lacking information. It is necessary for the public to see these problems in a complex context of circumstances, not just from the point of view of particular locations or professions. In this regard, unilateral partiality of some extreme environmentalists is often a difficult burden.