

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 1970s the European Commission developed the so-called Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units (NUTS). This NUTS classification becomes important for the collection of harmonized and thus comparable regional information for the purposes of planning the development of territorial communities and the country.

The NUTS classification defines three levels of hierarchical classification for the regions. According to the classification, each EU Member State is divided into several regions at NUTS level 1. Each region is divided into subregions at NUTS level 2 and each subregion at NUTS level 3.

In order to establish the relevant NUTS levels, where a given category of administrative units in a Member State has to be classified, the number of the population in the region is used as the main criterion.

For the purposes of planning, programming, management, resource provision, monitoring and evaluation of regional development in Bulgaria, number of regions are distinct and divided into levels according to the requirements of the common classification of the territorial units for statistical purposes applied in the European Union.

The decrease of the population in Bulgaria in the whole country and in the different regions, as well as the strong disproportion of the Bulgarian regions by a number of indicators characterizing their development – for instance strong and developing Southwest region and underdeveloped Northwest region etc. – necessitate future possible changes within the scope of the regions in Bulgaria at level 1, level 2 and level 3 (NUTS 1, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3), based on the current state of development and prospects for development in the context of the common classification of territorial units for statistical purposes of EU.

This specialized publication of Public Policy.bg, prepared under the general methodological guidance of Prof. Yordan Botev from the Public Administration Department at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", aims at assisting the administrative authorities in the country when they adopt their decisions (normative and organizational) for the future division of the country and for the successful implementation of the Regional development policy.

The published articles in this release of Public Policy.bg represent a personal author's view. The publishers of the Journal believe that the articles contain ideas that deserve to be publicized and discussed in the institutions directly involved in the formulation and implementation of regional development policy.

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