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Enterprises as actors of regional competitiveness in the environment of Slovakia

Recently a still more urgent need can be felt to examine enterprise as an actor of regional development and regional competitiveness, because they are significantly contributed by enterprising subjects. The present paper analyzes contributions of enterprises in the development of individual regions of Slovakia especially with regard to the effects connected with production and employment. With the use of statistical methods the tendencies of convergence or divergence of selected indicators of regional competitiveness are outlined, and the position of individual regions in the environment of Slovakia is identified.

Key words: enterprising subjects, regional competitiveness, convergence, divergence, indicators of economic productivity.

Introduction and formulation of the problem. The concept of implementation of economic and political tools not only on national but also on regional level has been well-known since 1930s. Both focus and aim of regional policy are quite unambiguous. What changes, though, are the paradigms of regional policy. Classical approaches in the form of industrial localization theory, of concentration on reducing costs and availability of workforce have gradually been turning to the theories of learning regions, networking of regional actors (Lundvall, 2003) or building of clusters. Bachtler and Yuill (2001) point at the development of the elements of regional policy system:

1. Factors. Instead of costs and succession, regional competitiveness, networks, knowledge, innovative environment have become the object.
2. Policy. Along with equality, more important role has been played by effectiveness, competitiveness and strategic approach.
3. Organization. Shift from the central to the regional and local levels, directives are being replaced by collective negotiation, partnership and participation.

Tvrdoň (2004, p. 205) recommends growth-egalization strategy for Slovakia which should:

– support and preserve the growth of regional centres (developed agglomerations) which are decisive bearers of national-economic growth and which create not just the development resources in the economy of Slovak Republic, but simultaneously they create 'pro-growth' environment for egalization of underdeveloped regions. The growth-egalization strategy in question is oriented at regional centres of national-economic growth, developed regions;

– within the egalization process to eliminate the negative effects of depression and adaptation to new market conditions in underdeveloped regions, connected with the support of localization, revitalization of regions with deformed demographic and professional structure (threat of social and economic degradation and marginalization). This growth-egalization strategy is aimed at the regional centres in underdeveloped regions;

– both strategies should be implemented by a non-diffusive, concentrating model; the practice of regional development has sufficiently proved that diffusion of resources within a large space can be an ineffective solution.

Regional economic policy plays the role of coordinator of goals and subjects.1 Slovakia agreed with the fundamental principles and goals of regional planning as suggested by *European Charter of*

regional-territorial planning. The European Union views regions as basic units of implementation of its strategic intentions which are aimed at facilitation of sustainable growth and at the continual improvement of living standards of its inhabitants. A decisive legislative tool of the state regional policy in Slovakia is the *Law No. 503/2001 on support of regional development* in the diction of ensuing regulations. This Law defines regional development as «continuous growth of both economic potential and social potential of a region which increases its economic level, efficiency, competitiveness and living standards of its inhabitants; region thus contributes to the economic development and social development of the country». The National Strategic Referential Frame of the Slovak Republic for 2007-2013 (NSRR) identifies the following strategic goal: to increase considerably competitiveness and efficiency of regions and the whole Slovak economy respecting the condition of sustainable growth which in measurable indicators means that:

– GDP has to reach more than 60% of EU level to the EU average 15,
– labour productivity (GDP/number of workers) has to reach more than 70% of EU level 15.

From the perspective of both theory and practice the increased attention is thus being paid to the issue of regional competitiveness (Bennet, Krebs, 1991; Maier, G., Tödtling, F., 1998; Malitzia, E.E., Feser, E.J. 1999; Amstrong, H., Taylor, J., 2000; Lundvall, B.A., Tomilson, M., 2002; Martin, R.L., 2003; Bryková, 2006, Chuzykov, 2007, Slaný, 2006; Kuzmišin, 2006; Cooke, P., Piccaluga, A., 2006) which is being analyzed in various dimensions: on the global level, on the level of countries, regions, enterprises.

Competitiveness is a relatively new concept and its characteristics and principles are emerging in the course of 90th of 20th century. It is associated with processes that characterize the economy in this period, namely globalization, regionalization and interdependency.

Questions and issues that create the essence of the concept of competitiveness are mostly those which politicians and economists examine in the long term and which allow better understanding of the problems underlying improved economic situation and the distribution of wealth.

Theorists consider the basis for examining of *competitive microeconomic level* where the explanation of concept is based on the ability of companies, as basic production units of the economy, to compete, grow and be profitable. Views on *competitiveness at the macroeconomic level* are not mutual. One group of scientist claims that dealing with the competitiveness at the macroeconomic level is not justified. The second group believes that the economy is competitive if its citizens are able to ensure high and rising living standards and high employment at a sustainable level.

Regional competitiveness as an object of investigation is the result of establishment of regions as the basic entities of the economy. It is a concept that is «between» macroeconomic and microeconomic competitiveness. There are two approaches: to the understanding of regional competitiveness in this context: a) regional competitiveness as an aggregate competitiveness of companies, b) regional competitiveness as a derivative of macroeconomic competitiveness.

According to the European Union the Regional Competitiveness is defined as «the ability of regions exposed to external competition to achieve a relatively high income and employment levels?, which is defined by as foollowing: the starting point in The sixth periodic report of the Regions (1999) «a region which wants to be competitive, must provide jobs in a reasonable amount and quality».

As in the environment of regions the enterprising subjects are significant agents of the aforementioned strategic goals, the recent years are marked by the need to examine enterprises as actors of regional development and competitiveness (Martin, 2003, Buček, 2006, Hudec, 2007).

The aim of the present paper in this respect is:

– to analyze the enterprising subjects allocated in the regions of Slovakia as creators of regional competitiveness with regard to their contributions especially in the sphere of effects connected with production and employment;
– to identify and evaluate both quantitatively and qualitatively the participation of enterprises in assisting the progress of economic development and competitiveness of individual regions and Slovakia.

Material and methods. Slovak Republic since 1989 has undergone significant political, economic and social changes, which were culminated by Slovakia's accession to the European Union on

May 1st, 2004. The Slovak Republic is a member of other international organizations such as NATO, UN, UNESCO, OECD, OSCE, CERN, WHO, Interpol and others.

Slovakia is a landlocked country in Central Europe, which borders with five countries: the Czech Republic to the west, Austria to the southwest, to the south with Hungary, with Ukraine to the east and the to north with Poland. Area of the Slovak Republic is 49 035 km2. Population was 5 384 822 as at 31.12 2004.

According to the statistical classification of territorial units established by EUROSTAT, Slovakia is divided:

NUTS 1   Slovakia.

NUTS 2   Region of Bratislava, Western Slovakia, Central Slovakia, Eastern Slovakia.

NUTS 3   Bratislava self-governing Region, Trnava self-governing Region, Nitra self-governing Region, Trencin self-governing Region, Banska Bystrica self-governing Region, Zilina self-governing Region, Kosice self-governing Region, Presov self-governing Region.

The current territorial systematization of the Slovak Republic is providedunder Governmental Resolution No. 157/2002 of February 20th, 2002. Kosice and Presov regions are border counties which are grouped in the Carpathian Euroregion, in which they take part in several projects of cooperation with the region of Transcarpathia (Ukraine) and other partner regions.

The research paper predominantly uses elementary (descriptive) statistical characteristics, index analysis and correlation analysis as crucial methods of examination of the statistical sample – enterprising units in the regions of Slovakia.

Elementary statistical characteristics (Hindls and Coll., 2006) are represented by a number calculated from the statistical sample which characterizes the relevant sample as a whole. They are appropriate for comparative study of statistical samples from the perspective of time, space and type. Simultaneously they allow for characterization of the statistical set as a whole and so it is possible to characterize the basic features of its development, structure and efficiency. Out of elementary statistical characteristics of level, the study will apply arithmetical average and median, from among the characteristics of variability1 – standard deviation, variation range and coefficient of variation.

Index analysis (Klímek, 2005) will be used in order to determine the regularities of phenomena development from the objective, temporal and spatial viewpoints. *Correlation analysis* measures the extent of statistical dependence between two quantitative variables; it lays stress on intensiveness (power) of the mutual relation of examined phenomena rather than on the inquiry into their cause – consequence relation1.

The examined periods are those of 2001–2007 and 1996–2006 respectively. From the side of input into the regional transformational process the analysis will make use of the indicator of the number of enterprising subjects and employment in the regions of Slovakia, and from the side of outputs – the created regional GDP. The analysis will also implement the indicator suggested by the author, which will connect the sides of input and output of the regional transformational process and in such a way it will allow for identification of participation (contribution) of the enterprising sphere in the regional economic efficiency – index of regional enterprising efficiency (IRPV):

$$I_{RPV} = \frac{\text{Regional GDP in the year - i}}{\text{Number of enterprising subjects in the regions}(\text{PO} + FO)}. \qquad (1)$$

Where: *GDP* – gross domestic product;
          PO   – legal bodies,
          FO   – private persons.

In principle this indicator expresses the regional enterprising productivity 1.

Results and discussion. Business activities in the Slovak Republic can according to the legal regulations be carried out by legal bodies (PO) or private persons (FO), who meet the requirements of relevant legislation. Over the period of 1996 –2006 the number of PO and FO increased from 140,323 to 275,869 (193.6%). The group of FO structurally prevails (83%) in the total number of

enterprising subjects in Slovakia and their number between 2001 and 2007 grew from 303,506 to 399,650 (131.7%). Based on the analysis of both the situation and structure of enterprising units in the regions of Slovakia through descriptive statistical characteristics it can be claimed that in the segment of FO the arithmetic mean – central level of their number in Slovak regions was 37,938 in 2001 and 49,955 in 2007. On the basis of measures of variation (variation range dropped from 23,078 to 20,888; coefficient of variation decreased from 0.1872 to 0.1471) we identify the convergent tendency in the number of FO in individual regions of Slovakia (differences between regions are diminishing). The growth in the segment of PO in the researched period is higher (168.3%) than in the segment of FO (132%). Structurally it is the group of trade companies (OS) which was strengthened up to 97.8%. The highest index of growth of PO was observed in Trnava region (206%) and the lowest one in Košice region (153.2%). The increase (divergence) in inter-regional differences in the PO numbers is reflected by the standard deviation (increase from 3,747 to 7.062), variation range (increase from 13.579 to 21.529) and coefficient of variation (growth from 0.56 to 0.61) which at the same time reflects a considerable diversity of the PO sample in the regions of Slovakia.

Analysis of enterprising subjects with regard to creation of employment and creation of GDP in the regions of Slovakia. The efficiency of economy and its competitiveness are significantly shaped by the enterprises which play important and indispensable role in creating of GDP and employment. The presented analysis pays special attention to the sphere of effects of the enterprising sector related to the production of GDP and employment.

The measure to which enterprising sphere (enterprises with more than 20 employees) contributes to the creation of employment in the Slovak Republic is documented by the table 1.

Employment in Slovakia grew within the period of 2001 – 2007 by 9.1% and has a slightly declining tendency (from 63.9% to 59.0%). The number of employees in enterprises with more than 20 employees increased from 2001 to 2007 by 1.4%. The share of Bratislava region in the employment of Slovakia reaches almost 1/3 (29.85%) and the share of the remaining regions oscillates between 9–11%. The most dynamic rise of employment was observed in Trnava region +17%, in Bratislava region +10%, considerable drop in employment was documented in Prešov region –16% (fall to 84%), in Banská Bystrica region –5% (decrease to 95%) and in Košice region –2% (98%).

The differences in employment of Slovak regions (chart 1) increased, the divergent tendency was identified – interregional differences have grown. This is indicated by the standard deviation (growth from 74,571 to 85,153), variation range (growth from 251,252 to 269,651) and coefficient of variation (growth from 0.46 to 0.52).

The role of enterprising sphere in creation of employment in the Slovak Republic will be specified via examination of interdependence between the overall employment of Slovakia and the number of enterprising subjects in Slovakia (chart 2) by Pearson's coefficient of correlation (table 2), where the examined period will be extended to 1996–2006.

Table 2 documents a positive dependence (with the rise of the number of enterprises employment grows as well) only in BSK (significant dependence) and TTSK. In TNSK, NSK, ZSK, PSK and

Table 1

Development of the number of the employed in Slovakia and in enterprises (over 20 employees)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
The employed in Slovakia	1997503	1999267	1999599	2003578	2052383	2156473	2194078
The employed in enterprises over 20 employees	1276901	1272761	1219613	1213437	1228610	1275816	1295010
Measure of employment in enterprises and in Slovakia in %	63,9	63,7	61	60,6	59,9	59,2	59

Source: own results according to the data of the Statistical Office of SR.
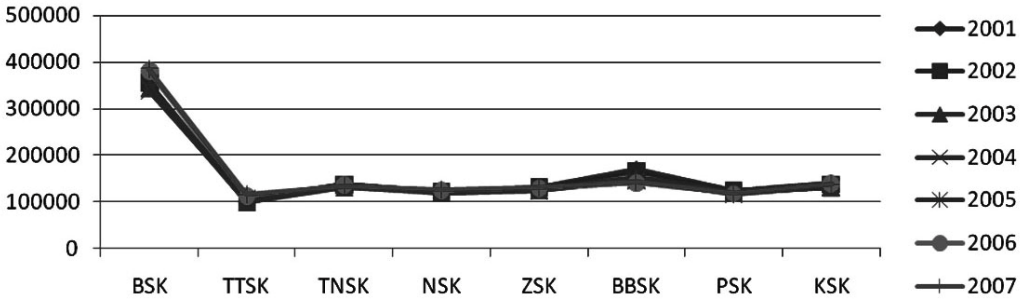
Source: own results
Chart 1 The development of the number of employees in Slovak regions in 2001-2007

axis x – number of enterprises;
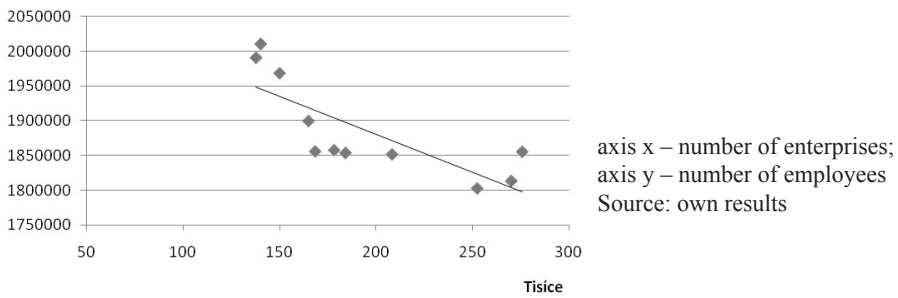axis y – number of employees
Source: own results

Chart 2 Interdependence between the number of the employed and the number of enterprising units in Slovakia

Table 2

Pearson's coefficient of interdependence between employment and number of enterprises

Pearson's	BSK	TTSK	TNSK	NSK	ZSK	BBSK	PSK	KSK
Coefficient	0,879	0,218	-0,197	-0,759	-0,734	-0,921	-0,812	-0,804

BSK – Bratislava municipal region   ZSK – Žilina municipal region
TTSK – Trnava municipal region   BBSK – Banská Bystrica municipal reg.
TNSK – Trenčín municipal region   NSK – Nitra municipal region
PSK – Prešov municipal region   KSK – Košice municipal region

Source: own results.

KSK the dependence is negative, i.e. with the rise of the number of enterprising subjects in regions the number of the employed in those regions falls.

One of important economic functions of enterprising units is creation of GDP1. Based on the statistical analysis it can be said that the growth of GDP in Slovakia from 2001 to 2006 was +62.8% (by 640,047 mill. Sk in b. c.). The highest share in the creation of GDP in Slovakia is that of BSK (26.3%), KSK and TTSK reach approximately 12% and the lowest share of 8.1% is that of PSK. Chart 3 illustrates the dependence between the rise of the number of enterprises and GDP in the Slovak Republic in the period 1996–2006.

Dependence between the number of enterprising subjects in Slovak regions and regional GDP is reflected in the table 3 and chart 4.

The correlation analysis shows that the number of enterprising subjects in the regions of Slovakia and the regional GDP have been developing in the same direction – they grow and the intensity of

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axis x = GDP in mill. SK b. c.; axis y = number of enterprising units
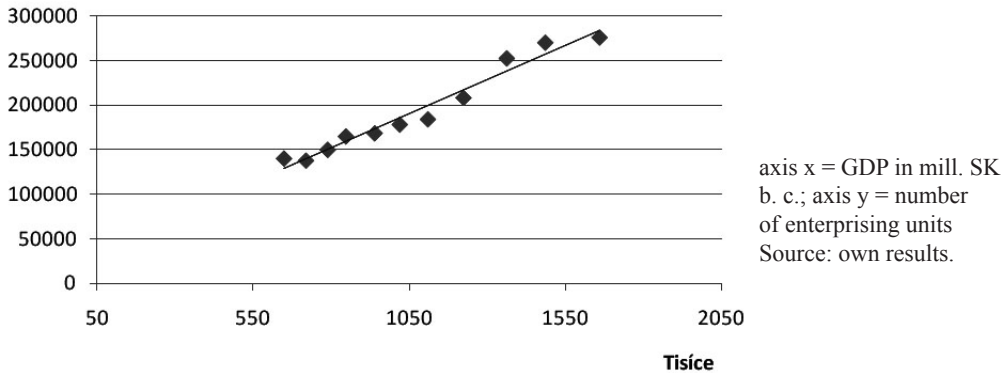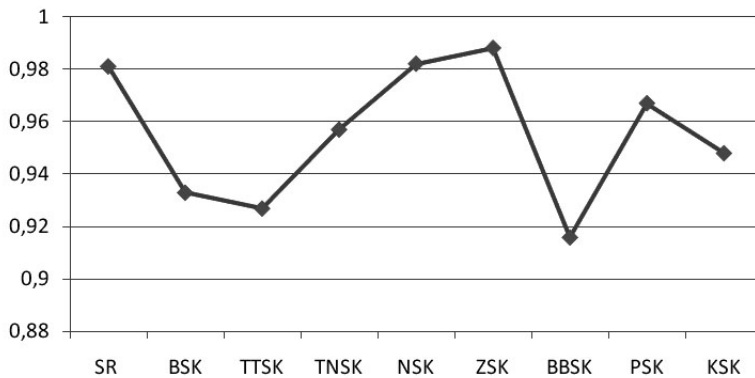Source: own results.

Chart 3 Interdependence of the number of enterprises (PJ) and GDP in Slovakia in the period 1996-2006

Pears. koef.

Source: own results

Chart 4 Pearson's coefficient of dependence between the number of PJ
and GDP in Slovak regions in 1996–2006

Table 3

Pearson's coefficient of the dependence between the number of enterprises (PJ)
and GDP in the regions of Slovak Republic in 1996-2006

	SR	BSK	TTSK	TNSK	NSK	ZSK	BBSK	PSK	KSK
Pears. coefficient	0,981	0,933	0,927	0,957	0,982	0,988	0,916	0,967	0,948

interdependence between the number of enterprises and creation of regional GDP in all regions of Slovakia is significant, even very close.

Examination of the dependence is aimed at gaining deeper insight into the nature of analyzed phenomena and processes. The true economic dependences, however, are hardly ever really strong (close). Even though the presented research arrived at higher values of correlation between the examined indicators, it is rather an initial step calling for a more profound analysis. Results of this analysis of regional enterprising subjects as creators of regional GDP through IRPV are contained in chart 4 (calculations made use of cumulated number PO and FO in the regions of Slovakia).

The middle level of IRPV in the regions of Slovak Republic measured by median displays rising tendency (chart 5).

Table 4

Values and development of IRPV in the period 2001–2006 in Slovak regions

GDP/ PO+FO	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	arithmetic mean	2006/2001 index
BSK	3,4229228	4,2440625	4,1948959	4,236808	4,8037443	4,8165565	4,286498	1,4071473
TTSK	2,8306353	2,9499623	3,1472627	3,257333	3,4954033	4,0776018	3,293033	1,4405253
TNSK	2,8901096	3,0682302	3,0430577	3,0564771	3,0413574	3,2833768	3,063768	1,1360734
NSK	2,5790102	2,8822668	2,9696918	3,0668214	3,2653027	3,3475138	3,018434	1,2979839
ZSK	2,3435197	2,4642133	2,4043848	2,4601656	2,6044375	2,7852602	2,510330	1,1884945
BBSK	2,7394991	3,1692912	3,1401999	3,3471477	2,7496566	2,9547597	3,016759	1,0785767
PSK	2,1762982	2,3715418	2,2632961	2,4917907	2,3010422	2,2245796	2,304758	1,0221851
KSK	3,2624612	3,5648375	3,5365115	3,9123998	3,7854189	3,9768568	3,673081	1,2189744

Source: own results.
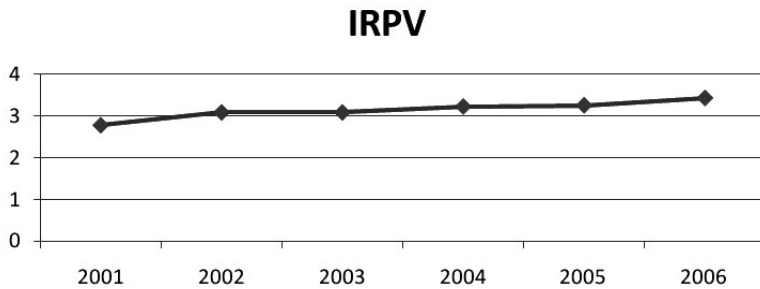
IRPV

Source: own results

Chart 5 Development of average IRPV in Slovakia during 2001 – 2006

The highest economic productivity per 1 enterprising subject can traditionally be observed in BSK (average 4.286498) and the traditionally lowest productivity – in PSK (average 2.304758). Results of the analysis through elementary statistical characteristics pointed at growing interregional differences in IRPV (divergent tendency), which is proved by *variation range* (growth from 1.2466246 to 2.5919769) and *coefficient of variation* which increased from 0.1426038 to 0.2247591.

Conclusions and recommendations. 1. A certain tendency of insufficiency in the use of workforce potential can be identified on the basis of middle level of regional employment measured by median in TTSK, NSK, and PSK. Higher than middle level of regional employment is continuously reached by BSK, KSK, and BBSK. In the category of regional employment – in the number of the employed – the differences increased (divergent tendency). Positive correlation between the number of enterprising subjects and the number of employees exists only in BSK (significant correlation) and TTSK. In TNSK, NSK, ZSK, PSK and KSK the correlation is negative, i.e. with the growing number of enterprises the number of employees falls. This tendency applies to Slovakia too (Pearson's coefficient –0.876).

2. The growth of GDP in the regions of Slovakia is uneven. The GDP under the central value measured by median is reached by TNSK, BBSK, and PSK, while BSK, KSK, TTSK, ZSK are in this respect continuously above the average. The correlation between rise of the number of enterprises in all regions and the growth of regional GDP is significant, even very close.

3. The average rise of IRPV in Slovakia expressed by arithmetic mean was 123.5% (from 2.780557 to 3.4333132) in the examined period. The highest average growth of IRPV is observed in TTSK (+44.1%) and the lowest one in PSK (+2.21%). The highest economic productivity on 1 enterprising subject traditionally can be seen in BSK (average 4.286498) and the lowest traditionally in PSK (average 2.304758). Interregional differences in IRPV have divergent tendency – they grow (standard deviation increased from the mean of 0.396518 to 0.7716682, i.e. by 51. 2 %). According to the value of median IRPV the regions of Slovakia can be divided into two groups. The regions in which enterprising efficiency is below the average: BBSK, TNSK, ZSK and PSK, whose enterprising capacity can be characterized as insufficient, which may have negative impact on their economic situation in the future. BSK, TTSK, ZSK and KSK continuously reach higher than average level of IRPV, which in the future will positively influence their economic level.

4. In order to reach and retain successful performance of any economic subject (enterprise, region, etc.) it is inevitable to facilitate its competitiveness which is stipulated by the existence of its development potential and by the degree of its utilization, which grant the advantage in external environment. The concept of learning regions is a new suggestion concerning ways of implementation of development processes in the environment of regions, using the potential of regions themselves (creating knowledge and learning). It is a modern and a very dynamic concept of regional policy, the main features of which are the following: personal development, innovations, and search for new tools of solving regional problems. It rests in creating networks of relevant actors in a region (enterprising subjects, institutional subjects and educational subjects). All regional actors should participate in determining the direction and character of development of region's enterprising system, not only because it reflects in its competitiveness, but also because it is the region itself who is going to be the main user of services provided by enterprising subjects.

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Кузмішинова В. Підприємницькі суб'єкти як дійові особи регіональної конкурентоспроможності в умовах Словаччини.

Європейський Союз розглядає регіони як основні одиниці реалізації своїх стратегічних намірів, спрямованих на забезпечення допустимого зростання та підвищення життєвого рівня його населення. Та оскільки в умовах регіонів визначним реалізатором наведених стратегічних цілей є підприємницькі суб'єкти, то в останній час нагальною стає потреба дослідження підприємства як учасника регіонального розвитку та регіональної конкурентоспроможності. У зв'язку з наведеним аналізуються підприємницькі суб'єкти як творці регіональної конкурентоспроможності з точки зору їх внесків до регіональної продукції (ПДВ) та регіональної зайнятості у вісьмох регіонах Словаччини (СР). При аналізі підприємницьких одиниць у регіонах СР та їх значення для регіонального розвитку використані основні статистичні методи: елементарні (дескриптивні), статистичні характеристики, індексовий аналіз та кореляційний аналіз. За оцінкою екстенсивного показника – кількості підприємницьких одиниць у регіонах СР – дескриптивними статистичними характеристиками в компоненті фізичних осіб була ідентифікована конвергентна тенденція, а в компоненті юридичних осіб – дивергентна тенденція. В обох компонентах у всіх регіонах ідентифіковане зростання. При аналізі частки підприємств як творців ПДВ був використаний інтенсивний показник – індекс регіональної підприємницької продуктивності ($I_{РПП}$) – як співвідношення регіонального ПДВ та регіональної кількості підприємств. У всіх регіонах в досліджуваний період $I_{РПП}$ зріс і була ідентифікована дивергентна тенденція. Для глибокого аналізу був використаний коефіцієнт залежності Пірсона. В усіх регіонах було встановлено тісну залежність між кількістю підприємницьких одиниць у регіонах СР та регіональним ПДВ. При аналізі частки підприємств у творенні зайнятості була встановлена позитивна залежність між кількістю підприємницьких одиниць і кількістю зайнятих тільки у двох регіонах (БСК і ТТСК). В решті регіонів (ТНСК, НКС, ЖКС, ПСК і КСК) наявна негативна залежність, тобто із зростанням кількості підприємницьких одиниць знижується кількість зайнятих. Ця тенденція стосується також СР (коефіцієнт Пірсона –0,876). Частка підприємств у загальній зайнятості в регіонах становить приблизно 60%. На основі одержаних результатів регіони СР було розподілено на дві групи: а) регіони, які досягають результатів вище середнього (БСК, ТТСК, ЖСК, КСК), а таким чином і вищої конкурентоспроможності; б) регіони, які досягають результатів нижчих середнього, внаслідок чого їх конкурентоспроможність є нижчою. У висновках рекомендується регіональному менеджменту трансформувати регіони на «регіони, що вчаться», в яких всі регіональні учасники творять та реалізують стратегію розвитку, засновану на використанні знань.

Ключові слова: підприємницькі суб'єкти, регіональна конкурентоспроможність, конвергенція, дивергенція, показники економічної продуктивності.

Кузмишинова В. Предпринимательские субъекты как действующие лица региональной конкурентоспособности в условиях Словакии.

В последнее время все более неотложной становится потребность изучения предприятия как действующего лица регионального развития и региональной конкурентоспособности, потому что предприятие является основным реализатором стратегических целей регионального развития. Эта статья анализирует вклад предприятий в развитие отдельных регионов Словакии, особенно относительно влияния, связанного с производством и занятостью. С помощью статистических методов проанализированы тенденции конвергенции или дивергенции отдельных индикаторов региональной конкурентоспособности и определена позиция индивидуальных регионов Словакии по их конкурентоспособности.

Ключевые слова: предпринимательские субъекты, региональная конкурентоспособность, конвергенция, дивергенция, показатели экономической продуктивности.