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Agric. Econ. – Czech

**Buchta S., Štulrajter
Z.:**

**Divergence of some
socio-economic
indicators between
rural and urban areas
in Slovakia**

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The article is dealing with the evaluation of socio-economic development in Slovakia from the point of view of urban and the rural regions in 1999–2005, based on analysis of regional socio-

economic indicators. This development is characterised by deepening differentiation between the urban and rural districts in the demographic structure of population, employment, unemployment, level of wages and salaries and private enterprising activities. Demographic structure in the rural regions, compared to the urban regions, is characterised by the increase of the share of population in post-productive age, ageing index and the unfavourable index of economic burden. Employment in the rural regions decreased at a more rapid rate than in the urban regions. From the unemployment point of view, there are significant regional differences in the SR. The worst affected are the regions of Eastern and south of Central Slovakia which suffer from the underdeveloped economic infrastructure, lower level of education, bankruptcy of the dominant industrial employers and a large share of agrarian population, where impact of transformation measures was the most severe. Unemployment rate in the rural regions was 2.2 times higher than in the urban regions in 2005. Growth rate of average wages and salaries is slower in

the rural regions compared to the urban ones and the average of the SR. In the period of 1999– 2005, the level of average wages and salaries in the rural regions accounted for 62.4% of average wages and salaries in the urban regions, during which the time trend of increasing wage disparity was continuing all the time. The trend of utilisation of cheap labour force for short part-time jobs is evident, particularly in the rural regions, which is in contrast to the growth of the standard of living and sustainable development of underdeveloped regions. The differentiation of economic level between urban and the rural regions is expressed also in the share of entrepreneurial entities in economically active population which tells against the rural regions in spite of the diminished differentiation in this indicator in 1999– 2005. The declining rate of growth in number of entrepreneurs in the urban regions is a consequence of the saturation of spatial and employment opportunities, while there is a substantially larger potential of acceleration of private enterprising in the rural regions. Continuation of this development leads to the socially

unacceptable differentiation and undesirable development of dual economies in the country and that is why it is necessary to solve this issue as a priority within the framework of the strategy of economic development of the SR.

Keywords:

rural area, ageing index, employment, unemployment, wages, entrepreneurial activity

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