

## Introduction

“Regional Portraits” is another publication of the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), which deals with regional issues in the Czech Republic. By bringing it out, the CZSO fills a gap in its range of its regional publications. The book gives rather a different view of the regions than the users of our publications have so far been accustomed to. Its birth was inspired by the publication “Portrait of the Regions” brought out at about every five years by the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). While the Eurostat’s portraying mainly focuses on regional units of the NUTS 2 level, our book concerns with NUTS 3 level regional units—with “*kraje*” in Czech or Regions in English as the “*kraje*” are referred to here—as these are of greater importance for the Czech Republic than the NUTS 2 regions. Our initial intention was to make the Czech reader familiar with the Regions as seen by statistics. We found very soon, though, that foreign readers would be interested in the book, too; this made us have the book translated into English, and you are holding the result in your hands now.

As already mentioned above, the CZSO has not brought out any publication of this kind yet. It did bring out a similar publication in 2004—“Analysis of Regional Differences in the Czech Republic in the Years 1997-2002”—but while having a similar structure, the “Analysis” was mainly based on graphical representations and tables at the expense of texts. In the “Regional Portraits” the textual part has an irreplaceable role to play and the maps, graphs and tables give a further insight into the portraits of the individual Regions. The authors assume that another similar publication could be brought out in about five years, if not earlier as a response to a particular order. In the meantime, they would like to focus on their main task, i.e. on the production of regional analyses with stress placed on monitoring regional disparities.

## Cohesion regions (NUTS 2) and regions (NUTS 3) in the Czech Republic\*



*Cohesion regions (Areas) are non-administrative units, on the contrary regions, i.e. units at the level of NUTS 3 represent self-government territorial units.*