

Abstract

This dissertation thesis deals with the establishment and practical functioning of the higher territorial self-governing units in the Czech Republic and in the Slovak Republic. It contains information on the development of the territorial division of former Czechoslovakia between the years 1918 and 1993, with an emphasis on the establishment of a regional system during the communist regime. The dissertation is focused on the process of the establishment of regional level of self-government in the Czech and Slovak Republic in 1990s. Debates over the most appropriate territorial and administrative division took place in parliaments of both countries after 1993. Two models of territorial division were considered in the Czech Republic – a provincial system, based on historical lands, and a regional system. Two alternatives were discussed in Slovakia – a county system and regional system. The territory of the Czech Republic was ultimately divided into 14 higher territorial self-governing units (13 regions and the Capital City of Prague), and the territory of Slovakia into 8 regions. The author focuses especially on the detailed analysis of respective draft bills and stenographic reports of parliamentary debates regarding the higher territorial self-governing units in parliaments of both countries. The reason is that parliaments are crucial participants for creation of the territorial division. Higher territorial self-governing units, in terms of unitary states, are artificially created administrative units made for administrative reasons, rather than natural or historical regions. Therefore, their creation is linked to a continuous and ongoing process of public administration reforms. The establishment of higher territorial self-governing units is also the result of an explicit political decision that should reflect current needs of the countries in public administration issues. Such establishment also reflects the priorities of individual political participants, and is, therefore, the result of political compromise made between political parties. In addition, the dissertation briefly describes practical functioning of administrative regions. Among others, general information on regional elections and other issues connected with regional system are also described. Within 20 years of their existence, administrative regions were established – more or less successfully – as an integral part of political systems of both countries. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the expert discussion on the regional level of self-government due to so far unpublished detailed information from parliamentary

debates concerning the process of establishment of higher territorial self-governing units.