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BULGARIA’S EXPERIENCE IN THE FORMATION OF CLUSTER POLICY

The article discusses the problems and possibilities of cluster formation as exemplified by international experiences in stimulating the innovation environment in the economy. Basing on the comparative characteristics of Bulgarian and European regional policies after 2006, we analyze the essence of the cluster approach in Bulgaria within European policies, aimed at supporting the development of clusters. An emphasis is put on the priorities identified in the National Development Strategy of Bulgaria for the periods 2005–2015 and 2012–2022. Particular attention is paid to the state’s and local authorities’ roles in the formation and implementation of cluster policy. We systemize services provided through indirect non-financial instruments to support cluster development in the EU and cluster initiatives in Bulgaria. We demonstrate positive experience in implementing the cluster approach in Bulgaria by considering a specific region, namely Sevlievo Municipality.

Keywords: territorial cluster, regional competitiveness, cluster policy, European Union, Bulgaria, Sevlievo Municipality

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