

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

NUTS boundaries are used for reporting of regional statistics to Eurostat and those statistics are used to inform regional policy. The Scottish Government is proposing to make minimal changes beyond aligning existing NUTS boundaries to Local Authority Boundaries.

### **Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 2 regions?**

Fiercely opposed to any change. Arran is an Island and logically belongs to the same EU administrative area as the rest of Scotland's Islands, with the same access to EU funding specifically targeted to address disparity throughout the EU via the "Convergence Objective" and associated funds ie. Structural Funds and LEADER. The whole Highlands & Islands NUTS 2 area including Cumbrae and Arran is challenged by the unique combination of peripherality, insularity, low population density, a widely dispersed enterprise base and low GDP. Ageing population and out-migration are also an issue.

Article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty states that "in order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion. In particular, the Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions. Among these regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and **island**, cross-border and mountain regions."

Auchrannie is the largest private sector employer on Arran and we implore the Scottish Government to reject any change to the NUTS 2 area.

### **Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 regions?**

n/a

Eurostat have requested we consider merging the Highlands & Islands with North Eastern Scotland to create a new area that's closer to the recommended population thresholds. The Scottish Government plan to request that these areas should be allowed an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations, i.e. because of particular geographical, socio-economic, historical, cultural or environmental circumstances, especially in the islands and the outermost regions.

### **Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for Highlands & Islands and North Eastern Scotland NUTS 2 areas?**

n/a

Eurostat have suggested that the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 should include merging Moray with Argyll & Bute Local Authority to create an area that meets their recommended population ranges.

**Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for the proposed Moray and Argyll & Bute NUTS 3 areas?**

n/a