

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Karlovarský Region is in particular famous for its spa industry. There is not only one of the Czech Republic's most famous spas, the Karlovy Vary spa, but also the spas of Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně, Lázně Kynžvart, and Jáchymov in the Region. The spa in Kyselka is not currently in operation. Along with healing springs, the Region is rich in natural mineral waters of which Mattoni is the most famous one. In connection with spa industry what is also very popular are the Carlsbad spa wafers, a sweet adored not only by local inhabitants but, primarily, by spa guests from all over the world. Besides that, the town of Karlovy Vary is also famous for its Becherovka herbal liqueur and the art of glassmakers from the Moser company. The town of Chodov was made famous by peach-blow exported to the whole world. As for culture, it is mainly the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival where Czech and foreign filmmakers meet.

The Karlovarský Region is located in the west of the Czech Republic (CR) and was established by the split of the Západočeský Region to form the Karlovarský Region and the Plzeňský Region. In the north and in the west, there is the state border with Germany, in the east it neighbours with the Ústecký Region, and in the south with the Plzeňský Region. It forms the Severozápad cohesion region along with the Ústecký Region. The Krušné hory Mountains stretch along the state border across the two Regions. Their highest point, Klínovec (altitude 1 244 m), is in the Karlovy Vary District as well as the lowest point of the Region (altitude 320 m), which is in the Ohře River on the border of the Region. The Ohře River is also the most important river in the Karlovarský Region and the whole area belongs to its basin. Other important rivers are: Teplá, Rolava, Bystřice, and Svatava. The most popular of these is the Teplá River, which flows into the Ohře River in the town of Karlovy Vary and runs through the valley of Karlovy Vary where most of the hot springs rise to the surface. They flow into the river and enable the formation of a kind of aragonite known as sinter and pisolite, both of which have precipitated from hot springs of Karlovy Vary for centuries (the water contains a lot of dissolved minerals and gases, mainly carbon dioxide). Works of art and souvenirs, tasteful paperweights, and ashtrays are made from the bigger pieces of aragonite, box lids are decorated with it, it is used for crafting of pendants, and probably the most popular are thermal tuff (sinter) coated roses. Among other natural resources, the most important are brown coal deposits in the area around and in the town of Sokolov and also ceramic clays that contributed to a high number of porcelain manufactures almost all over the Region. However, the Karlovarský Region is the most famous all over the world for its mineral and healing waters, which enabled the origin of the aforementioned spas.

The Region is formed by 3 Districts – the Cheb District, the Karlovy Vary District, and the Sokolov District with 134 municipalities in total that are further divided into 528 parts. With its area (3 310 km²) the Karlovarský Region is one of the smallest; it takes up only 4.2% of the whole territory of the CR. The largest District is the Karlovarský District (45.6% of the Region's area) with the biggest number of municipalities (56) and the biggest share of population living in the Region (39.0%). The Sokolov District and the Cheb District are comparable as for their number of municipalities and area. In total, there are 38 towns in the Region. In towns of the Karlovy Vary District, 93 038 population lived as at 31 December 2019. In towns of the Sokolov District it was 72 007 population and in towns of the Cheb District 76 027 population lived. As at 31 December 2019, 294 664 population lived in municipalities of the Karlovarský Region, which was 2.8% of the CR's population. The most populated is the Karlovarský District, where 114 818 population lived in total, of which 50.8% (58 382) were females.

The Region ranks last in the CR as for the number of births (2 827) and deaths (3 405). When we compare the number of births per 1 000 population (9.6 persons), the Karlovarský Region ranks last of the Regions of the CR, too. On the contrary, with the number of deaths per 1 000 population (11.5 persons), the Karlovarský Region and the Moravskoslezský Region rank first in the CR. In 2019, 3 572 persons moved into the Karlovarský Region and 3 226 moved out of the Region, the balance hence being positive (346 persons). The total population change in the Karlovarský Region was negative, too (232 persons).

The share of unemployed persons (the share of available job applicants aged 15–64 years in the whole population of the same age) was 2.74% in the Karlovarský Region. The share of unemployed persons in the Cheb District was 1.93%, in the Karlovy Vary District 2.58%, and in the Sokolov District 3.79%. In 2019, there were 5 799 (by 430 less than in 2018) unemployed job applicants per 7 074 job vacancies. The Sokolov District had the most applicants (2 182 persons), followed by the Karlovy Vary District (1 901 persons), while the least of them were from the Cheb District (1 142 persons). The biggest proportion of the unemployed belonged to job applicants with primary education and no education (2 885 persons, i.e. 49.7%) and secondary vocational education and secondary education without A-level examination (1 849 persons, i.e. 31.9%). As far as the age of the unemployed is concerned, the biggest proportion belonged to the 50–59 years age group (25.4%), and the 40–49 years age group (21.6%). The average age of job applicants (42.3 years) decreased by 0.4 years compared to the previous year.

In total, 683 dwellings were completed in 2019, i.e. by 195 more than in 2018. When we survey the number of completed dwellings (flats) per 1 000 mid-year population, the highest value of this indicator is reported by the Cheb District (3.1 dwellings) and the lowest by the Sokolov District (1.4 dwellings).

One of the most important industries in the Karlovarský Region is tourism. The Region is the target destination for guests from the CR and abroad mainly thanks to its spas. In 2019, 1 190 296 guests visited the Region. If we recalculate the guests per 1 000 population of the Region, we get 4 037.5 guests. The share of foreigners who visited the Karlovarský Region last year is 60.2%. The Region is the number one in the CR as for the number of overnight stays per 1 000 population (18 317.5 guests). In connection with the spa tourism, there is an adequate amount of cultural establishments and conservation areas in the territory of the Karlovarský Region. These are completed with the offers of the spa symphonic orchestras and several festivals; the most famous of them is the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Other cultural event is, for example, the Chopin Festival in Mariánské Lázně and Canoe Mattoni sport event.