

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Ústecký Region lies in the northwest of the Czech Republic (CR) along its north-western border with the Federal Republic of Germany, namely with the Free State of Saxony. The Region's neighbours are also the Liberecký Region in the northeast, the Karlovarský Region and partly the Plzeňský Region in the west, and the Středočeský Region in the southeast.

The landform of the Region is very diverse in terms of geography; the nature is varied and manifold. Along the borders with Germany, the area is fringed by the Ore Mountains (Krušné hory in Czech), the Elbe Sandstone Rocks (Labské pískovce in Czech), and the Lužice Mountains (Lužické hory in Czech). The Ore Mountains are very old; they are formed mainly of plutonites or Palaeozoic schist. The south-eastern part of the Region consists of plains that originate from the Mesozoic era – the so-called Česká křídová tabule (the Czech Cretaceous Formation) – from which the hill of Říp rises (it is associated with a famous legend about ancestors coming to Bohemia) and also the mountain range of České středohoří (the Bohemian Low Mountain Range, sometimes also called the Central Bohemian Uplands/Highlands) with its highest peak of Milešovka. The mountain range of České středohoří originated from volcanic activity in the Tertiary era and has a unique landscape character with many contrasts and picturesque secluded spots. The highest point of the Ústecký Region is located on the border of the Ústecký Region and the Karlovarský Region below the peak of Klínovec (Háj pod Klínovcem at the altitude of 1 231.27 m). Not taking into account bottoms of surface mines, the lowest point of the Region is the surface of the Labe (Elbe) River (altitude 115 m) near the municipality of Hřensko, which is at the same time the lowest point of the Czech Republic. The Labe River is the largest watercourse in the territory of the Region; from the left, the second biggest tributary – Ohře – and also the Bílina River flow to it. From the right, the Ploučnice River flows to Labe; the last tributary from the right in our territory is the Kamenice River. Also mineral and thermal springs can be found in the Region. The biggest expanse of water is the Nechanická reservoir built on the Ohře River in the western part of the Region.

The area of the Region is 5 339 square kilometres, which is 6.8% of the Czech Republic's total area. Agricultural land covers more than 51% of the Region's territory, forests cover almost 31%, and bodies of water 2% of the territory.

The Ústecký Region is varied as for natural conditions as well as in terms of its economic structure, density of settlement, and condition of the environment. Historically, the economic importance of the Region is based on a considerable amount of its raw materials, especially large deposits of brown coal, which lie close to the surface. The brown coal basin stretches under the hillsides of the Ore Mountains from the city of Ústí nad Labem to Kadaň. There are also other important raw materials, which are mined in the Region, e.g. glass and foundry sands of good quality and a building stone. Four distinct areas can be defined in the Region that differ much one from another. It is an area with highly developed industrial production, which is concentrated primarily in the foothills of the Ore Mountains (in the Chomutov District, the Most District, the Teplice District, and partially also the Ústí nad Labem District). As for industries, an important position belongs to the energy industry, coal mining, mechanical engineering, chemical industry, and glass industry. Other important areas are around the towns of Litoměřice and Louny, which are known for their production of hops and vegetables. Especially areas along the Labe River and the Ohře River are well-known fruit-growing regions (the so-called Garden of Bohemia). Grapes grown in the Litoměřice area enjoy an excellent reputation. The area around the town of Most has also recently become a known wine-growing region, in which vine is grown mainly on lands that were reclaimed after brown coal mining. The Ore Mountains area is a mountain range with sparse population and limited economic activities; the area around the town of Děčín is neither an area with concentration of heavy industry nor an agricultural area. Its northern part called Šluknovsko is a typical peripheral territory (remote and difficult to access from central parts of the Region).

The Ústecký Region is divided into seven Districts (the Děčín District, the Chomutov District, the Litoměřice District, the Louny District, the Most District, the Teplice District, and the Ústí nad Labem District) comprising 354 municipalities of various sizes, of which 59 have the status of a town. As at 1 January 2003, the second phase of the state administration reform came into force, which determined in a decree administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers and administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority including their seats. As of that date, 16 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers originated in the Ústecký Region as follows: Bílina, Děčín, Chomutov, Kadaň, Litoměřice, Litvínov, Louny, Lovosice, Most, Podbořany, Roudnice nad Labem, Rumburk, Teplice, Ústí nad Labem, Varnsdorf, and Žatec as well as 30 administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority.

As at the end of 2022, the Ústecký Region had the population of 812 337 ranking it fifth in the Czech Republic. Its population density (152.2 people per square kilometre) is higher than the national average (137.3 people per square kilometre) and the Region is the fourth densest area after the Capital City of Prague, the Moravskoslezský Region, and the Jihomoravský Region. The densest settlement is in the brown coal basin under the Ore Mountains, a lower density is in the area of the Ore Mountains and in the Louny District and the

Litoměřice District, in which predominantly smaller rural settlements are placed. The city of Ústí nad Labem with the population of 91 963 is the largest municipality and at the same time the seat of the Region. What is characteristic for the Region is its relatively young population; the average age is 42,6 years. The Ústecký Region ranks the third lowest in the number of live births per 1 000 population (9.0) but there is the second highest mortality rate in the Czech Republic (12.2 deaths per 1 000 population). The Ústecký Region ranks of divorces per 1 000 population (2.1) and first in the number of abortions per 100 live births (39.1).

In 2022 the Region's gross domestic product accounted for 5.3% of the CR's GDP; converted to GDP per capita, it amounts to 69.4% of the national average and ranks thirteenth in the CR. Among the most important employers of the Ústecký Region are: Severočeské doly a.s. (coal mining companies), ČEZ Distribuce, a.s., ORLEN Unipetrol RPA s.r.o. and Krajská zdravotní, a.s., which has associated the following hospitals since 2007: the hospital in Děčín, Masaryk's hospital in Ústí nad Labem, the hospital in Teplice, the hospital in Most, and the hospital in Chomutov.

Industrial activity from the past had and still has an unfavourable impact on the quality of the environment. Strongly developed surface mining had severely damaged the natural landscape character, which has been gradually recovering only thanks to a very costly reclamation. Well-known are also problems with the emission situation in the Region. It has much improved during the last decade (it can be proved by a decreasing amount of emissions); however, the Region is still perceived as an area with the most damaged environment. It won an inglorious victory as for its specific emissions (t/km²) of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.

A part of the territory of the Region is covered by the České Švýcarsko (Czech Switzerland) national park with the area of 7 928 hectares that was founded in 1999 and also by the following protected landscape areas (PLAs): the České středohoří PLA (the Bohemian Low Mountain Range), the Labské pískovce PLA (the Elbe Sandstone Rocks), a part of the Kokořínsko PLA, and of the Lužické hory PLA. One can find there 186 small protected landscape areas that cover the area of 9 951 hectares.

From the labour force sample survey it results that there are almost 378 thousand employed persons in the Region most of whom work in the processing industry (101 thousand persons according to the CZ-NACE classification). In 2022, the average gross monthly wage in the Region reached CZK 37 042 (per FTE person), which is by CZK 3 275 less than the national average and the Region ranks sixth among all Regions of the CR. Decrease in coal mining, restructuring of enterprises, slowing down of productions and agriculture entail that, in the national comparison, there has long been one of the highest shares of unemployed persons for a long time in the Ústecký Region (5.54%; 3.72% in the CR as at 31 December 2022).

In the Statistical Business Register, almost 178 thousand enterprises, organisations, and entrepreneurs were registered in the end of 2022. The biggest part comprised of private entrepreneurs in business under the Trade Act unincorporated in the Commercial Register (more than 130 thousand). From the point of view of the CZ-NACE classification, most entities dealt with wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles.

A network of educational establishments in the Region comprises 359 nursery schools, 284 basic schools, 95 secondary technical schools and grammar schools. Two universities provide higher education in the Region: the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and the College of Applied Psychology in Terezín.

Basic health care in the Region is provided by a network of outpatient care establishments and pharmacies. Medical care is provided in 18 hospitals with 5 328 beds. The most important health care establishment in the Region is Krajská zdravotní, a.s., which has associated hospitals in Děčín, in Ústí nad Labem, in Teplice, in Most, and in Chomutov. The follow-up care and physiotherapeutic care are provided in 7 specialised therapeutic institutions with 691 beds.

The Region has an important location in terms of transport within the European Union. The important E55 international motorway runs through the Teplice District and the Litoměřice District, linking the north and south of Europe, and continuing from the town of Lovosice as the D8 motorway. At the end of 2006, a new segment of the D8 motorway over Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) with a direct connection to the German A17 motorway was open to traffic. Another important trunk road is the road leading from the Karlovarský Region along Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) to the northern part of the Liberecký Region. The route stretching from the Federal Republic of Germany via Chomutov and Louny to Prague is also important. The international railroad from the Federal Republic of Germany via the city of Ústí nad Labem to Prague is the main railway route in the Region. The Labe (Elbe) River is the most important waterway in the Czech Republic; it enables shipping to Hamburg, a port in the North Sea.

Due to its rich history of settlement, the Ústecký Region has a great number of historic buildings and monuments. Some of the best known are, for example, the Romanesque rotunda on the hill of Říp, the Gothic church in Most, the baroque chateau in Duchcov, the monasteries in Osek and in Doksany, and chateaux in Ploskovice and in Libochovice. Litoměřice, Úštěk, and Terezín were designated urban conservation areas and

the centre of Roudnice nad Labem is a conservation area. Several villages in the Litoměřice area were selected to become rural conservation areas. There are painting collections of great worth in the Litoměřice picture gallery. On the Litoměřice exhibition grounds various types of events take place throughout the year. The most famous are, for example, the Garden of Bohemia (Zahrada Čech) sales exhibition focusing on growing of fruits and vegetables or a fair specialising in domestic equipment and construction goods called My house, my castle (Můj dům, můj hrad in Czech), etc. To mention some of the beauties of nature, the best known is the České Švýcarsko national park (the Bohemian Switzerland) with its famous Pravčická brána (the Pravčice Gate), a lovely Gate to Bohemia (Porta Bohemica) along the Labe River, rock formations of the Tisá Walls and the Bohemian Switzerland, and many others. For those who like sports, the Ústecký Region has also something to offer. It is a modern racecourse, a motor-racing circuit, a golf course, all that in the town of Most. Also several cycle routes go through the Region, one of which is to connect Prague with Dresden in the future. The Ore Mountains and also the Lužice Mountains offer excellent conditions for skiing.