

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ÚSTECKÝ REGION

The Ústecký Region lies in the northwest of the Czech Republic along its northern border with the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly with the Free State of Saxony. The Region's neighbours are also the Liberecký Region in the northeast, the Karlovarský and partly the Plzeňský Regions in the west, and the Středočeský Region in the southeast.

Surface of the Region is very diverse from the point of view of geography; the nature is varied and manifold. Along the borders with Germany the area is surrounded by the Ore Mountains (Krušné hory), the Sandstone Rocks of Labe (or Labské pískovce) and the Lužice Mountains. The Ore Mountains are very old; they are formed of volcanic rocks or Palaeozoic schist. The south-eastern part of the Region consists of plains that originate from Mesozoic era – the so-called Česká křídová tabule (Czech Cretaceous Formation) – from which the mountain "Říp" rises (it is associated with the famous legend of our ancestors coming to Bohemia) and also the České Středohoří (the Bohemian Low Mountain Range) with its highest peak Milešovka. The České Středohoří originated from a volcanic activity in the Tertiary era and has a unique face of the landscape with many contrasts and picturesque secluded spots. The highest point on the territory of the Region lies on the hillside of the highest peak of the Ore Mountains – Klínovec – the top of which is located already on the territory of the Karlovarský Region. Not taking into account bottoms of surface mines the lowest point of the Region is the surface of the Labe (Elbe) River at Hřensko (115 m above sea level), which is at the same time the lowest point of the Czech Republic. The Labe River is the largest watercourse on 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 on our territory is the Kamenice River. Also mineral and thermal springs can be found in the Region. The biggest water area is the Nechanická reservoir built on the Ohře River in the western part of the Region.

The area of the Region 5,335 square kilometres accounts for 6.8% of the Czech Republic's total area. Agricultural land covers nearly 52% of the Region's territory, forests cover 30% and water areas 2% of the territory.

The Ústecký Region is varied as for natural conditions as well as from the point of view of its economic structure, density of settlement and condition of the environment. Historically, economic importance of the Region is based on 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 town of Ústí nad Labem to Kadaň. There are also other important raw materials in the Region, e.g. quality glass and foundry sands and 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 preliminary in the foothills of the Ore Mountains (the Chomutov, Most, Teplice and partially also Ústí nad Labem District). Among branches, an important position belongs to the energy industry, coal mining, mechanical engineering, and chemical and glass industry. Other important areas are around Litoměřice and Louny, which are known for their production of hops and vegetables. Especially, the areas along the Labe River and Ohře River are well-known fruit growing regions (the so-called Garden of Bohemia). Grapes grown in the Litoměřice area have excellent reputation. During recent years, the area around Most has 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 and the area around Děčín is neither an area with concentration of heavy industry nor an agricultural area. Its northern part called Šluknovsko is a typically peripheral territory with its remoteness and difficult accessibility from central parts of the Region.

The Ústecký Region breaks up into seven administrative districts (Děčín, Chomutov, Litoměřice, Louny, Most, Teplice and Ústí nad Labem) comprising 354 municipalities of various sizes, of which 58 have a status of 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 competence and administrative districts of municipalities with commissioned local authority including their seats. From that date 16 administrative districts of municipalities with extended competence originated in the Ústecký Region: Bílina, Děčín, Chomutov, Kadaň, Litoměřice, Litvínov, Louny, Lovosice, Most, Podbořany, Roudnice nad Labem, Rumburk, Teplice, Ústí nad Labem, Varnsdorf, and Žatec and also 30 administrative districts of municipalities with commissioned local authority.

As at the end of 2009, the Ústecký Region had 836,198 inhabitants and thus it ranks fifth in the Czech Republic. Population density (157 inhabitants per square kilometre) is higher than the national average (133 per sq km) and the Region is the fourth densest area after the City of Prague, the Moravskoslezský Region and the Jihomoravský Region. The densest settlement is in the brown coal basin under the Ore Mountains, lower density is in the area of the Ore Mountains and the Louny District and Litoměřice District, in which

predominantly smaller country seats are placed. The largest municipality and at the same time the seat of the Region is the town of Ústí nad Labem with 95,477 inhabitants. What is characteristic for the Region is its relatively young population; the average age is 39,8 years, The Ústecký Region ranks second in the number of live births per 1,000 inhabitants together with the Liberecký Region (11.5) but there is one of highest mortality in the Czech Republic (10.6 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants). The Ústecký Region ranks second in the number of divorces per 1,000 inhabitants (3.4) and first in the number of abortions per 100 live births (47,5).

In 2009, the Region's gross domestic product accounted for 6.4% of the CR's GDP; converted to GDP per inhabitant it amounts to 79,8 % of the national average and ranks tenth in the CR. Among the most important employers of the Ústecký Region are: Mostecká uhelná společnost, Severočeské doly (coal mining companies), Chemopetrol (petrochemical company), and Krajská zdravotní, a.s. (Regional Health, Inc.) Ústí nad Labem, which has associated Hospital Děčín, Masaryk's hospital in Ústí nad Labem, Hospital Teplice, Hospital Most and Hospital Chomutov since 2007.

Industrial activity from the past had and still has an unfavourable influence on the quality of the environment. Strongly developed surface mining distinctively damaged the natural face of the landscape, which gradually recovers only thanks to a costly recultivation. Well-known are also problems with the emission situation in the Region. During the last decade it has much improved (it can be proved by a decreasing amount of emissions), however, the Region is still perceived as an area with the most damaged environment. An inglorious primacy belongs to the Region as for the specific emissions of sulphur dioxide (t/km^2), and nitrogen oxides.

Part of the territory of the Region is covered by the České Švýcarsko (Czech Switzerland) national park with the area of 7,900 hectares that was founded in 2000 and also by the following protected landscape areas: České středohoří (the Bohemian Midlands), the Labské pískovce (the Sandstone Rocks of Labe), Kokořínsko and the Lužice Mountains. One can find 140 small-area protected landscape areas that cover the area of 3,486 hectares.

From the labour force sample survey it results that there are about 365,7 thousand employed persons in the Region of which most work in the processing industry (about 97,1 thousand by classification CZ-NACE). In 2009, the average gross monthly wage in the Region reached 21,179 CZK (FTE), which is by 2,309 CZK less than the national average and the Region ranks sixth among all the regions in the CR. Decrease of coal mining, restructuring of enterprises, slowing down of productions and agriculture cause that in the national comparison the Ústecký Region has in the long-term the highest registered unemployment rate (13.61%, in the CR 9.24% as at 31 December 2009).

In the statistical Business Register, more than 175 thousand enterprises, organisations and entrepreneurs were registered in the end of 2009. The biggest part comprised of entrepreneurs – natural persons not incorporated in the Companies Register (more than 124 thousand). From the point of view of the CZ-NACE classification most entities dealt with wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods.

The network of educational establishments comprises 328 nursery schools, 283 primary schools, 117 high schools and grammar schools. In the region university education is provided only at the university of J. E. Purkyně.

The network of outpatient care establishments and pharmacies provides basic health care in the Region. Urgent medical care is provided in 20 hospitals with 5,327 beds. The most important health care establishment in the Region is and Krajská zdravotní, a.s. Ústí nad Labem which has associated Hospital's Děčín, Ústí nad Labem, Teplice, Most and Chomutov. Following and rehabilitation care is ensured in 13 specialised therapeutic institutions with 1,338 beds, of which 6 institutions are determined for long-term patients.

The Region has an important transport location in relation to the European Union. The important international road E55 runs through the Teplice and Litoměřice Districts, linking the north and south of Europe, and going on from the town of Lovosice as the highway D8. At the end of 2006 a new segment of highway D8 over Krušné Hory with direct connection to the German highway A17 was open to traffic. Another important route is the road leading along Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) to the northern part of the Liberecký Region. No less important is also the route coming from the Federal Republic of Germany via Chomutov and Louny to Prague. The main railway route is the international track from the Federal Republic

of Germany via the town of Ústí nad Labem to Prague. The Labe River is the most important water route in the Czech Republic and enables shipping to Hamburg, a port in the North Sea.

There are several border crossings in the Region: 14 road border crossings, 3 railway border crossings, 1 river border crossing and many newly built crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.

Due to its rich history of settlement, the Ústecký Region boasts of a great number of historic buildings and monuments. The best known is, for example, Romanesque rotunda on the Říp Mountain, Gothic church in Most, baroque castle in Duchcov, monastery in Osek and Doksaný and chateaux Ploskovice and Libochovice. Litoměřice, Ústěek and Terezin were designated urban conservation areas and centre of Roudnice nad Labem is a conservation area. Several villages in the Litoměřice area were selected for rural conservation areas. Also, there are painting collections of great worth in the Litoměřice picture gallery. On Litoměřice exhibition grounds various types of actions take place throughout the year. Very well known is, for example, the Garden of Bohemia (Zahrada Čech) sales exhibition focused on growing of fruits and vegetables or a fair specialized on domestic equipment and construction goods called My house, my castle. To mention some of the beauties of nature, the best known is the national park České Švýcarsko (the Bohemian Switzerland) with its famous Pravčická brána (the Pravčice Gate), lovely Gate to Bohemia (Porta Bohemica) along the Labe River, formations of Tiská rock 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, motor-racing circuit, golf course, all that in the town of Most. Also several cycle tracks 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.