

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PLZEŇSKÝ REGION

The Plzeňský Region lies in the southeast of the Czech Republic, bordering the Federal Republic of Germany (Bavaria) in the west, the Karlovarský Region in the northwest, the Středočeský Region in the northeast, and the Jihočeský Region in the southeast.

The area of 7,561 km² ranks the Region third largest, while the population places the Region ninth in the CR. The Region comprises seven Districts: Domažlice, Klatovy, Plzeň-město, Plzeň-jih, Plzeň-sever, Rokycany, and Tachov. Their characteristics vary significantly from one District to another in terms of landscape chart, population and its distribution, economic potential, as well as the number and density of settlements.

It is the landscape relief that accounts for the variability of natural conditions, in particular. Geographically, the Region breaks up into several areas: Plzeňská pahorkatina (the Plzeň Uplands), a part of Brdská vrchovina (the Brdy Highlands), Český les and Šumava (the Bohemian Forest and the Šumava Mountains); climatic, geological and hydrological conditions of the respective areas differ to a great degree.

Raw material resources, which represent the basic potential for the development of manufacturing, are located particularly in the central parts surrounding the town of Plzeň. It is resources of coal, heat-resistant and ceramic clays, and building stone – moreover, there are resources of limestone in the Šumava foothill area. As for agriculture, there are quite favourable conditions for farming in the Region. Agricultural land covers about 50.3% of the total area, of which arable land makes up 68.1%. Forestry is characterised by enough natural resources of wood, as forest land covers 39.6% of the total area of the Region (large forests are particularly in Šumava, Český les, and Brdská vrchovina). The volume of timber removal ranks the Region third in the CR with prevalent coniferous felling.

The quality of the environment may be regarded as good with respect to the whole CR. Specific emissions according to REZZO 1-4 in the Region are lower than the national average. In 2009, specific emissions of sulphur dioxide were 1.43 t/km², which is 64.7% of specific emissions in the CR; specific emissions of nitrogen oxides were 1.64 t/km² (i.e. 51.3% of the national level); specific emissions of carbon monoxide were 2.89 t/km² (i.e. 54.5% of the national level); and of comprise solids 0.59 t/km² (i.e. 76.1% of the national level).

The least damaged areas comprise the mountainous parts of Šumava, Český les, western parts of Brdská vrchovina, and the areas surrounding the municipalities of Manětín and Nečtiny. The protection of the environment in Šumava is ensured by the organisations the National park Šumava and the Landscape Protected Area Šumava. The Protected Landscape Area Český les was newly designated in 2005. There are 182 small protected areas in the Region and several wildlife parks have been designated to conserve the landscape variability.

The town of Plzeň where the environment is damaged severely is an exception. Specific emissions reported for the Plzeň-město District rise above the national average several times. The town of Plzeň and its surroundings suffer from heavy road traffic and high concentration of industrial activities. The overloaded road network much worsens quality of the environment by emissions (nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons) and noise. Moreover, mining or quarrying activities most devastated the areas surrounding the following municipalities: Nýřany, Tlučná, and Vejpnice; Břasy and Radnice; Stříbro; and Ejpovice.

Road network in Plzeň consists of 5,129 km of roads of which 421 km are first class roads, 1,500 km second class roads and 3,099 third class roads. Compared to other Regions in the CR the Plzeňský Region has the third highest region's share of third class roads, namely 9.1%.

The Plzeňský Region has 109 km of motorways most of which are in the Tachov District (45 km), the Rokycany District (26 km) and the Plzeň-sever District (19 km). Length of railways in the Region was 710 km as at 31 December 2010.

A high number of unevenly distributed small settlements is characteristic of the Plzeňský Region, as well as the lack of medium-sized towns – therefore, when compared with the whole CR, the distribution of settlement appears atypical. The town of Plzeň with its 169,935 population contrasts with small municipalities, as it is the second most important centre in Bohemia, after the city of Prague.

The Plzeňský Region comprises 56 towns accounting for the population of 387,708 (67.8% of the Region's total population).

Based on Act No. 314/2002 Sb. on determination of municipalities with commissioned local authorities and municipalities with extended competence, the Czech Republic has from 1 January 2003 a new administrative arrangement: it is divided into 205 administrative districts of municipalities with extended competence. The decree of the Ministry of Interior No. 388/2002 Sb. determines administrative districts of municipalities with commissioned local authorities and administrative districts of municipalities with extended competence. After the end of activity of district authorities (as at 31 December 2002) an important part of their competence was thus shifted to municipalities with extended competence. The Plzeňský Region was divided into 15 administrative districts of municipalities with extended competence under which 35 administrative districts of municipalities with commissioned local authority come. The following belong to the municipalities with extended competence: Blovice, Domažlice, Horažďovice, Horšovský Týn, Klatovy, Kralovice, Nepomuk, Nýřany, Plzeň, Přeštice, Rokycany, Stod, Stříbro, Sušice and Tachov.

Most of developing settlements lie on development hubs of regional importance and on the western radial hub that connects Plzeň and Prague and is directing through a corridor on the border with Germany. Out of these hubs there are sparsely inhabited territories with prevailing residential and agricultural function with insufficiently developed social and technical infrastructure and limited transport services. The following will contribute to revitalization of these settlements: establishment of small businesses, revival of crafts and development of services related to tourism. Municipalities associate to form microregions in order to enable at least partial realisation of some activities.

In the period of 1990-2010 the housing construction intensity was the highest in the year 2008. The number of completed dwellings per 1 000 mid-year population was 4.70. In the year 2010 the value of the housing construction intensity amounted to 3.33. Compared to the previous year, the number of completed dwellings per 1 000 population decreased by 0,26.

The population 572,045 ranks the Region sixth smallest in the country (31 December 2010), making up 5.4% of the CR's total population. However, the population is distributed very unevenly. 30% of the population live in the town of Plzeň and approximately next more than one fifth is concentrated into 13 towns of 5 000 inhabitants and over. 17% of the population live in smaller towns under 5 000 inhabitants.

The Plzeňský Region has the second lowest density of population, which amounts to 75.7 inhabitants per km² (the national density is 133.6 inhabitants per km²). Within the Region, the lowest density is reported for the Tachov and the Klatovy Districts (38.7 and 45.6 inhabitants per km², respectively).

Regarding age distribution of population, the Region ranks among the oldest ones in the CR – the 2009 average age amounted to 41.2. In addition, the Plzeň-město District reported an average age of 42.9. On the other hand, only 39.3 years of age is reported for the Tachov District. A high share of senior population manifests itself also in the index of ageing (i.e. the ratio of the 65+ population to the 0-14 population). In 2010, the value of the index amounted to 113.4 which is the fourth highest figure after the Capital City of Prague and the Zlínský and the Jihomoravský Regions (the index of ageing in the CR is 107.8). The highest values of the index were reported for the following districts: the Plzeň-město (135.8), the Rokycany (120.9), and the Klatovy (116.7). On the contrary, a very low value was reported for the Tachov District (83.4).

Since 2003, population of the Czech Republic stopped decreasing and in 2010 (when compared to 2009) it increased by 25,957 inhabitants. The number of live-born children in the CR decreased year-on-year by 1,195 children, i.e. by 1.0%. In 2010 the natural change was 10,309 persons. Population of the CR increased mainly due to net migration that was 15,648 persons.

Population of the Plzeňský Region increased in 2010 (when compared to 2009) by 182 inhabitants. The number of live-born children decreased by 170 year-on-year, i.e. an decrease by 2.7%. The natural change was positive: 426 persons. Net migration was negative – 244 persons.

As for the number of live births 10.9 per 1 000 mid-year population, the Plzeňský Region was almost comparable to the national average in 2010. Relatively, the biggest number of live births children was

born in the Plzeň-sever (12.2), the Tachov (11.3) and the Plzeň-jih (11.0) Districts. As for abortions 38.8 per 100 births, the Plzeňský Region ranks third within the Czech Republic after the Ústecký and Karlovarský Regions. Much higher abortion rate in comparison to the regional average was achieved in the Plzeň-město (42.1) and the Tachov (40.4) Districts.

In the number of marriages and divorces per 1 000 mid-year population the Plzeňský Region reached approximately the national average; relatively, most marriages were concluded in the Rokycany (4.9), the Plzeň-město (4.7) Districts. Relatively, most marriages (3.2) were divorced in the Rokycany District, while the least (2.5) in the Klatovy District.

In 2010, the share of the Plzeňský Region in total gross domestic product in current prices was 4.6%. In GDP per capita (306 628 CZK) compared with the other regions placed in the sixth place.

Important food enterprises in the Plzeňský Region are: Plzeňský Prazdroj a.s. (founded in 1843) - the biggest Czech beer exporter (it exports to almost 50 countries all over the world), which is a part of SABMiller plc international group (the second largest brewery company); Stock Plzeň a.s., traditional producer of spirits (nowadays the biggest producer of spirits in the Czech Republic) and Bohemia Sekt Českomoravská vinařská a.s. in Starý Plzenec – an important wine producer.

Engineering belongs to important industrial branches in the Region; it is related especially to the name Škoda. To key assortment produced by Škoda belong: facilities for both classical and nuclear power engineering and petrochemistry, products of ironworks and forges, heavy machine tools, facilities for rolling mills and sugar plants, hydraulic and curing presses, gear units, rail vehicles, trolleybuses, drive motors, etc. Research and trading company are also developing. Other important industrial enterprises, which have an influence on the Region's economy are: DIOSS Nýřany a.s., producing products from sheet metals and tubing, Okula Nýrsko a.s., producer of traditional optical frames for glasses and processor of plastics, LASSELSBERGER s.r.o., which represents ceramics manufacturing (it consists of the following companies: Chlumčanské keramické závody, Keramika Horní Bříza, Rako Rakovník, Cemix Čebín and Calofrig Borovany).

The Plzeňský Region is very attractive for foreign investors thanks to its location. A dominant position among foreign investors belongs to Japanese plant Panasonic AVC Networks Czech s.r.o. producing flat panel display screen. Other important foreign companies are: YAZAKI Wiring Technologies Czech s.r.o producing components for automobile industry, company VISHAY ELECTRONIC s.r.o., which deals with production of electronic parts, BORGERS CS spol. s.r.o. with production of plastic products, MD ELECTRONIC spol. s.r.o. producing cable jumpers, Daikin Industries Czech Republic s.r.o. with production and repairs of industrial cooling and air conditioning facilities.

Cross-border co-operation with Bavaria on the Euroregional basis helps to moderate social-economic differences – it is the Domažlice and Klatovy Districts (Euroregion Šumava), and the Tachov District (Euroregion Egrensis) participating in the European Cross-border Co-operation Program.

The 2009 number of employees in the Region amounted to 209.8 thousands persons (headcount) by the so-called workplace method (incl. enterprises with less than 20 employees), it is 36.7% of the Region's total population. The 2009 average wage of CZK (headcount persons) amounted to 21,864 CZK by the so-called workplace method ranked the Plzeňský Region third in the CR, after the Capital City of Prague and the Středočeský Region. The wage, however, does not amount to the national average, but is lower by 3.5%.

According to the Business Register, there were registered 144,632 businesses in the Plzeňský Region as at 31 December 2010, the best part of which accounted for unincorporated private entrepreneurs. The most of businesses (39.9%) have their seats in the Plzeň-město District. In terms of employment, a major role is played by 50 businesses with 500 and more employees and 22 businesses employ more than 1 000 employees.

Organisations and companies of the highest number of employees include: Fakultní nemocnice Plzeň (Teaching hospital), Psychiatrická léčebna Dobřany, (Asylum), Plzeňský Prazdroj, a.s., Západočeská univerzita v Plzni (West Bohemia university in Plzeň), Panasonic AVC Networks Czech s.r.o., YAZAKI Wiring Technologies Czech s.r.o., VISHAY ELECTRONIC, s.r.o., MD ELEKTRONIK spol. s.r.o., HP Pelzer s.r.o., ŠKODA TRANSPORTATION a.s., ŠKODA POWER s.r.o., ŠKODA JS a.s.,

LASSELSBERGER a.s., City Council of Plzeň, Plzeňské městské dopravní podniky a.s. (Municipal transport company), BORGERS CS spol. s.r.o.

The Plzeňský Region ranks among regions of rather low unemployment rate. There were 27,267 job applicants registered by employment offices as at 31 December 2010 in the Region. Compared to other regions, the Plzeňský Region reports the fifth lowest unemployment rate 8.25% (according to the new methodology). The highest rates are reported for the Tachov and the Domažlice Districts (12.53%, 9.61%), while the lowest ones for the Plzeň-město and the Plzeň-jih Districts (6.44% and 6.73%, respectively).

There were 2,161 vacancies in the Region (31 December 2010), i.e. 12 job applicants per vacancy. The most favourable ratio was achieved by the Plzeň-město District (8 job applicants per vacancy), while the worst ratio was left for the Domažlice District (20 job applicants per vacancy). Graduate and juvenile job applicants accounted for 5.8% of the Region's total number of unemployed job applicants.

As for labour force structure, the most difficult to find a job it is for employees with low qualification, persons with some limitations due to their health, school graduates and administrative workers with secondary education. On the contrary, lack of workers is reported from technical professions.

There are 11 hospitals with a total 3,508 beds (in all departments). The network of pre-school and school facilities comprises 256 nursery schools, 222 basic schools, 14 grammar schools, 50 vocational training excl. follow up, University education in the Region is provided at the Západočeská university in its 8 faculties (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Pedagogical, Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Applied Science, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Health Studies); and Faculty of Medicine in Plzeň, which belongs to the Charles University in Prague.

The Region has favourable conditions for tourism. Plzeň offers many historic landmarks; also its historic underground is interesting (it has 20 km and belongs to the largest in Central Europe). Among the natural points of interest is the Bolevec Lakes System, which is from technical as well as landscape point of view a unique late Gothic work from the 15th century. There is a dense network of recreation and hiking trails. Other often-visited places are the zoological and botanical gardens of the town of Plzeň and hills in its surroundings – Krkavec, Chlum and Sylván with outlook towers.

As for other monuments of cultural heritage, there is Manětín baroque chateau, the Plasy Monastery (a historical site preserve), the remains of Radyně and Buben Gothic castles, Kaceřov Renaissance chateau, remains of Rabštejn nad Střelou castle, Horšovský Týn Renaissance chateau, water castle at Švihov, Kozel chateau, Nebílovy baroque chateau, Lužany chateau, Kladruby monastery, Kašperk castle, remains of Libštejn Gothic castle and many others. Also the town of Domažlice and its traditional summer Chod Festival (in August) attract attention of many visitors.

Excellent conditions for summer and winter recreation are in the Šumava Mountains thanks to hiking trails and cycling tracks. For downhill and cross-country skiing there are many ski slopes that are taken care of as well as tracks for cross-country skiing. For recreation and improvement of health condition one can stay at Konstantinovy Lázně spa that focuses on health precaution, treatment and convalescence of cardiovascular illnesses, locomotive system, digestion and respiratory system. As for other places suitable for recreation there is the Hracholusky Reservoir and the Berounka River often visited by water sportsmen.