

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE REGION

According to the valid law, the Jihomoravský Region comprises of the following districts: Blansko, Brno-město, Brno-venkov, Břeclav, Hodonín, Vyškov and Znojmo; it is divided into 21 administrative districts of the municipalities with extended competence. With its area of 719,522 ha and population almost 1,172 thousand inhabitants the Region ranks fourth in the Czech Republic. Location of the Region is rather favourable from geographical point of view as it lies on a historical connection between the south and north of Europe. Within the EU its neighbours are Slovakia and Austria and within the Czech Republic it neighbours with the Jihočeský, Pardubický, Olomoucký, Zlínský and Vysočina Regions. Various natural conditions in the Region obviously influence the way of the landscape utilisation and the way of life in a concrete locality. Four different characters of basic landscape types can be distinguished in the Region:

- Large cave complexes of the Moravian Karst (Moravský kras) in the northern part of the Region known especially thanks to the Macocha Abyss (138.5 m), hillsides and a lot of protected areas. Many caves of this unique area, which belongs to the cleanest in the CR as for ecology, are accessible to the public and visited by plenty of tourists from the CR as well as abroad.

- Southern part of the Region is mostly a flat area of fields, meadows and vineyards with rests of bottomland forests alongside the Dyje river. Podýjí in the southwestern corner of the region is exceptionally well preserved example of a river valley in the richly forested landscape. Quantity of water bodies in the river Dyje between Znojmo and Břeclav has become an ideal nesting waterfowl. A symbol of this part of southern Moravia is Pálava and Lednice-Valtice area. Those loving water sports and fishing visit every year the Nové Mlýny reservoir.

- Behind the Morava river, in the eastern part, the landscape gradually elevates to the hills of the White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty). This biospheric reservation belongs to the most precious natural areas in Europe.

- Although the landscape around the city of Brno is influenced by the existence of the large urban agglomeration, the surroundings of the city is considered to be one of the most beautiful in the CR. In the north, it is adjacent to the forests of the Moravian Karst, in the south are open flats of the southern Moravia and right at the borders of the city there is the Brno dam.

On the territory of the Region there are two places, which are listed as UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites. First to be mentioned is the Lednice-Valtice area, which is an example of a system of forests, meadows and water areas marvellously added by romantic cathedrals, arbours and, first of all, the chateaux of Lednice and Valtice. Mastery of modern architecture is represented by the Tugendhat Villa in the city of Brno. What must not be omitted are two biospheric reservation UNESCO of protected landscape areas of Dolní Morava and White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty).

The highest altitude in the Region is in the Hodonín District at the mountain called Durda (842 m above sea level). In the Břeclav District you can find the municipality of Lanžhot on the territory of which there is the lowest point (150 m) of the Region as for altitude, which is located where the Dyje and the Morava rivers meet. A rich history of the Jihomoravský Region is showed by local archaeological sites, chateaux, castles, castle ruins, churches and synagogues. Near Brno there is a battlefield of one of the goriest Napoleon wars, which is known as the battle of the three emperors near Slavkov. The folk architecture can be seen in the Strážnický open-air museum. Also the folk feasts such as carnivals, banquets, building of maypoles and fairs are maintained plentifully in the Jihomoravský Region. In the Region, which is known for its vine tradition, there are several unique vinery buildings found. In Přímětice there is one of the biggest cloister cellars in the world, however the ancient listed the Petrov Plže and the baroque cellars in Pavlov should not be missed out.

Agricultural land comprises more than 60 % of the Region's total area, of which 83 % is arable land. The highest share of arable land (i.e. in the agricultural land) is in the Znojmo and Vyškov Districts. To go into detail, agriculture focuses on cereals, rape and sugar beet. Thanks to very favourable climatic conditions the Jihomoravský Region has a long tradition and a high level of specialised agricultural production: viniculture, fruit-growing and vegetable-growing. There are nearly 90 % of the CR's total vineyards. The districts with a developed viniculture include the Břeclav, Hodonín, Znojmo and partially also the Brno-venkov District.

Within the livestock production the Jihomoravský Region ranks on one of the first places in farming of swine and poultry.

There is a significant economic potential in the Jihomoravský Region. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the Region accounts for almost 10.9 % of the CR's gross domestic product. The GDP share, however, does correspond with the population share of the Region, which is 11.1 % of the CR's population.

With regards to the industrial tradition of the city of Brno and its surroundings, manufacturing still plays a dominant role in the Region's economy; its share in the total value added produced in the Region is 30.4 % while the share of agriculture (another traditional branch of especially southern parts of the Region) is only 2.9 %. Developing construction makes 6.8 % and services 59.9 %.

The Jihomoravský Region as a whole ranks among those of rather good quality of air. Air pollution, noise and similar unfavourable influences are only of local character, especially around large industrial centres. High levels of specific emissions are seen particularly in the Brno-město and Brno-venkov District. What contributes to the pollution is an increasing number of cars, especially in big cities. There is an increasing number of municipalities connected to the sewage system with a sewage water treatment plants, which is one of the many ways how to improve the strong water pollution of rivers Morava, Dyje, and Svratka. Significant attention is given to the problem of environmental protection in this region, which is proved year by year by the volume of investments dedicated to the protection of the environment.

The Region's population was 1 172 853 as at 31 December 2014, which is 11.1 % of the CR's total population. As for breakdown by sex, women were prevailing: there were 1,044 women per 1,000 men. It is influenced primarily by the structure of the city of Brno, in which 1,075 women per 1,000 men live. Regarding the distribution of the population by age in 2014 when compared to 2013, there was a decrease in the 15-64 age group (by 0,7 %), while an increase was observed in the 65+ age group (by 2,6 %). In 2014, number of children under 15 is the highest within the last thirteen years. The ratio of 65+ population to that under 15 (the dependency ratio) amounted to 121,2 in 2014 (in 2013 it was 120.2). The dependency ratio for females in 2014 was 147,3, while for males it was only 96,4. This big difference is caused mainly by lower age of males at death.

An important part of the regional cooperation, supported in particular by the Regional office of the Jihomoravský Region is the formation of microregions. The formation of microregions is an important and positive trend for common advocacy of interests and plans in particular in the rural communes with the aim of achieving desirable changes in all of the municipalities of a certain area. Recently, cross-border cooperation in the "Pomoraví" euroregion has been developing; the region comprises Weinviertel, South Moravia and Western Slovakia regions. Most of these areas are characterized by intense agricultural activity with the exception of urban agglomerations of Vienna, Brno and Bratislava, in which industrial and trade activity are concentrated. Among the main priorities of the Region's development belong the development of the "Pomoraví" euroregion and cross-border cooperation, support of the conceptual development of the area, development of cooperation on the euroregional level mainly in the spheres of science, education, social welfare services, culture and sport also belong among the priorities of the development of the Jihomoravský Region.

Natural attraction zone of the entire southern Moravia is the city of Brno, which is located at the confluence of Svratka and Svitava rivers. Being an important regional centre, which is situated on the crossroads of motorways to Prague, Vienna, Bratislava and Olomouc, it is a place where traditional international exhibitions and fairs take place thus highlighting the city's status of a busy international business centre. It is the second largest city in the Czech Republic, the importance of which reaches beyond local context: it is a seat of many institutions of national importance, especially judiciary; it is also an important centre of culture and higher education.

In the Jihomoravský Region, the trend of increasing number of employees dropped in 2013. The reached average wage CZK 23,482 per natural persons ranks the Region well below the national average (CZK 24,165).

According to the results of Labour Force Sample Survey the level of economic activity of population slightly exceeds the average of the Czech Republic, in 2014 however the Jihomoravský Region decreased a growth of employed in their major occupation. The biggest share in their number has industry in the Region in particular manufacturing.

According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs the number of job applicants in 2014 decreased. The registered unemployment rate of 8.25 % still belonged among the highest in the CR. The Jihomoravský Region ranked tenth out of 14 regions. The tender of the vacancies has doubled. In average, there are 15 job applicants for a vacancy in the region.

As for transport, the Jihomoravský Region has an important transit function. The backbone of the transport system consists of D1, D2 and R43 and R52 fast roads. An important transport junction of the Region is Brno, which is a road, motorway, and railway junction. However, the civil airport Brno–Tuřany can accept all types of aircrafts all the year round. Two main railway corridors, which interconnect EU countries, go through the Region and the City of Brno is a member of an association of European towns in the interest of which is to build a fast railway. Road transport intensity increases, which is clear from the number of registered passenger cars (more than 504 thousand) and trucks (almost 71 thousand) in the Region in 2014. Motorways and roads in the total length of 4.5 thousand km serve the increasing road transport intensity.

With respect to international tourism, a prime role is played by the natural and cultural heritage areas, such as Lednice–Valtice Cultural Landscape (it was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site together with another eight in the CR), the Moravian Karst (Moravský kras) and the Slavkov (Austerlitz) Battlefield. Brno plays a similar cultural role with its national heritage buildings and monuments. One of the most attractive landscape areas is the Podyjí National Park. Much cultural and social attractiveness attracts visitors to the territory of the Region, which is of a high benefit for the development of tourism. From this point of view, one of advantages of the Region is viniculture tourism; the Region draws its unique character from folklore and folk culture. Positive in this sense is also the influence of cycling in the southern part of Moravia, namely in international context (Moravian–Silesian long-distance cycle track, Greenways, Amber cycle track, and a cycle track from the City of Brno to Vienna). The importance of Masaryk's circuit should not be missed out as it attracts many sympathisers of motor racing from the CR and abroad every year.

The offer of accommodation services is secured by 816 accommodation establishments such as hotels, motels and camps, in which almost 1.5 million guests (including 34.3 % of foreigners) were accommodated in 2014.

Health care in the Region is ensured by 22 hospitals with a total of 7,151 beds (in all departments) as well as by a sufficient number of other independent health establishments, independent surgeries and pharmacies or dispensaries.

What is positive in the Region is the sufficient network of pre-school and school establishments. Pre-school children attend 657 nursery schools; basic education is provided in 472 basic schools from which most pupils continue their study in 123 secondary schools. The network of schools usually covers the requirements for placement of children; however, some inadequacies still occur. The effort of the secondary and vocational education is to ensure interconnection of the offer of secondary education and the needs of the labour market.

The above-the-average education level of population in the Region is also contributed to by a high quality of the system of tertiary education. The necessary education is provided to the students in public or private universities in Brno, Znojmo or Lednice, University of Defence in Brno should also be mentioned.