

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION**

The Liberecký Region comprises of the Česká Lípa, Jablonec nad Nisou, Liberec, and Semily Districts. From 1 January 2003, there are 10 administrative districts of the municipalities with extended competence (3rd level municipalities) and within them 21 territorial districts of municipalities with commissioned local authority (2nd level municipalities) on its territory.

The Region is situated in the north of the Czech Republic. The territory includes northern part of the Česká kotlina basin, Jizerské hory (the Jizera Mountains), western part of Krkonoše (the Giant Mountains) including their foothills and eastern part of Lužické hory (the Lužice Mountains). The northern part of the region is bordering the Federal Republic of Germany in the length of 20 km and Poland in the length of 130 km. In the east, the Region neighbours the Královéhradecký Region, in the south the Středočeský Region, and in the west the Ústecký Region.

The Liberecký Region covers only 4.0% of the total area of the Czech Republic. With the exception of the City of Prague, the Region is the smallest one in the Czech Republic having the area of 3 163 km<sup>2</sup>. Agricultural land comprises 44.2% of the Region's area; the share of arable land (20.6%) is well below the national average. On the contrary, a distinctively high percentage (44.5%) is reported for forest land.

The whole Region is generally mountainous, it has an upland character. The highest point is the 1 435 m high Peak Kotel situated near Harrachov in the Semily District. The lowest point of 208 m above sea level lies in the Liberec District on the place, where the Smědá River leaves the territory of the Czech Republic. The most famous peak of the Region is Ještěd (1 012 m), which is the highest point of the Ještěd mountain range. The climate in the north-eastern part of the Region (the Jizera Mountains, the Giant Mountains with its foothills) belongs to a rather cold area, while the western and south-western parts have conditions of a slightly warm area. Three rivers gather the waters from the Region: the basin of the River Ploučnice in the west, the basin of the River Labe in the east, and the basin of the River Odra (Nisa) in the north. Supplies of ground water are mainly found near the southern border, while in the north-east, there is a protected area of natural accumulation of surface water. Mineral water and healing peat sources are also present in the Region.

From the natural history point of view, the Liberecký Region is a very important area and includes a great variety of ecosystems, a lot of protected areas as well as areas with interesting fauna and flora. There are 5 protected landscape areas in the Region: České středohoří (the Bohemian Low Mountain Range), Jizerské hory, Lužické hory, Český ráj (the Bohemian Paradise), and Kokořínsko (the Kokořín Area); 8 national nature reserves, 9 national nature monuments, 36 nature reserves, and 68 nature monuments.

Regarding raw materials, the Region is rich in foundry and glass sands of good quality. In the past, it was important for its ornamental and building stone (e.g. granite from Liberec, chalk slate from Železný Brod, quality basalt and quartzite, etc.), which were mined and processed there. Nowadays, the quarrying focuses on mining of sand, gravel and broken stone aggregates. The coal deposit of the Giant Mountains foothill basin reaches into the territory of the Semily District.

As at 31 December 2012, the population of the Liberecký Region was 438 594 (4.2% of the CR's population), ranking the Region second smallest in the country. The average population density is 138.6 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, which is slightly above the national average. The highest density can be found in the Jablonec nad Nisou District (223.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) and the Liberec District (172.9 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>). At 31 December 2012 there were 215 municipalities in the Region, with the average municipality area 14.7 km<sup>2</sup>. The percentage of urban population was 77.7%. A lower percentage of urban population is reported only for the Semily District (57,6%). The main center of the Region is Liberec, with a population 102 113 inhabitants, the second largest town in the Region is Jablonec nad Nisou, whose population more than 45 thousand.

The demographic development of the Liberecký Region is rather similar to that observed in other Regions. The population age structure is slightly younger when compared to the Czech Republic's average. The average age in the Region is 40.9 years, which is by 0.4 years less than the national average. The distribution of population by age varies significantly in the individual areas of the Region. The population of the Česká Lípa area ranks among the youngest in the CR, while the population of the Semily and Turnov area among the oldest.

The economic structure of the Liberecký Region is principally of industrial nature. The traditional manufacture of textiles has recently lost its dominant role over twenty years. The economic recession in recent years is reflected in the industry of manufacture of glass and imitation jewellery. Manufacturing is focused on the automotive and manufacturing rubber and plastic products. The agriculture, which functions, in fact, just as a supplementary branch of the economic structure, grows mainly cereals and forage crops for

cattle breeding. To make the list complete, tourism is also a major contributor to the Liberecký Region's economy.

In 2012, the gross domestic product per capita was 77,5% of the CR's one. As for the CR's total GDP, the share of the Liberecký Region stood at 3,2%.

As at 31 December 2012, the Region's share of unemployed persons, calculated from data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR, was 7.75%, which was by 0.38 percentage point more than the national average. As for the order of regions by share of unemployed persons, the Liberecký Region ranked seventh.

As for education, there is a network of basic and secondary schools in the Region. The Liberecký Region is typical of secondary schools of art that reach beyond the regional context. Glass and imitation-jewellery secondary schools of applied arts are especially worth mentioning. Not only secondary, but also tertiary education is provided - by the Technical University of Liberec.

Basic health care is provided by a network of out-patient establishments and pharmacies. Acute care, care of chronic patients and physiotherapeutic care is provided by a stabilised network of eight hospitals. The most important health establishment is the Liberec Hospital. The Institute of the Arm and Plastic Surgery in the town of Vysoké nad Jizerou is an establishment of multi-regional significance. There are two balneological centres in the Region to treat rheumatism and diseases of locomotive organs, heart, and blood circulation system Lázně Libverda and Lázně Kunratice (Spa Libverda and Spa Kundratice).

Social activity focuses mainly on care of old and overaged persons, who are taken care of in a network of homes for seniors and houses with day care the services. A unique position in the area of social care of young people in the Liberecký Region belongs to the Institute of Jedlička ("Jedličkův ústav"). The system of social establishments comprises also of many asylum establishments and centres for people in need, which concentrate on treatment and prevention of addictions.

The Liberecký Region has rich historic tradition represented by many historic buildings and monuments and cultural establishments. The institutions of supra-regional significance include primarily the Severočeské muzeum (the North-Bohemian Museum) in Liberec, the Regional Gallery in Liberec, and the State Scientific Library in Liberec. Important cultural institutions are also Divadlo F. X. Šaldy (the F. X. Šalda Theatre) with the scene of Small Theatre, and Naivní divadlo (the Naive Theatre), the Zoological and Botanical Gardens in Liberec. A number of museums and galleries are scattered about the Region. Those interested in tradition of glass and artificial jewellery of this area can visit, for example, museums of glass making in Nový Bor, Kamenický Šenov and Železný Brod or Museum of glass and artificial jewellery in Jablonec nad Nisou. Český ráj Museum (Czech Paradise Museum) in Turnov owns collections from the area of geology, mineralogy and documentation of goldsmith's art and jewellery making, which are unique not only within the Czech Republic but also as for Europe. Extensive collections of various fire-fighting techniques while offering two museums - Firefighters Historical Museum in Nový Oldřichov and Museum of fire equipment in Chrastava.

The Liberecký Region is also a well-known place as for tourism. Visitors, foreigners as well as Czech nationals, come to enjoy exceptional landscape, to see nature formations, historic monuments and other places of interest. There are many specific areas in the Region that are strongly linked to tourism: the western parts of the Giant Mountains, the Jizera Mountains, Turnovsko-Český ráj (the Turnov Area – the Bohemian Paradise), the town of Doksy and its surroundings, the Lužice Mountains and Podkrkonoší (the Giant Mountains foothills).

Frequently visited attractions of national heritage significance include religious buildings and castles, such as Bezděz, Zákupy, Lemberk, Frýdlant v Čechách, Sychrov, Hrubý Rohozec and Valdštejn. Many reservoirs and lakes are to be found in the Region, too, with the most well-known Máchovo Jezero (the Lake of Mácha). Visitors can use accommodation establishments with total capacity more than 36 thousand bed places in collective tourist accommodation establishments of various categories. Quite a number of individual recreation establishments can be found in the Region (weekend houses of one kind or another), especially in the Česká Lípa and Semily Districts. Important road and railway border crossings and many border crossings for pedestrians help develop the tourism of the Region.

The territory of the Liberecký Region includes also part of the Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa, the oldest group of its kind in the Czech Republic. It is a euroregion of three border areas located on the territory where borders of the Czech Republic, Federal Republic of Germany and Polish Republic meet.