

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE REGION

The Karlovarský Region is in particular famous for its spas. There are not only one of our most famous spas Karlovy Vary but also Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně, Lázně Kynžvart and Jáchymov in the Region. The spa in Kyselka is not currently in operation. Along with mineral springs the region is rich with its natural mineral waters of which the most famous is Mattoni. In connection with spas what is also very popular are the spa wafers loved not only by local inhabitants but predominantly by spa guests from all over the world. Karlovy Vary apart from this are also famous for its herbal liquor Becherovka and the art of glassmakers from the Moser Company. The city Chodov was made famous by peach-blow, exported to the whole world. Among the cultural aspects it is mainly the International Film Festival Karlovy Vary that offers the meeting of domestic and foreign creators.

The Karlovarský Region is located in the west of the Czech Republic and was formed by the split of the Západočeský Region to form the Karlovarský and Plzeňský Region. In the north and west there is the state border with Germany, in the east its neighbour is the Ústecký Region and in the south the Plzeňský Region. Along with the Ústecký Region it forms the Northwest cohesion area, the so-called NUTS 2. The mountains Krušné hory are stretching along the national borders across these two regions. The highest point is Klínovec (1 244 m above sea level) in the Karlovy Vary District as well as the lowest point of the region (320 m above sea level), which is on the river Ohře on the borders of the region. The river Ohře is also the most important river in the Karlovarský Region and the whole area belongs to its basin. Other important rivers are Teplá, Rolava, Bystřice and Svatava. The most popular of these is the river Teplá, which flows into the river Ohře in Karlovy Vary and runs through the valley Karlovy Vary where most of the hot springs rise to the surface. These flow into the river and enable the formation of a kind of aragonite known as sinter and pisolite, both eliminated from hot Karlovy Vary springs for centuries. Their water has a lot of minerals and gases, mainly carbon dioxide dissolved. Artistic and commemorative items, tasteful paperweights, ashtrays are made from the bigger pieces, pieces are also garnished into box covers and probably the most popular are sinter roses. Among other natural resources the most important are reserves of brown coal in the area of Sokolov and further ceramic clay that led to a high number of porcelain manufactures almost all over the region. However the biggest contribution to the world's response to our region have mainly reserves of mineral and healing waters, that enabled the origin of the above mentioned spas.

The region is formed by 3 districts – the Cheb, Karlovy Vary and Sokolov Districts with a total of 132 municipalities, which are further divided into 518 parts. With its surface area (3 314 km²) the Karlovarský Region is one of the smallest, it takes only 4.2 % of the whole CR. The most spacious district is the Karlovarský District (46 % of the region) with the biggest number of municipalities (54) and the biggest share of living inhabitants (38.8 %). The Sokolov and Cheb Districts are comparable as for the number of municipalities and space area.

There are 37 towns in the region. In towns of the Karlovy Vary District lives 98 620 inhabitants, in the District Sokolov 76 366 inhabitants and in the Cheb District 80 639 inhabitant. As at 31 December 2009 there were 307 636 inhabitants in municipalities of the Karlovarský Region, which is 2.9 % of the CR's population. The most populated is the Karlovarský Region, where as at 31 December 2009 there were 119 432 inhabitants in total, of which 51.0 % (60 964) were women.

Our region ranks on the last place with the absolute number of births (3 425 persons) and deaths (3 150 persons). If we, however, compare the number of births per 1 000 inhabitants (11.1 persons) then our Region ranks on the 6th place in the CR. With the number of deaths per 1 000 inhabitants (10.2 persons) the Karlovarský Region ranks on the 6nd place. In 2009, 3 056 persons moved in to the Karlovarský Region and 4 098 moved out of the region, the balance hence being negative (1 042 persons). The total increase in the Karlovarský Region is negative (767 persons) and ranks the Region on the 2th place in the CR.

Registered unemployment rate in the end of 2009 was 11.07 % (10th place in the CR) and compared to 2008 it increased by 3.45 percentage points. The lowest unemployment rate was in the Cheb District (9.89 %) then in the Karlovy Vary (10.48 %) and Sokolov Districts (13.26 %). In 2009 there were 19 337 (5 900 more than in 2008) unemployed job applicants per 830 job vacancies. The Karlovy Vary District had the most applicants (7 366 persons), then the Sokolov District (6 503 persons) and the least the Cheb District (5 468 persons). The biggest representation among the unemployed had job applicants with basic education (8 267 persons, i.e. 42.8 %) and vocational education (7 592 persons, i.e. 39.3 %). With regards to the age of the unemployed, the biggest representation had the 20 – 24 age group (13.7 %) and 50 – 54 age group (13.3 %). The average age of job applicants (38.7 years) increased compared to the previous year by 0.3 years.

There were completed 512 dwellings, i.e. by 116 under than in 2008. Within the Region the of dwellings per 1 000 inhabitants was built in the Karlovy Vary District and Cheb District (1.9 dwellings).

In 2009 health care in the Karlovarský Region was secured by 5 hospitals, 626 offices of physicians and other 157 health establishments. In total there were 1 193 doctors, of which 1 170 in non-state health establishments. In 2009 there were 88 pharmacies and dispensaries (incl. detached places of work) in the Karlovarský Region.

Tourism is in the Karlovarský Region one of the most important industries. It is the target destination for guests from the CR and abroad mainly due to our spas. In 2009 there were 666 094 guests in our region. If we recalculate guests per 1 000 inhabitants of the region, we get 2 163 guests, the second highest value following the Hl. m. Praha Region, which has traditionally the best position in tourism in the CR. The share of foreigners, who visited the Karlovarský Region last year is 68.6 % and as the only region along with the Hl. m. Praha Region it recorded a higher number of foreign guests than domestic guests. Our region is the number one in the CR in the number of over night stays per 1 000 inhabitants (13 604.1 guests).

In connection with the spa tourism there is an adequate amount of cultural facilities and memorial zones on the territory of the Karlovarský Region. These are completed with the offers of the spa symphonic orchestras and some of the festivals; the best known is the International Film Festival Karlovy Vary, which took place already for the 45th time this year. Among other cultural or sport events belong for e.g. the Locket's Cultural Summer, Chopin Festival Mariánské Lázně and Canoe Mattoni.