

CHARACTERISTICS 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 (3 315 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 (39.1 %). 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 97 112 inhabitants, in the District Sokolov 75 481 inhabitants and in the Cheb District 78 185 inhabitant. As at 31 December 2011 there were 303 165 inhabitants in municipalities of the Karlovarský Region, which is 2.9 % of the CR's population. The most populated is the Karlovarský District, where as at 31 December 2011 there were 118 452 inhabitants in total, of which 50.9 % (60 248) were women.

Our region ranks on the last place with the absolute number of births (3 014 persons) and deaths (3 080 persons). If we, however, compare the number of births per 1 000 inhabitants (9,9 persons) then our Region ranks on the 9th place in the CR. With the number of deaths per 1 000 inhabitants (10.1 persons) the Karlovarský Region ranks on the 7th place. In 2011, 2 402 persons moved in to the Karlovarský Region and 2 975 moved out of the region, the balance hence being negative (573 persons). The total increase in the Karlovarský Region is negative (639 persons).

Registered unemployment rate in the end of 2011 was 9,83 % and compared to 2010 it decreased by 1,56 percentage points. The lowest unemployment rate was in the Cheb District (7,97 %) then in the Karlovy Vary (9,57 %) and Sokolov Districts (12,29 %). In 2011 there were 17 447 (o 2 475 less than in 2010) unemployed job applicants per 1 088 job vacancies. The Karlovy Vary District had the most applicants (6 658 persons), then the Sokolov District (6 280 persons) and the least the Cheb District (4 509 persons). The biggest representation among the unemployed had job applicants with basic education (7 570 persons, i.e. 43.4 %) and vocational education (6 629 persons, i.e. 38.0 %). With regards to the age of the unemployed, the biggest representation had the 45 – 54 age group (22.5 %) and 25 – 34 age group (21.6 %). The average age of job applicants (38,9 years) decreased compared to the previous year by 0.2 years.

There were completed 626 dwellings, i.e. by 240 less than in 2010. Within the Region the of dwellings per 1 000 inhabitants was built in the Karlovy Vary District (2.5 dwellings), Cheb District (2.3 dwellings) and Sokolov (1,2 dwellings).

In 2011 health care in the Karlovarský Region was secured by 5 hospitals, 640 offices of physicians and other 155 health establishments. In total there were 1 273 doctors, of which 1 249 in non-state health establishments. In 2011 there were 89 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 2011 there were 709 733 guests in our region. If we recalculate guests per 1 000 inhabitants of the region, we get 2 341,1 guests. The share of foreigners, who visited the Karlovarský Region last year is 68.3 %. Our region is the number one in the CR in the number of over night stays per 1 000 inhabitants (14 419,1 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 47th time this year. Among other cultural or sport events belong for e.g. the Loket's Cultural Summer, Chopin Festival Mariánské Lázně and Canoe Mattoni.