

CHARAKTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Vysočina Region is situated in the centre of the CR. It borders the Jihočeský, Středočeský, Pardubický and Jihomoravský regions with which it establishes the NUTS2 area in order to get region development backing. It differs from the neighbouring regions by a dissected territory, higher altitude and low residential density. The disintegrated residential structure causes in some cases people to move away from smaller municipalities; young and qualified inhabitants often do so.

The Vysočina Region has an inland location and its borders do not touch the state borders of the CR. However, the southern part of the Region stretches to the zone that is close to the borders with Austria and that's why the Vysočina Region participates in the across-the-border projects along with the Jihočeský and Jihomoravský regions. The landscape of the territory is formed by the hills of the Czech-Moravian Highlands (Českomoravská vrchovina). The region is attractive for its rather low air pollution, relatively healthy forests and clean water resources and expanses of water that are important for water supply and distribution.

With its area (almost 6,800 sq km) the Region ranks the regions of above-average size; only 4 regions of the CR have a larger area. The highest point of the Region is Javořice in Javořícká vrchovina (the Peak Javořice in the Javořice Highlands, 837 m above sea level), while the lowest point (about 239 m above sea level) is the level of the Jihlava River at the point where it leaves the Region, which is to be found southwest of the Třebíč District. There are two protected landscape areas in the Region: Žďárské vrchy (the Žďár Hills) and Železné hory (the Iron Mountains). The Melechov Hill in the territory of the Havlíčkův Brod District is called in some sources a geographical centre of Europe.

As for administrative breakdown, the territory of the Vysočina Region comprises 5 districts, 15 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers and 26 administrative districts of municipalities with authorized municipal office. The basic self-governing unit is a municipality; there are 704 of them in the Region (as of 1 January 2005). The average population per municipality amounts to 731; it is the lowest of all the regions of the Czech Republic. The highest number of municipalities comprises those of population under 500. There are 34 municipalities with the status of town in the Region, and the number, in relation to the Region's area, falls slightly below the national average.

As of 1 January 2010, the Region's population was almost 515,000 which represents the third lowest population density among the regions in the CR. There is a slight female sex majority in the Region population. In 2009, the number of newly-born children slightly decreased; more remarkably did the number of divorces. Most couples divorced after 15 years or longer. Majority of mothers reached the age of 25-29 years when delivering their first child. Share of children born out of marriage is lower than in the other regions of the CR except for Zlínský Region, but it has also a growing tendency and in 2009 it reached 32,00%. Related to that there is also an increase of the number of single mothers.

The Business Register of the Region, which contains all identification numbers issued to organisations, comprised almost 101,000 businesses as at the end of 2009. This number placed the Region last but one in the CR, just ahead of the Karlovarský Region. It implies that there are not many business activities. The biggest number of businesses was reported for the Žďár nad Sázavou District (more than 23 thousand) and the lowest one for the Pelhřimov District (more than 15 thousand).

Economic performance of the Region in comparison with other regions of the CR is below the average. Share of the Region at GDP of the CR was during the last years about 4%. When calculating GDP per capita the Region ranks eleventh position. In 2009 this indicator was almost 271,000 CZK, i.e. more than 78% of the national average.

The 2009 average monthly gross wage in the Vysočina Region was more than 20,300 CZK. Average wages in the Region continue to be under the average of the CR. Big differences are also in average gross wages paid in individual branches of the Region's economy. The highest wages were paid in the branch of financial intermediation, while the lowest wages were in hotels and restaurants.

The registered rate of unemployment amounted to more than 10% at the end of 2009, being the seventh lowest in the entire CR. The highest rate was reported for the Třebíč District (almost 13%) while the lowest for the Pelhřimov District (7,5%). A year-on-year increase in unemployment was observed in almost all districts. The number of job applicants decreased against the year 2008 almost by 60%. There were 38 job applicants per vacancy. The offer for qualified labour force is not high.

The Vysočina Region continues with its tradition of agricultural production. Although the Region's natural conditions are below average (because the high altitude and slope relief of the territory

decrease production ability of lands) for some agricultural commodities and activities the territory of the Vysočina Region is optimal (production of potatoes, oil plants, pastoral farming). However, what is missing is economic and technical base for agricultural producers.

After a difficult transformation period the agriculture in the Region still has a large-scale sector of farming. Most agricultural enterprises focus on a combination of crop production and animal production; smaller production units of peasants are more specialised.

Total area of cereals in 2009 was more than 150,000 ha. Total harvest was almost 680,000 t; the average yield of cereals was 4,42 t per hectare. Total harvest of potatoes in the Region was 275,000 t, which is just about a third of the national production of potatoes. Harvest amount, area and hectare yield in potatoes approximately remained at the level of the preceding year.

In 2009, cattle farming intensity per 100 ha of agricultural land was in the amount of 57 heads; it was the highest of all the regions of the CR. Average annual yield of milk of 1 cow was almost 7,000 litres. With its meat production in the amount of more than 51,000 t (without poultry production) the Region ranked first in the Czech Republic.

Industrial enterprises got almost 90 billion CZK for their own goods and services in 2009, which was by 25.0% less than in 2008. The data apply to 145 enterprises with 100 or more employees. Industrial output in the Region includes engineering, metalworking, textile, wood- and food-processing industry. Industrial centres are former district towns and other towns with a good transport accessibility.

In 2009, almost 6,900 building permits were granted in the Vysočina Region for all types of buildings, which is by 5.0% less than in 2008. As for the dwellings started, the Region ranks twelfth among the 14 regions of the CR. Completed were more than 1,400 dwellings, which is a year-on-year by 20% less. Modernised were more than 300 dwellings.

The road and railway network in the Region is strategic from the national as well as European point of view. The territory is a part of Central-European urbanised axis (Berlin-Prague-Vienna/Bratislava-Budapest). D1 highway (in the network of European roads called E 50 and E 65) thus fulfils its function in national and European transport. Recently the good strategic location of the Region has attracted plenty of foreign investors who deploy not only production plants but also research and development units there.

The Region has a rather stabilised network of basic schools and a sufficient capacity of secondary schools. However, insufficient technical equipment of schools and ensuring of commute of children from small municipalities are problems.

An indisputable advantage of the Region is its relatively low crime rate and a low share of groups of inhabitants that are dangerous from social point of view.

The Region hosts several interesting cultural events – some of national or even international character. A meeting of choruses from all over the world is held in the town of Jihlava every year, accompanied by the international competition of mixed-voice chamber choruses called Mezinárodní festival sborového umění. An important organiser of cultural activities is the town of Telč. Besides the festival Prázdniny v Telči (Holidays in Telč), it also hosts other events such as Evropské setkání folklorních souborů (the European Meeting of Folklore Ensembles). Also Mezinárodní festival dokumentárního filmu (the International Documentary Festival) gained popularity; it takes place in Jihlava and prize for the best documentary of the year is awarded there.

The Vysočina Region is also attractive for its tourism opportunities available all-year-round. It is not only summer or winter stays to enjoy but also many cultural and historic buildings and monuments to see. The best snow conditions are at Žďárské vrchy – there you can ski at 700-820 m above sea level. Also Svratecká hornatina offers hills over 700 m above sea level. The biggest expanse of water in the Region is Velké Dářko Reservoir with 206 ha. The Dalešice Reservoir on the Jihlava River is the highest dam (100 m) in the Czech Republic. Sykovec is a pond with sand bed situated highest in the Českomoravská vrchovina Highlands (720 m above sea level).

Three historic buildings and monuments of the CR that are a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site are to be found in the Region: the Urban Conservation Area of Telč, the Church of St John of Nepomuk by the architect Giovanni Santini on a hill called Zelená Hora near the town Žďár nad Sázavou and the former Jewish ghetto with a cemetery and St. Procopius Basilica in Třebíč. The protected landscape areas of Žďárské vrchy and Železné hory mountain ranges, Mohelenská hadovcová step prairie, Velký Špičák hill and numerous natural areas comprise the landscape treasures of the Region. The future of tourism and travelling as such in the Vysočina Region is certain

to focus on urban tourism and forms of calm and environment-friendly dwelling-based tourism. The latter is enabled with a dense net of marked path (approximately 2 900 km), building cycle tracks and gradually developing farms with accommodation.