

2. AREA AND CLIMATE

The Czech Republic is a land-locked country lying in the central part of Europe in the middle of the Northern Temperate Zone of the Northern Hemisphere. Its area of 78 866 km², population of 10 486 731, and population density of 133 inhabitants per 1 km² rank the country 15th, 12th, and 8th among 27 countries of the European Union, respectively (as at 1 January 2011). The country borders make vicinity to Germany (810.3 km), Poland (761.8 km), Austria (466.3 km), and Slovakia (251.8 km).

Since 1 January 2000, the Czech Republic has had a new territorial structure. The former administrative districts have been grouped to make 14 administrative regions, including the Hl. m. Praha Region, which forms a separate region. Activities of the former district offices were terminated at the end of 2002, and a significant portion of their powers was delegated to 205 municipalities with extended powers, which began to function on 1 January 2003.

The main European watershed separating the basins of the North Sea, Baltic Sea, and the Black Sea passes through the territory of the Czech Republic. The divide node of the three seas is the mountain Klepáč (altitude 1 144 m) located in the massif of Králický Sněžník. The major rivers are the Labe River (370 km) and the Vltava River (433 km) in Bohemia, the Morava River (246 km) and the Dyje River (306 km) in Moravia, and the Odra River (135 km) and the Opava River (131 km) in Silesia and northern Moravia.

Geographically the Czech Republic lies on the boundary of two mountain systems, which differ in age and geological and geomorphological evolution. The western and middle areas of the Czech Republic are covered with the uplands of Česká vysočina, formed basically at the end of the Palaeozoic Era and being for the most part of a hilly nature, and with highlands (the mountain ranges of Šumava, Český les, Krušné hory, Krkonoše, Orlické hory, and Jeseníky). The mountains of Západní Karpaty, which gained its current appearance in the Tertiary Period (the mountain range of Beskydy), projects into the eastern part of the country. The boundary in between the two mountain systems is filled with a belt of valleys.

The climate in the Czech Republic is influenced by mutual penetration and mingling of ocean and continental effects. Prevailing westerly winds, intensive cyclonic activity causing frequent alternating of air masses, and relatively ample precipitation are characteristic for the climate. Maritime effects are mainly felt in Bohemia, whereas Moravia and Silesia are more affected by the continental climate. The Czech Republic climate is strongly influenced by the country altitude and geographical relief: 52 817 km² (66.97%) of the country territory is located at an altitude of up to 500 m, 25 222 km² (31.98%) lies at an altitude in between 500 and 1 000 m, and only 827 km² (1.05%) is at an altitude above 1 000 m. The average altitude of the Czech Republic is 430 m.

Also wild fauna and flora species of the Czech Republic bear evidence of the intersection of principal directions, in which wild fauna and flora species spread across Europe. Forests, mostly coniferous, cover 34% of the country area.

The soil mantle also features considerable variability in terms of both soil texture composition and occurrence of respective soil types. Brown soils (cambisols) are the most prevalent soil type in the Czech Republic.

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More detailed information is available in other CZSO publications issued in accordance with the Catalogue of Products 2012 in the thematic group CROSS-THEMATIC INFORMATION, subgroup Summary Data on the Czech Republic:

- 1301-12 "Population of Municipalities as at 1 January 2012" (preliminary data) – May 2012; and
- 1302-12 "Small Lexicon of Municipalities of the Czech Republic 2012" – December 2012.

Further data can be found published on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at:

- www.czso.cz/eng/redakce.nsf/i/regions_towns_
or on websites of other institutions at:
- www.chmi.cz/portal/dt?portal_lang=en&menu=JSPTabContainer/P1_0_Home
- Czech Hydrometeorological Institute
- www.vugtk.cz/e_index.html – Research Institute of Geodesy, Topography and Cartography (VUGTK, v.v.i.)