

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Vysočina Region is situated in the centre of the CR. It borders the Jihočeský Region, the Středočeský Region, the Pardubický Region, and the Jihomoravský Region. It establishes the NUTS2 cohesion region together with the Jihomoravský Region in order to get the Region's development backing. Elevation differences, higher altitude, and low residential density are characteristic for the Region. The disintegrated residential structure sometimes contributes to depopulation of smaller municipalities; young and qualified people leave.

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 therefore the Vysočina Region participates in cross-border cooperation activities together with the Jihočeský Region and the Jihomoravský Region. The landform of the Vysočina Region 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. A major European watershed as well as the historical border of Bohemia and Moravia extends across the Region from southwest to northeast.

With its area (almost 6 800 sq km) the Region ranks among the Regions of an above-average size; only 4 Regions of the CR have a larger area. The highest point of the Region is Javořice in Javořická vrchovina (the Javořice Peak in the Javořice Highlands, altitude 837 m) in southern part of the Jihlava District, while the lowest point (altitude about 239 m) is the level of the Jihlava River at the point where it leaves the Region, which is in the south-eastern part 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 Havlíčkův Brod District is called the geographical centre of Europe in some sources.

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 authority. The basic self-governing unit is a municipality; there are 704 of them in the Region (from 1 January 2005). The average population per municipality in the Vysočina Region amounts to 723, i.e. the least of all Regions of the Czech Republic. Municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants are most frequent in the Region. There are 34 municipalities with the status of town in the Region now, which is slightly below the national average with regards to the Region's area.

As at 1 January 2018, the Region's population was almost 509 000, which is the third lowest population density among the Regions of the CR. The proportion of urban population was almost 57% as at 31 December 2017. In 2017, the number of births slightly increased, the number of marriages increased, but the number of divorces increased too. The share of children born out of marriage is lower than in other Regions of the CR for a long time (except for the Zlínský Region, the Jihomoravský Region, and Prague); however, it has also a growing tendency and in 2017 it reached 44.4%.

As at 31 December 2017, 113.1 thousand businesses were registered in the Statistical Business Register, which contains all identification numbers issued to organisations. This number ranks the Region last but one within the CR, just ahead of the Karlovarský Region. With regard to the Region's population it means that entrepreneurial activity is rather low in the Region. The highest number of businesses was reported by the Žďár nad Sázavou District (25.8 thousand) and the lowest by the Pelhřimov District (17.4 thousand).

Economic performance of the Region is below the average in comparison with other Regions of the CR. The share of the Region in the GDP of the CR was about 4% over the last years. In 2017, the GDP per capita of the Region was more than CZK 392 000, i.e. about 82% of the national average.

The average gross monthly wage in the Vysočina Region in 2017 was CZK 26 162 (headcount), which was more than 2 thousand below the national average.

The proportion of unemployed persons in the population aged 15–64 years has reached the value of 3.80% and was the fifth highest in the Czech Republic at the end of 2017. The highest proportion was reported for the Třebíč District (4.86%), while the lowest for the Pelhřimov District (2.24%). The number of unemployed job applicants decreased by 16.5% in comparison with the year 2016. There were 2 job applicants per vacancy in the Vysočina Region as at 31 December 2017. The offer for qualified labour force is not high, but it has been slightly improving.

The Vysočina Region continues with its tradition of agricultural production. Although the Region's natural conditions are below average (because of 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, oleaginous crops, pastoral farming).

What continues to be characteristic for agriculture in the Region is large-scale production. Most agricultural enterprises focus on a combination of crop production and animal production; smaller production units of self-employed own-account farmers are more specialised.

The total area of cereals in 2017 was almost 134 000 ha, the total harvest reached 696 000 t, and the average per-hectare yield of cereals decreased to 5.21 t. The total harvest of potatoes in the Region was

249 000 t, which is over a third of the national production of potatoes. The area in potatoes remained almost the same as in the preceding year; however, the per-hectare yield has decreased by almost a ton and therefore the total harvest was lower.

In 2017, cattle livestock density per 100 ha of agricultural land reached 61 head; it was the highest of all the Regions of the CR. The average annual yield of milk of 1 cow reached 8 452 litres. With its meat production in the amount of 36 200 t (excluding poultry production) the Region ranked third in the Czech Republic.

Industrial enterprises made profits in the amount of more than CZK 158 billion for their own goods and services in 2017, which was by 4.0% more than in 2016. The data apply to 134 enterprises with 100+ employees. As for industrial production in the Region, especially the following are important: engineering, metalworking, textile, wood- and food-processing industry, and energy industry. Former District towns and other towns with good transport accessibility are industrial centres.

In 2017, 4 625 building permits were granted in the Vysočina Region for all types of buildings; it is about 1.5% increase compared to 2016. As for the dwellings started (1 354), the Region ranks tenth among the 14 Regions of the CR. 1 014 dwellings were completed in the Region, which is a 4.6% increase, year-on-year.

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). The D1 motorway (named E50 and E65 within the European road network) thus serves both the 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. There is one university in the Region: College of Polytechnics Jihlava, which was attended by 2.3 thousand students in the 2017/2018 academic year.

Health care in the Region concentrates in 6 hospitals (with 2 700 beds). Outpatient care is provided by 238 surgeries of general practitioners for adults, 97 surgeries of general practitioners for children, and about 240 surgeries of dentists.

The positive side of the Region includes low crime rate and low suicide rate in relation to the population.

The Region hosts several interesting cultural events some of which have national or even international character. For example, the Autumn Book Fair in Havlíčkův Brod has a long tradition. 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 the Choral Art Festival Jihlava; also the International Documentary Film Festival became popular. An important organiser of cultural activities is the town of Telč. Besides the festival Holidays in Telč, it also hosts other events such as the European Meeting of Folklore Ensembles. Traditional Folk Music Holiday Festival and a tramp band competition ("Náměšťská placka") take place in Náměšť nad Oslavou. The International Festival of Petr Dvorský is held in the chateau of Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou. One of the most popular sports facilities is the ski resort Nové Město na Moravě where widely known skiing events are held.

Accommodation establishments in the Region were visited by more than 563 000 guests in 2017. The Vysočina Region is also attractive for its tourism opportunities available all year round. Tourists can visit also many valuable cultural and historic sites. The best snow conditions are at Žďárské vrchy – there you can ski at an altitude of 700-800 m. There is also a substantial part of the capacity of collective accommodation establishments in this area. Higher altitudes of over 700 m are also in the hills of Jihlavské vrchy and Svratecká hornatina. The biggest expanse of water in the Region is Velké Dářko Reservoir (the largest pond in the Vysočina Region). The Dalešice dam on the Jihlava River with its 100 m high embankment is the highest earthfill dam in the Czech Republic.

The following three historic buildings and monuments that are inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List are in the Vysočina Region: the Historic Centre of Telč, the Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora near the town of Žďár nad Sázavou, and the Jewish Quarter with a cemetery and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč. In Pelhřimov, there is a unique Museum of Records and Curiosities. Natural riches of the Region consist of two protected landscape areas and numerous nature reserves. The future of tourism in the Vysočina Region lies in urban tourism and various forms of calm and environment-friendly dwelling-based tourism. It is supported by a dense net of trails (approximately 2 900 km) and by development of cycle routes (approximately 2 500 km).