

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

According to the valid law, the Jihomoravský Region comprises the Blansko District, the Brno-město District, the Brno-venkov District, the Břeclav District, the Hodonín District, the Vyškov District, and the Znojmo District; it is divided into 21 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers. With its area of 718 782 ha and the population of almost 1 183 thousand inhabitants the Region ranks fourth in the Czech Republic. From the geographical point of view, the Region has a rather favourable location, because it lies on a historical connection between the north and south of Europe. Within the EU, the Region neighbours with Slovakia and Austria; within the Czech Republic it neighbours with the Jihočeský Region, the Vysočina Region, the Pardubický Region, the Olomoucký Region, and the Zlínský Region. Various natural conditions in the Region naturally influence the way of the landscape utilisation and the way of life in a concrete locality. Four different characters of basic landscape types can be distinguished in the Region:

- Large cave complexes of the Moravian Karst (Moravský kras) in the northern part of the Region known especially thanks to the Macocha Abyss (138.5 m deep), hillsides, and a lot of protected localities. Many caves of this unique area, which belongs to the cleanest in the CR as for ecology, are accessible to the public and visited by plenty of Czech and foreign tourists.

- The southern part of the Region is mostly a flat area of fields, meadows, and vineyards with rests of bottomland forests alongside the Dyje River. The Podyjí National Park in the south-western corner of the Region is an example of an exceptionally well-preserved river valley in a richly wooded landscape. Many water bodies in the Dyje River between the towns of Znojmo and Břeclav have become an ideal nesting for the waterfowl. Symbols of this part of southern Moravia are: Pálava and the Lednice-Valtice area. Lovers of water sports and fishing visit every year the Nové Mlýny reservoir.

- Behind the Morava River, in the eastern part, the landscape gradually elevates to the hills of the White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty). This biospheric reservation belongs to the most precious natural areas in Europe.

- Although the landscape around the city of Brno is influenced by the existence of the large urban agglomeration, the surroundings of the city are considered to be one of the most beautiful in the CR. In the north, it is adjacent to the forests of the Moravian Karst; in the south, there are open flats of the southern Moravia and right at the borders of the city there is the Brno Dam.

There are two places on the territory of the Region, which are inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. First to be mentioned is the Lednice-Valtice area, which is an example of a system of forests, meadows, and water bodies marvellously complemented by romantic cathedrals, arbours, and, first of all, the chateaux of Lednice and Valtice. The Tugendhat Villa in the city of Brno is a unique example of functionalistic architecture of interwar period. What must not be missed out are two biospheric reservations declared by UNESCO: Dolní Morava and White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty).

The highest point in the Region (altitude 842 m) is in the Hodonín District on the mountainside of the mountain called Durda, which is on the border with the Zlínský Region and Slovakia. In the Břeclav District, you can find a municipality of Lanžhot, which is the most southern part of Moravia; on its territory there is the lowest point of the Region (altitude 150 m), which is located at the confluence of the Dyje River and the Morava River. The Jihomoravský Region has a rich history – there are archaeological sites, chateaux, castles, castle ruins, churches, and synagogues. Near the city of Brno, there is a battlefield of one of the bloodiest battles of Napoleon's wars known as the battle of the three emperors near Slavkov. The folk architecture can be seen in the Strážnice Open Air museum. There is also an abundance of folk feasts such as carnivals, feasts, building of maypoles, and fairs maintained in the Jihomoravský Region. The Region is also known for its tradition of viticulture (and viniculture) – there are several unique winery buildings. In Přímětice, there is one of the biggest cross-vaulted cellars in the world; however, ancient unique wine cellars close to the municipality of Petrov called Petrovské Plže and baroque cellars in Pavlov should not be missed out either.

Agricultural land comprises more than 60% of the Region's total area, of which 83% is arable land. The highest share of arable land in the agricultural land is in the Znojmo District and the Vyškov District. To go into detail, agriculture focuses on cereals, rape, and green and silage maize. Thanks to very favourable climatic conditions, the Jihomoravský Region has a long tradition and a high level of specialised agricultural production: viniculture, fruit-growing, and vegetable-growing. Over 90% of the area of the CR's total vineyards are in the Region. Viniculture is developed in the Břeclav District, the Hodonín District, the Znojmo District, and partially

also in the Brno-venkov District. As for the livestock production, the Jihomoravský Region ranks among the first places in farming of swine and poultry.

The Jihomoravský Region as a whole has a rather good quality of air. Air pollution, noise, and similar unfavourable influences are only of a local character, especially around large industrial centres. High levels of specific emissions are seen particularly in the neighbourhood of the city of Brno. What also contributes to the pollution is an increasing number of cars, especially in big towns and cities. An increasing number of municipalities are connected to sewerage systems with wastewater treatment plants; it is one of the many ways to improve heavy water pollution of the Morava River, the Dyje River, and the Svatka River. The issue of environmental protection is paid close attention to in the Region.

The Region's population was 1 183 207 as at 31 December 2017, which is 11.2% of the CR's total population. As for the breakdown by sex, females were prevailing; there were 1 039 females per 1 000 males in the Region. It is influenced primarily by the structure of the city of Brno, in which 1 071 females per 1 000 males live. Regarding the distribution of the population by age in 2017 when compared to 2016, there was a decrease in the 15–64 years age group (-0.5%), while an increase was observed in the 65+ years age group (+2.3%) and in the 0–14 years age group (+ 1.9%). The ratio of the 65+ years population to that under 15 years of age (the ageing index) amounted to 123.5 in 2017 (in 2016 it was 122.9). The ageing index for females in 2017 was 148.6, while for males it was only 95.5. The difference is caused mainly by a lower mean age of males at death.

An important part of regional cooperation, supported in particular by the Regional Authority of the Jihomoravský Region, is formation of microregions. The formation of microregions is an important and positive trend for common defending of interests and plans in particular in the rural communes with the aim to achieve desirable changes in all of the municipalities of a certain area. Recently, cross-border cooperation in the "Pomoraví" euroregion has been developing; the euroregion comprises Weinviertel, South Moravia, and Western Slovakia regions. Most of these areas are characterized by an intense agricultural activity with the exception of urban agglomerations of Vienna, Brno, and Bratislava, in which industrial and trade activities are concentrated. The following belong to the main priorities of development of the Jihomoravský Region: development of the "Pomoraví" euroregion and cross-border cooperation, support of the conceptual development of the area, development of cooperation on the euroregional level mainly in the domains of science, education, social services, culture, and sport.

The city of Brno is a natural catchment area of the entire southern Moravia; it is located at the confluence of the Svatka River and the Svitava River. Being an important regional centre, which is situated on the crossroads of motorways to Prague, Vienna, Bratislava, and Olomouc, it is a place where traditional international exhibitions and fairs take place thus highlighting the city's status of a busy international business centre. It is the second largest city in the Czech Republic, the importance of which reaches beyond local context: it is a seat of many institutions of national importance, especially judiciary; it is also an important centre of culture and higher education.

The number of employees in enterprises that have their workplaces located in the Region decreased in 2016. The average wage of an employee of CZK 25 905 per headcount person ranks the Region below the national average (CZK 26 843).

According to results of the Labour Force Sample Survey, the level of economic activity of the Region's population is slightly below the average of the Czech Republic; the number of people employed in the Jihomoravský Region in 2017 remained at almost the same level as in the previous year. Most people are employed in manufacturing (152.7 thousand persons) and in business operations (60.5 thousand persons).

According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the number of job applicants in 2017 decreased. The share of unemployed persons (4.60%) still belonged to the highest in the CR. The Jihomoravský Region ranked twelfth of the 14 regions. The number of vacancies increased by a half. In average, there are 2 job applicants for a vacancy in the Region.

As for transport, the Jihomoravský Region has an important transit function. The backbone of the transport system consists of class I motorways D1 and D2 and class II motorways D46 and D52. The city of Brno is an important transport junction of the road, motorway, and rail transport and of the integrated transport system of

the Region. The civil airport in Brno–Tuřany can accept all types of aircrafts all the year round. Two main railway corridors, which interconnect EU countries, go through the Region and the city of Brno is a member of an association of European towns in the interest of which is to build a fast railway. Especially road transport intensity increases, which is clear from the number of registered passenger cars (574 thousand) and trucks (79 thousand) in the Region in 2017. The dense road transport network consists of motorways and roads in the total length of 4.4 thousand km.

In terms of international tourism, a prime role is played by the natural and cultural heritage areas in the Region, namely the Lednice–Valtice Cultural Landscape, the Moravian Karst (Moravský kras), and the Slavkov (Austerlitz) Battlefield. The city of Brno plays a similar cultural role with its national heritage buildings and monuments. One of the most attractive landscape areas is the Podyjí National Park. Much cultural and social attractiveness attracts visitors to the territory of the Region, which is of a high benefit for the development of tourism. From this point of view, viniculture tourism is one of advantages of the Region. The Region draws its unique character from folklore and folk culture. In this sense, also the influence of cycling is positive in the southern part of Moravia, namely in international context (Moravian–Silesian long-distance cycle track, Greenways, Amber cycle track, and a cycle track from the city of Brno to Vienna are there). The importance of Masaryk's circuit should not be missed out either, as it attracts many fans of motor racing from the CR and abroad every year.

Accommodation services are offered by 805 accommodation establishments such as hotels, motels, and camps, in which over 1.9 million guests (including 33.8% of foreigners) were accommodated in 2017.

Health care in the Region is ensured by 23 hospitals with a total of 7 455 beds (in all departments) as well as by a sufficient number of other independent health establishments, independent surgeries, and pharmacies or dispensaries.

What is positive in the Region is the sufficient network of pre-school and school establishments. Pre-school children attend 667 nursery schools; basic education is provided in 482 basic schools from which most pupils continue their study in 125 secondary schools. The network of schools usually covers the requirements for placement of children; however, some inadequacies still occur. The effort of the secondary and vocational education is to ensure interconnection of the offer of secondary education and the needs of the labour market.

The education level of the Region's population is above average, which is also contributed to by a high quality of the system of tertiary education. The necessary education is provided to students in public or private universities in the city of Brno, the town of Znojmo, and the municipality of Lednice; the University of Defence in Brno should also be mentioned.