

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Karlovarský Region is in particular famous for its spas. There is not only one of the CR's most famous spa 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 healing springs, the Region is rich with its natural mineral waters of which Mattoni is the most famous one. In connection with spa industry what is also very popular are the Carlsbad spa wafers, a sweet adored not only by local inhabitants but mainly by spa guests from all over the world. The town of Karlovy Vary is also famous for its Becherovka herbal liqueur and the art of glassmakers from the Moser Company. The town of Chodov was made famous by peach-blow exported to the whole world. As for culture, it is mainly the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival where domestic and foreign creators meet.

The Karlovarský Region is located in the west of the Czech Republic and was established by the split of the Západočeský Region to form the Karlovarský Region and the Plzeňský Region. In the north and in the west it is the state border with Germany, in the east it neighbours with the Ústecký Region and in the south with the Plzeňský Region. Along with the Ústecký Region it forms the Severozápad Cohesion Region. The Krušné hory mountains are stretching along the state border across the two regions. The highest point is Klínovec (altitude 1 244 m) in the Karlovy Vary District as well as the lowest point of the Region (altitude 320 m), which is on the Ohře River on the border of the Region. The Ohře River 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 Teplá River, which flows into the Ohře River 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 precipitated from hot Karlovy Vary springs for centuries. Their water contains a lot of dissolved minerals and gases (mainly carbon dioxide). Works of art and souvenirs, tasteful paperweights, and ashtrays are made from the bigger pieces, smaller ones 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 clays that contributed to a high number of porcelain manufactures almost all over the Region. However, the Karlovarský Region is the most famous all over the world for its mineral and healing waters, which enabled the origin of the aforementioned spas.

The Region is formed by 3 districts – the Cheb District, the Karlovy Vary District, and the Sokolov District with 134 municipalities in total that are further divided into 527 parts. With its area (3 310 km<sup>2</sup>) the Karlovarský Region is one of the smallest; it takes only 4.2% of the whole territory of the CR. The largest district is the Karlovarský District (45.6% of the Region's area) with the biggest number of municipalities (56) and the biggest share of inhabitants living in the Region (39.0%). The Sokolov District and the Cheb District are comparable as for their number of municipalities and area. In total, there are 38 towns in the Region. In towns of the Karlovy Vary District 93 800 inhabitants lived as at 31 December 2017; in the Sokolov District it was 72 758 inhabitants and in the Cheb District 76 426 inhabitants. As at 31 December 2017, 295 686 inhabitants lived in municipalities of the Karlovarský Region, which was 2.8% of the CR's population. The most populated is the Karlovarský District, where 115 328 inhabitants lived in total, of which 50.8% (58 579) were women.

The Region is the last one in the CR as for its number of births (2 753) and deaths (3 406). When we compare the number of births per 1 000 population (9.3), the Karlovarský Region is the last one of the regions of the CR, too. With the number of deaths per 1 000 population (11.5) is the first one in the ČR. In 2017, 3 081 persons moved into the Karlovarský Region and 3 491 moved out of the Region, the balance hence being negative (410 persons). The total population change in the Karlovarský Region was negative, too (1 063 persons).

The share of unemployed persons (the share of available job applicants aged 15–64 years in the whole population of the same age) was 3.47% in the Karlovarský Region. The lowest share of unemployed persons was in the Cheb District (2.17%) followed by the Karlovy Vary District (3.39%) and the Sokolov District (4.90%). In 2017, there were 7 488 (by 4 308 less than in 2016) unemployed job applicants per 6 503 job vacancies. The Sokolov District had the most applicants (3 143 persons), followed by the Karlovy Vary District (2 847 persons), while the least were from the Cheb District (1 498 persons). The biggest proportion of the unemployed belonged to job applicants with primary education and no education (3 976 persons, i.e. 53.1%) and secondary vocational education and secondary education without A-level examination (2 313 persons, i.e. 30.9%). With regards to the age of the unemployed, the biggest proportion belonged to the 45–54 years age group (24.0%), the 35–44 years age group (21.8%),

*and the 25–34 years age group (18.6%). The average age of job applicants (43.3 years) increased by 1.5 years compared to the previous year.*

*In total, 375 dwellings were completed in 2017, i.e. by 126 more than in 2016. When we survey the number of completed dwellings per 1 000 mid-year population, the highest value of this indicator is reported by the Karlovy Vary District (1.60 dwellings) and the lowest by the Sokolov District (0.96 dwellings).*

*One of the most important industries in the Karlovarský Region is tourism. The Region is the target destination for guests from the CR and abroad mainly due to its spas. In 2017, there were 1 038 270 guests in the Region. If we recalculate guests per 1 000 population of the Region, we get 3 506.1 guests. The share of foreigners, who visited the Karlovarský Region last year is 63.1%. The Region is the number one in the CR in the number of overnight stays per 1 000 population (17 428.8 guests). In connection with the spa tourism there is an adequate amount of cultural establishments and conservation areas on the territory of the Karlovarský Region. These are completed with the offers of the spa symphonic orchestras and several festivals; the most famous is the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Other cultural or sport events are, for example, the Chopin Festival Mariánské Lázně and Canoe Mattoni.*