

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Plzeňský Region lies in the southwest of the Czech Republic, bordering the Federal Republic of Germany (Bavaria) in the west, the Karlovarský Region in the northwest, the Středočeský Region in the northeast, and the Jihočeský Region in the southeast.

The area of 7,649 km² ranks the Region the third largest among Regions of the CR, while as for population it ranks eighth. The Region comprises seven Districts: Domažlice, Klatovy, Plzeň-město, Plzeň-jih, Plzeň-sever, Rokycany, and Tachov. Their characteristics vary significantly from one District to another in terms of landscape character, population size and structure, economic potential, as well as the size and density of settlements.

It is the landscape relief that accounts for the variability of natural conditions, in particular. Geographically, the Region breaks up into several areas: Plzeňská pahorkatina (the Pilsen Uplands), a part of Brdská vrchovina (the Brdy Highlands), Český les and Šumava (the Bohemian Forest and the Šumava Mountains); climatic, geological, and hydrological conditions of the respective areas differ to a great degree.

Mineral reserves, which are crucial for the development of manufacturing, are located particularly in the central parts surrounding the city of Plzeň (Pilsen). It regards resources of coal, heat-resistant and ceramic clays, and building stone. In the Šumava foothill area, there are resources of limestone. As for agriculture, there are quite favourable conditions for farming in the Region. The agricultural land covers about 49.3% of the total area, of which arable land makes 66.9%. Forestry is characterised by sufficient natural resources of wood, as forest land covers 40.4% of the total area of the Region (large forests are particularly in Šumava, Český les, and Brdská vrchovina). As for the volume of coniferous roundwood removals, the Region ranks seventh within the CR.

The environment of the Region is of good quality when compared to other Regions of the CR. Specific emissions according to REZZO 1–4 in the Region are lower than the national average. In 2017, specific emissions of sulphur dioxide were 0.55 t/km² (i.e. 41.1% of specific emissions in the CR), specific emissions of nitrogen oxides were 0.88 t/km² (i.e. 44.1% of the national level), specific emissions of carbon monoxide were 5.51 t/km² (i.e. 60.9% of the national level), and solid emissions were 0.50 t/km² (i.e. 71.7% of the national level).

The least damaged areas comprise the mountainous parts of Šumava, Český les, western parts of Brdská vrchovina, and the areas surrounding the municipalities of Manětín and Nečtiny. The environment protection in Šumava is ensured by the following organisations: the Šumava National Park and the Šumava Protected Landscape Area. There are five protected landscape areas (Šumava, Český les, Slavkovský les, Brdy and Křivoklátsko) and 193 small-size protected areas in the Region.

The city of Plzeň and its surroundings, where the environment is severely damaged, are an exception. Specific emissions reported for the Plzeň-město District are several times higher than the national average. The city of Plzeň and its surroundings suffer the effects of a high concentration of industrial activities and heavy road traffic. The overloaded road network makes the quality of the environment much worse due to emissions of nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons and noise. Mining or quarrying activities devastated the most the areas in the surroundings of the following municipalities: Nýřany, Tlučná, Vejprnice, Břasy, Radnice, Stříbro, and Ejpovice.

The road network in the Plzeňský Region consists of 5,120.4 km of roads and motorways, of which 415.0 km are first class roads, 1,493.0 km second class roads, and 3,103.2 third class roads. The Plzeňský Region has 109.2 km of motorways, most of which are in the Tachov District (44.7 km), the Rokycany District (25.9 km), and the Plzeň-sever District (18.9 km). Length of railways in the Region was 705.4 km as at 31 December 2018.

What is typical for the Plzeňský Region is a high number of small settlements that are scattered about the Region; since medium-sized towns are missing, the structure of centres is atypical in comparison to other parts of the CR. The city of Plzeň with its 172 441 population contrasts with small municipalities, as it is the second most important centre of Bohemia, right behind Prague. The Plzeňský Region comprises 57 towns, in which 391,500 population live (67.0% of the Region's total population).

Based on Act No 314/2002 Sb on determination of municipalities with authorised municipal authorities and municipalities with extended powers, the Czech Republic has from 1 January 2003 a new administrative structure: it is divided into 205 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers. The Decree of the Ministry of the Interior No 388/2002 Sb determined administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority and administrative districts of municipalities with

extended powers. After the end of activity of district authorities (as at 31 December 2002) an important part of their powers was thus shifted to municipalities with extended powers. The Plzeňský Region was divided into 15 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers under which 35 administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority come. The following belong to the municipalities with extended powers: Blovice, Domažlice, Horaždovice, Horšovský Týn, Klatovy, Kralovice, Nepomuk, Nýřany, Plzeň, Přeštice, Rokycany, Stod, Stříbro, Sušice, and Tachov.

Main settlements in the Region lie on development lines of regional importance and on the western radial route, which connects Plzeň and Praha and is directing through a corridor to the border with Germany. Out of these hubs, there are sparsely inhabited territories with prevailing residential and agricultural function, with insufficiently developed social and technical infrastructure, and limited transport services. The following will contribute to revitalization of these settlements: establishment of small businesses, revival of crafts, and development of services related to tourism. Municipalities associate to form microregions in order to enable at least partial implementation of some activities.

Within the period of 1990–2018, housing construction intensity peaked in 2008. The number of completed dwellings per 1 000 mid-year population was 4.70. In the year 2018, the value of the housing construction intensity amounted to 4.16.

The population of 584,672 inhabitants ranks the Region seventh smallest in the Czech Republic (as at 31 December 2018), making up 5.5% of the CR's total population. However, the population is distributed very unevenly over the Region. Almost 30% of the population live in the city of Plzeň and another 23.2% is concentrated into 16 towns of 5,000+ inhabitants. About 14.3% of the population live in smaller towns under 5,000 inhabitants.

The Plzeňský Region has the third lowest population density in the CR, which amounts to 76.4 inhabitants per km² (the population density of the CR is 135.0 inhabitants per km²). Within the Region, the lowest density is reported for the Tachov District and the Klatovy District (38.9 and 44.4 inhabitants per km², respectively).

Regarding the distribution of the population by age, the Region ranks among the oldest ones in the CR - the 2018 average age amounted to 42.7 years. In the Klatovy District, the average age was even 43.7 years. On the contrary, the lowest average age (41.7 years) was in the Tachov District. A high share of senior population in the Plzeňský Region is reflected also in the ageing index (i.e. the ratio of the 65+ years population to that under 15 years of age). In 2018, the value of the index amounted to 129.7, which is the sixth highest figure in the CR (the ageing index in the CR was 123.2). The highest values of the index were reported by the following Districts: the Klatovy District (145.7), the Plzeň-město District (135.1), and the Rokycany District (131.8). On the contrary, the lowest value was reported by the Tachov District (113.1).

The population of the Czech Republic increased by 39,745 inhabitants in 2018 (when compared to 2017). The number of live-born children in the CR decreased by 369 children, year-on-year (i.e. a decrease by 0.3%). In 2018, population of the CR increased thanks to net migration (38,629 persons) and the natural population change, which amounted to 1,116 persons.

The population of the Plzeňský Region increased by 3,856 inhabitants in 2018 (when compared to 2017). The number of live-born children only increased by 16 children, year-on-year (i.e. an increase by 0.3%). The natural population change (a decrease) amounted to -194 persons. The population of the Plzeňský Region increased thanks to net migration, which amounted to 4,050 persons.

As for the number of live births (10.4 per 1,000 mid-year population), the figure for the Plzeňský Region was lower when compared to the national average in 2018. In relative terms, the highest number of live births was in the Plzeň-město District (11.0), the Tachov District (10.5) and the Rokycany District (10.5). As for abortions (27.3 per 100 births), the Plzeňský Region ranks the fifth lowest in the CR. Compared to the previous year, the number of abortions per 100 births decreased by 5.5. Compared to the CR, the abortion rate in the Plzeňský Region was lower; per 100 births, there were by 1.5 abortions less in the Plzeňský Region in comparison to the CR. Higher abortion rate in comparison to the regional average was achieved in the Klatovy District (38.0), the Domažlice District (33.9).

As for the number of marriages per 1,000 mid-year population (5.2) the Plzeňský Region was comparable to the national average (5.1). In relative terms, most marriages were concluded in the Domažlice District (5.6) Rokycany District (5.4) and Tachov District (5.4). The divorce rate in the Plzeňský Region (2.4) was comparable to the national average (2.3). In relative terms, most

marriages were divorced in the Rokycany District (2.7) and in the Plzeň-jih District (2.6), while the least (2.2) in the Domažlice District and Klatovy District.

In 2018, the share of the Plzeňský Region in the total gross domestic product of the Czech Republic at current prices was 4.9%. In GDP per capita (CZK 449,822) it ranked fifth in comparison with other Regions of the CR.

Important food enterprises in the Plzeňský Region are: Plzeňský Prazdroj a.s. (founded in 1842) - the biggest Czech beer exporter (which is a part of Asahi Group Holdings, Ltd. - a Japanese beer brewing company); Stock Plzeň a.s., a traditional producer of spirits (nowadays the biggest producer of spirits in the Czech Republic), and Bohemia Sekt Českomoravská vinařská a.s. in Starý Plzenec - an important wine producer.

Engineering belongs to important industries in the Region; it is associated especially with the name of Škoda. The following belong to the key assortment produced by Škoda: facilities for both classical and nuclear power engineering and petrochemistry, products of ironworks and forges, heavy machine tools, rolling mill equipment, sugar mill equipment, hydraulic and curing presses, gear units, rail vehicles, trolleybuses, drive motors, and various types of steam turbines. Own research and a trading company are also developing there. Other important industrial enterprises, which have an influence on the Region's economy are: DIOSS Nýřany a.s., producing products from metal sheets and tubes, Okula Nýrsko a.s., plastics processor, and LASSELSBERGER s.r.o., which represents ceramics manufacturing.

Thanks to its location, the Plzeňský Region is attractive for foreign investors. A dominant position among foreign investors belongs to Japanese plant Panasonic AVC Networks Czech s.r.o. producing flat panel display screens. Other important foreign companies are: VISHAY ELECTRONIC s.r.o., a company producing electronic parts, BORGERS CS spol. s r.o. producing textiles and textile floor coverings for the automotive industry, MD ELECTRONIC spol. s r.o. producing cable jumpers, and Daikin Industries Czech Republic s.r.o. producing heat pumps, air conditioning, and ventilation systems.

Cross-border cooperation with the neighbouring Bavaria within Euroregions helps to reduce socio-economic differences. It is the Domažlice District and the Klatovy District (Euroregion Šumava), and the Tachov District (Euroregion Egrensis) participating in the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme.

The 2017 number of employees in the Region amounted to 221.8 thousand headcount persons (by the so-called workplace method incl. enterprises with less than 20 employees, according to preliminary data), which is 38.2% of the Region's total population. The average wage per headcount person amounted to CZK 28 220 (according to preliminary data). The Plzeňský Region ranked third behind the Hl. m. Praha Region and the Středočeský Region. The average wage, however, was by 1.7% lower than the national average.

According to the Statistical Business Register, there were 147,014 businesses in the Plzeňský Region as at 31 December 2018, most of which were natural persons (78.5%). Most of the businesses (37.6%) have their seat in the Plzeň-město District. As for employment, a major role in the Region is played by 61 businesses with 500+ employees, of which 25 businesses employ over 1,000 employees.

The following organisations and companies in the Region have rather high numbers of employees: LASSELSBERGER, s.r.o., VISHAY ELECTRONIC spol. s r.o., Statutární město Plzeň, IDEAL AUTOMOTIVE Bor, s.r.o., HP-PELZER s.r.o., International Automotive Components Group s.r.o., Plzeňský Prazdroj, a.s., BORGERS CS spol. s r.o., Západočeská univerzita v Plzni, MD ELEKTRONIK spol. s r.o. and Fakultní nemocnice Plzeň.

Within the CR, the Plzeňský Region ranks among Regions with rather low share of the unemployed. There were 9,009 job applicants kept in the labour office register as at 31 December 2018 in the Region. Compared to other Regions of the CR, the Plzeňský Region reports the second lowest share of the unemployed (2.12%). The highest share of the unemployed was reported for the Tachov District and the Rokycany District (2.86% and 2.48%, respectively), while the lowest was in the Plzeň-jih District (1.71%), and the Plzeň-město District (1.79%).

There were 34,866 vacancies kept in the labour office register in the Plzeňský Region (as at 31 December 2018), i.e. approximately 0.3 job applicants per vacancy. The worst ratio was in the Klatovy District (0.6 job applicants per vacancy). Graduate and juvenile job applicants accounted for 4.5% of the Region's total number of unemployed job applicants kept in the labour office register.

There are 10 hospitals with 3,321 beds in total (in all departments) in the Region. Some of the therapeutic institutions for long-term patients became parts of hospitals and they are not registered separately any more. The network of pre-school and school facilities comprises 276 nursery schools, 222 basic schools, 15 grammar schools, 44 programmes of technical (vocational) education (at schools excluding follow-up courses). University education in the Region is provided at the Západočeská univerzita v Plzni (University of West Bohemia in the city of Plzeň) by its 9 faculties (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Health Care Studies, and Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art). Students can also study at the Faculty of Medicine in Plzeň (which belongs to the Charles University in Prague), further in a university centre in Pilsen (which belongs to the Metropolitan University Prague), and in Klatovy in a consulting centre of the Faculty of Economics and Management (which is a part of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague).

The Region has favourable conditions for tourism. The city of Plzeň offers many historic landmarks; also its historic underground is interesting (it has 20 km and belongs to the largest in Central Europe). As for natural points of interest, there is the Bolevec lake system in Plzeň, which is from technical as well as landscape point of view a unique late Gothic work from the 15th century. There is a dense network of recreation and hiking trails in the Region. Other frequently visited places are the zoological and botanical gardens of the city of Plzeň and hills in its surroundings: Krkavec, Chlum, and Sylván with outlook towers.

As for other monuments of cultural heritage, there is Manětín baroque chateau, the Plasy Monastery (a national cultural monument), the remains of Radyně and Buben Gothic castles, Kaceřov Renaissance chateau, remains of Rabštejn nad Střelou castle, Horšovský Týn Renaissance chateau, water castle at Švihov, Kozel State Chateau, Nebílovy baroque chateau, Lužany Chateau, Kladruby Monastery, Kašperk Castle, remains of Libštejn Gothic castle, and many others. Also the town of Domažlice and its traditional summer Chod Festival (in August) attract attention of many visitors.

Excellent conditions for summer and winter recreation are in the Šumava Mountains thanks to hiking trails and cycling tracks. For downhill and cross-country skiing there are many ski slopes that are taken care of as well as tracks for cross-country skiing. For recreation and improvement of health condition one can stay at Konstantinovy Lázně spa that focuses on prophylaxis, treatment, and rehabilitation regarding cardiovascular diseases, the locomotive system, and the respiratory system. Other places in the Region suitable for recreation include the Hracholusky Reservoir and the Berounka River often visited by water sportsmen.