

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Ústecký Region lies in the northwest of the Czech Republic along its north-western border with the Federal Republic of Germany, namely with the Free State of Saxony. The Region's neighbours are also the Liberecký Region in the northeast, the Karlovarský Region and partly the Plzeňský Region in the west, and the Středočeský Region in the southeast.

The landform of the Region is very diverse in terms of geography; the nature is varied and manifold. Along the borders with Germany the area is surrounded by the Ore Mountains (Krušné hory), the Elbe Sandstone Rocks (or Labské pískovce in Czech), and the Lužice Mountains. The Ore Mountains are very old; they are formed mainly of volcanic rocks or Palaeozoic schist. The south-eastern part of the Region consists of plains that originate from Mesozoic era – the so-called Česká křídová tabule (Czech Cretaceous Formation) – from which the hill of Říp rises (it is associated with a famous legend about ancestors coming to Bohemia) and also the České Středohoří (the Bohemian Low Mountain Range) with its highest peak Milešovka. The České Středohoří originated from a volcanic activity in the Tertiary era and has a unique landscape character with many contrasts and picturesque secluded spots. The highest point on the territory of the Region lies on the hillside of the highest peak of the Ore Mountains – Klínovec – the top of which is located already on the territory of the Karlovarský Region. Not taking into account bottoms of surface mines, the lowest point of the Region is the surface of the Labe (Elbe) River at Hřensko (altitude 115 m), which is at the same time the lowest point of the Czech Republic. The Labe River is the largest watercourse on the territory of the Region; from the left, the second biggest tributary – Ohře – and also the Bílina River flow to it. From the right, the Ploučnice River flows to Labe; the last tributary from the right on our territory is the Kamenice River. Also mineral and thermal springs can be found in the Region. The biggest expanse of water is the Nechranická reservoir built on the Ohře River in the western part of the Region.

The area of the Region is 5 335 square kilometres, which is 6.8% of the Czech Republic's total area. Agricultural land covers nearly 52% of the Region's territory, forests cover almost 31%, and bodies of water 2% of the territory.

The Ústecký Region is varied as for natural conditions as well as in terms of its economic structure, density of settlement, and condition of the environment. Historically, the economic importance of the Region is based on a considerable amount of its raw materials, especially large deposits of brown coal, which lie close to the surface. The brown coal basin stretches under the hillsides of the Ore Mountains from the town of Ústí nad Labem to Kadaň. There are also other important raw materials, which are mined in the Region, e.g. glass and foundry sands of good quality and a building stone. Four distinct areas can be defined in the Region that differ much one from another. It is an area with highly developed industrial production, which is concentrated primarily in the foothills of the Ore Mountains (in the Chomutov District, the Most District, the Teplice District, and partially also the Ústí nad Labem District). As for industries, an important position belongs to the energy industry, coal mining, mechanical engineering, chemical industry, and glass industry. Other important areas are around Litoměřice and Louny, which are known for their production of hops and vegetables. Especially areas along the Labe River and the Ohře River are well-known fruit-growing regions (the so-called Garden of Bohemia). Grapes grown in the Litoměřice area have excellent reputation. During recent years, the area around Most has become a known wine-growing region, in which vine is grown mainly on lands that were reclaimed after brown coal mining. The Ore Mountains area is a mountain range with sparse population and limited economic activities; the area around Děčín is neither an area with concentration of heavy industry nor an agricultural area. Its northern part called Šluknovsko is a typical peripheral territory (remote and difficult to access from central parts of the Region).

The Ústecký Region is divided into seven Districts (the Děčín District, the Chomutov District, the Litoměřice District, the Louny District, the Most District, the Teplice District, and the Ústí nad Labem District) comprising 354 municipalities of various sizes, of which 59 have a status of town. As at 1 January 2003, the second phase of the state administration reform came into force, which determined in a decree administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers and administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority including their seats. As of that date, 16 administrative districts of municipalities with extended powers originated in the Ústecký Region: Bílina, Děčín, Chomutov, Kadaň, Litoměřice, Litvínov, Louny, Lovosice, Most, Podbořany, Roudnice nad Labem, Rumburk, Teplice, Ústí nad Labem, Varnsdorf, and Žatec as well as 30 administrative districts of municipalities with authorised municipal authority.

As at the end of 2018, the Ústecký Region had 820 789 inhabitants and thus it ranks fifth in the Czech Republic. Its population density (154 inhabitants per square kilometre) is higher than the national average (135 inhabitants per sq km) and the Region is the fourth densest area after the Capital City of Prague, the Moravskoslezský Region, and the Jihomoravský Region. The densest settlement is in the brown coal basin under the Ore Mountains, a lower density is in the area of the Ore Mountains and the Louny District and the Litoměřice District, in which predominantly smaller country seats are placed. The town of Ústí nad Labem

with 92 952 inhabitants is the largest municipality and at the same time the seat of the Region. What is characteristic for the Region is its relatively young population; the average age is 42 years. The Ústecký Region ranks the second lowest in the number of live births per 1 000 population (9.9) but there is the second highest mortality rate in the Czech Republic (11.4 deaths per 1 000 population). The Ústecký Region ranks first in the number of divorces per 1 000 population (2.6) and first in the number of abortions per 100 live births (41.0).

In 2018, the Region's gross domestic product accounted for 5.5% of the CR's GDP; converted to GDP per capita, it amounts to 71.7% of the national average and ranks thirteenth in the CR. Among the most important employers of the Ústecký Region are: Mostecká uhelná společnost, Severočeské doly (coal mining companies), Chemopetrol (petrochemical company), and Krajská zdravotní, a.s., which has associated the following hospitals since 2007: the hospital in Děčín, Masaryk's hospital in Ústí nad Labem, the hospital in Teplice, the hospital in Most, and the hospital in Chomutov.

Industrial activity from the past had and still has an unfavourable influence on the quality of the environment. Strongly developed surface mining had severely damaged the natural landscape character, which has been gradually recovering only thanks to a costly reclamation. Well-known are also problems with the emission situation in the Region. It has much improved during the last decade (it can be proved by a decreasing amount of emissions); however, the Region is still perceived as an area with the most damaged environment. It has the inglorious primacy in specific emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.

A part of the territory of the Region is covered by the České Švýcarsko (Czech Switzerland) national park with the area of 7 926 hectares that was founded in 2000 and also by the following protected landscape areas: České Středoohoří (the Bohemian Midlands), Labské pískovce (the Elbe Sandstone Rocks), Kokořínsko, and the Lužice Mountains. One can find there 175 small protected landscape areas that cover the area of 9 338 hectares.

From the labour force sample survey it results that there are almost 385 thousand employed persons in the Region most of whom work in the processing industry (101 thousand persons as for the CZ-NACE classification). In 2018, the average gross monthly wage in the Region reached CZK 29 404 (per FTE person), which is by CZK 2 481 less than the national average and the Region ranks eighth among all the Regions of the CR. Decrease in coal mining, restructuring of enterprises, slowing down of productions and agriculture cause that in the national comparison the Ústecký Region has had the highest share of unemployed persons for a long time (4.50%; 3.07% in the CR as at 31 December 2018).

In the Statistical Business Register, almost 176 thousand enterprises, organisations, and entrepreneurs were registered in the end of 2018. The biggest part comprised of private entrepreneurs in business under the Trade Act unincorporated in the Commercial Register (more than 139 thousand). From the point of view of the CZ-NACE classification, most entities dealt with wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, and repair of personal and household goods.

A network of educational establishments in the Region comprises 359 nursery schools, 281 basic schools, 95 secondary technical schools and grammar schools. Two universities provide university education in the Region: the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and the College of Applied Psychology in Terezín.

Basic health care in the Region is provided by a network of outpatient care establishments and pharmacies. Medical care is provided in 19 hospitals with 5 298 beds. The most important health care establishment in the Region is Krajská zdravotní, a.s., which has associated hospitals in Děčín, in Ústí nad Labem, in Teplice, in Most, and in Chomutov. The follow-up care and physiotherapeutic care are provided in 7 specialised therapeutic institutions with 802 beds.

The Region has an important location in terms of transport within the European Union. The important E55 international motorway runs through the Teplice District and the Litoměřice District, linking the north and south of Europe, and continuing from the town of Lovosice as the D8 motorway. At the end of 2006, a new segment of the D8 motorway over Krušné hory with a direct connection to the German A17 motorway was open to traffic. Another important route is the road leading along Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) to the northern part of the Liberecký Region. The route stretching from the Federal Republic of Germany via Chomutov and Louny to Prague is of equal importance. The international railroad from the Federal Republic of Germany via the town of Ústí nad Labem to Prague is the main railway route in the Region. The Labe River is the most important waterway in the Czech Republic and enables shipping to Hamburg, a port in the North Sea.

Due to its rich history of settlement, the Ústecký Region has a great number of historic buildings and monuments. Some of the best known are, for example, the Romanesque rotunda on the hill of Říp, the Gothic church in Most, the baroque chateau in Duchcov, the monasteries in Osek and Doksany, and

chateaux in Ploskovice and Libochovice. Litoměřice, Úštěk, and Terezín were designated urban conservation areas and the centre of Roudnice nad Labem is a conservation area. Several villages in the Litoměřice area were selected to become rural conservation areas. There are painting collections of great worth in the Litoměřice picture gallery. On Litoměřice exhibition grounds various types of actions take place throughout the year. The most famous are, for example, the Garden of Bohemia (Zahrada Čech) sales exhibition focusing on growing of fruits and vegetables or a fair specialising in domestic equipment and construction goods called My house, my castle (Můj dům, můj hrad in Czech). To mention some of the beauties of nature, the best known is the České Švýcarsko national park (the Bohemian Switzerland) with its famous Pravčická brána (the Pravčice Gate), a lovely Gate to Bohemia (Porta Bohemica) along the Labe River, rock formations of the Tisá Walls and the Bohemian Switzerland, and many others. For those who like sports, the Ústecký Region has also something to offer. It is a modern racecourse, a motor-racing circuit, a golf course, all that in the town of Most. Also several cycle routes go through the Region, one of which is to connect Prague with Dresden in the future. The Ore Mountains and also the Lužice Mountains offer excellent conditions for skiing.