

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The Vysočina Region is situated in the centre of the Czech Republic (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 support the Region's development. Fragmentation of the territory, 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, 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 square kilometres) the Region ranks among the Regions of an above-average size; only 4 Regions of the CR have a larger area. The Javořice peak (altitude 837 m) in the Javořice Highlands (Javořická vrchovina) in southern part of the Jihlava District is the highest point of the Region, whereas the level of the Jihlava River at the point where it leaves the Region in the south-eastern part of the Třebíč District (altitude about 239 m) is the lowest point. 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 authorised municipal authority. A municipality is the basic self-governing unit; there are 704 of them in the Region (from 1 January 2005). The average population per municipality in the Vysočina Region amounts to 736, i.e. the least of all Regions of the Czech Republic. Municipalities with less than 500 population are the most frequent in the Region. There are 35 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 2024, the Region's population was nearly 518 000, which is the third lowest population density among the Regions of the CR. The proportion of urban population was 56% as at 31 December 2023. In 2023, the number of births decreased, the number of marriages decreased, and the number of divorces slightly increased. The share of children born outside marriage is lower than in other Regions of the CR for a long time (except for Prague, the Jihomoravský Region, and the Zlínský Region); however, it has been increasing for a long time to reach 44% in 2023.

As at 31 December 2023, 107.6 thousand businesses were registered in the Statistical Business Register, which contains all identification numbers issued to organisations. This number ranks the Region last but two within the CR, just ahead of the Karlovarský Region and the Liberecký 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 Jihlava District (24.9 thousand) and the lowest by the Pelhřimov District (16.3 thousand).

Economic performance of the Region is below the national average. The share of the Region in the gross domestic product (GDP) of the CR was about 4% over the last years. In 2023, the GDP per capita of the Region was more than CZK 606 000, i.e. about 87% of the Czech Republic's average.

The average gross monthly wage in the Vysočina Region in 2023 was CZK 37 746 per headcount person (preliminary data), which was almost 3.3 thousand below the national average.

The proportion of unemployed persons in the population aged 15–64 years has reached 3.05% and was the fourth lowest in the Czech Republic at the end of 2023. The highest proportion was reported for the Třebíč District (3.69%), whereas the lowest for the Pelhřimov District (1.96%). The number of unemployed job applicants increased by 0.8% in the Vysočina Region compared to the year 2022. There was roughly one job applicant per vacancy in the Vysočina Region as at 31 December 2023. The offer for qualified labour force is not high.

What is traditionally important in the Vysočina Region is agriculture. Although the Region's natural conditions are below average (because 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 2023 was 135 000 hectares (ha); with the average per-hectare yield of cereals having decreased to 5.5 t, the total harvest almost reached 744 000 tonnes (t). The total harvest of potatoes

in the Region was 199 000 t, which is over a third of the production of potatoes in the Czech Republic. The area under potatoes was slightly larger; however, the per-hectare yield considerably decreased and therefore the total harvest was significantly lower.

In 2023, cattle livestock density per 100 hectares of agricultural land reached 60 head; it was the highest of all Regions of the CR. The average annual milk yield per cow reached 9 621 litres. With its meat production in the amount of 31 200 tonnes (excluding poultry production) the Region ranked fourth in the Czech Republic.

Industrial enterprises earned almost CZK 184 billion for their own goods and services in 2023, which is by 2.4% more than in 2022. The data apply to 135 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. Mainly former district towns and, besides them, also other towns with good transport accessibility are industrial centres.

In 2023, 4 512 building permits were granted in the Vysočina Region for all types of buildings; it is about 8% decrease compared to 2022. As for the dwellings started (1 383), the Region ranks the eleventh among the 14 Regions of the CR. 1 695 dwellings were completed in the Region, which is a 6.5% decrease, year-on-year.

The road and railway network in the Region is of strategic importance in terms of the Czech Republic and Europe. 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. Therefore, the strategic location of the Region has recently attracted many foreign investors who place not only their production capacities but also research and development 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 2.2 thousand students in the 2023/2024 academic year.

Health care in the Region concentrates in 8 hospitals (with 2 300 beds). Outpatient care is provided by surgeries of general practitioners for adults, surgeries of general practitioners for children, and surgeries of dentists. However, their accessibility is problematic for part of the rural population.

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 summer music festival called Vysočina Fest and also the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival take place in the town of Jihlava every year. The town of Telč regularly organises a festival called Holidays in Telč and the European Meeting of Folklore Ensembles. A traditional Folk Music Holiday Festival takes place in Náměšť nad Oslavou. The International Festival of Petr Dvorský is held in the state chateau of Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou. Those who like country music can visit a festival called "Trampský širák" ("Tramp's broad-brimmed hat" in English) in the market town of Štoky every year. As for sport, there is a very popular sports complex in the town of Nové Město na Moravě, in which competitions of world importance are successfully held.

Accommodation establishments in the Region were visited by more than 670 000 guests in 2023. The Vysočina Region also offers good opportunities for summer and winter stays for tourists as well as an opportunity to visit 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 of its kind 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 urban conservation area (historic centre) of the town 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 the town of 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 will undoubtedly lie, besides urban tourism, also in various forms of calm and eco-friendly stays. That is supported by a dense network of trails (approximately 2 900 km) and by development of cycle routes (approximately 2 500 km).