

Ústí Region, Czech Republic

Central Bohemian
Highlands

General overview

The Ústí Region is an administrative unit of the Czech Republic located in the northwest of the country. It borders on the Free State of Saxony, Germany, to the north, the Liberec Region in the northeast, the Karlovy Vary Region and, partly, the Pilsen Region in the west, and the Central Bohemian Region in the southeast. It is the fifth largest of the 14 regions in the Czech Republic and has a population of 821 377. It is the fourth most densely populated region in the country (154/km²), its population density being higher than the national average (133/km²). The Region's 339 km² account for 6.8 % of the total area of the country. The town of Ústí nad Labem (92 984 inhabitants) is the largest municipality in, and the seat of, the Region (1).

In the Ústí Region, 80.7 % of the population live in 59 cities and 295 villages; 54 % of the villages have populations of up to 500 inhabitants but these populations total only 5.8 % of the inhabitants of the Region (1). The different locations of the Ústí Region are distinguishable from each other in terms of natural and environmental conditions, economic structure and population density. Historically, the economic importance of the Region is the result of mineral wealth and developed industrial production. The

Region's gross domestic product (GDP) accounts for 6.0 % of the national GDP (the fifth highest of the country's 14 regions) (1). Although the Ústí Region is highly developed industrially, it has many beautiful natural areas, cultural monuments, and tourist sites.

One of the Region's characteristics is its relatively young population with an average age of 41.4 years (the average age in the Czech Republic is approximately 42 years). The Ústí Region ranks third lowest with respect to number of live births per 1000 inhabitants (10.3); its mortality rates are, however, among the highest in the country (11.2 deaths/1000 inhabitants) (2).

The most common diseases in the Region are ischemic heart disease (the rates for which rank among the highest in the Czech Republic), brain vascular diseases, malignant tumours, diabetes mellitus, and infectious diseases. The most common causes of death are circulatory diseases and cancer. Other main causes of death are diseases of the digestive and respiratory systems. Life expectancy at birth is 73.9 years for males and 79.6 years for females; both values are constantly about two years below the national average. The health indicators for the Ústí Region rank among the worst in the country.

The provision of health care in the Czech Republic is based mainly on compulsory public health insurance, which is funded by the mandatory contributions of entrepreneurs, employers and employees, as well as state funds provided to cover seniors, students, unemployed people, women on maternity leave, among others (1).

The public-services network is regulated by independent health-insurance companies contracted at the regional and municipal levels. In turn, the health-insurance companies contract medical services to provide health services. Citizens are liable for payment of only certain expenditures related to health care and medicine.

Urgent medical care is provided in 11 hospitals with approximately 3856 beds. The most important health-care establishment in the Region is Krajská zdravotní, Plc., a company with five associated hospitals (the Děčín, Ústí nad Labem, Teplice, Most and Chomutov hospitals). These include highly specialized departments, such as those for neurosurgery, thoracic surgery, robotic surgery, cardiology, oncology, and nuclear medicine. After, long-term and rehabilitation care is ensured in 17 specialized therapeutic institutions with 1444 beds; hospice/palliative care is provided in two institutions in the region with 41 beds. Basic health care is provided by a network of outpatient-care establishments and pharmacies.

Since 2015, the Ústí Region has provided financial support for the creation of a public network of automated external defibrillator (AED) devices. These have gradually been placed in public places with high concentrations of people, such as train stations, city squares, public offices, and tourist sites.

There are 21 emergency medical services (EMS) stations and 1 air medical services base in the Ústí Region.

In 2015, the Ústí Region entered into an agreement with the Free State of Saxony on mutual cross-border EMS cooperation. The project allows the emergency medical services of both countries to intervene in case of emergencies on either side of border.



Strengths

The strengths of the Ústí Region include:

- ✓ a full range of primary and outpatient care;
- ✓ equal availability of health care for all insured people;
- ✓ several highly specialized departments, such as those for neurosurgery, thoracic surgery and nuclear medicine.



Aspirations

The Ústí Region is interested in:

- ✓ gathering examples of good practice in health-care organization at the regional level,
- ✓ participating in cooperative projects within the frame of public health and prevention (involving all age groups, screening programmes, elimination of health-risk behaviour, etc.);
- ✓ obtaining resources for hospital modernization and the training of health-care professionals;
- ✓ improving the quality of life of the citizens in the Region.



Challenges

The Region is challenged by:

- ✓ a lack of medical professionals in hospitals (young physicians leave to work abroad or in private ambulances);
- ✓ a growing deficit in public finances intended for health care;
- ✓ an ageing population of physicians providing primary and outpatient care and a lack of interest among young physicians.



Potential areas of collaboration

The Ústí Region is interested in collaborating with other regions, especially cross-border regions, on:

- ✓ sharing experiences, knowledge and mutual challenges related to health care and prevention;
- ✓ providing cross-border health care;
- ✓ work/study exchange programmes for health-care professionals.



Working groups

The Ústí Region is interested in participating in working groups on:

- ✓ health systems/primary health care;
- ✓ the all-of-government approach/intersectoral action;
- ✓ cross-border cooperation in providing health care.



People active in the Regions for Health Network (RHN)

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