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CZECH REPUBLIC

INSIGHT PAPER

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RURALITY (1)

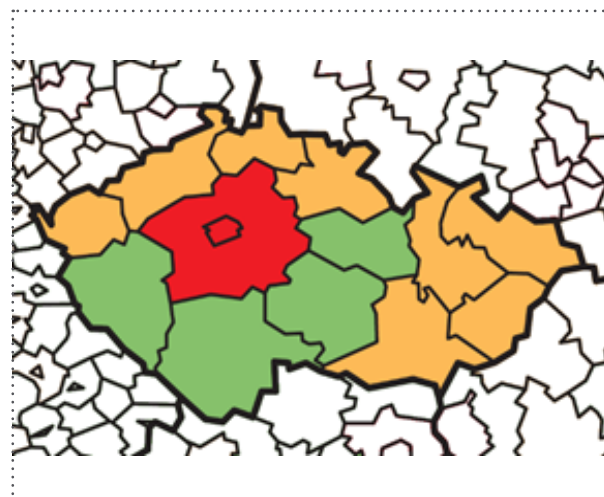
Degree of urbanisation for local administrative units
 level 2 (LAU2)



- Cities
- Towns and suburbs
- Rural Areas
- Data not available

Source: Eurostat, JRC and European Commission Directorate-General
 for Regional Policy, May 2016

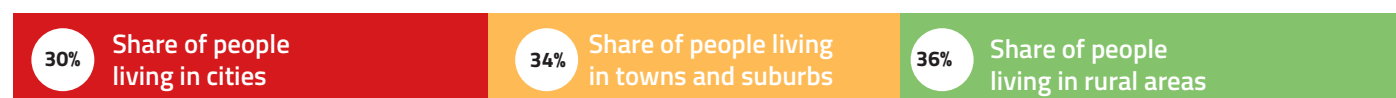
Urban-rural typology for NUTS level 3 regions



- **Predominantly urban regions**
 (rural population is less than 20% of the total population)
- **Intermediate regions**
 (rural population is between 20% and 50% of the total population)
- **Predominantly rural regions**
 (rural population is 50% or more of the total population)
- Data not available

Source: Eurostat, JRC, EFGS, REGIO-GIS, December 2016

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION



Source: Eurostat, 2018

GEOGRAPHY

Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe bordered by Germany to the west, Austria to the south, Slovakia to the east and Poland to the northeast. It covers an area of 78,866 square kilometres with a mostly temperate continental climate and oceanic climate. The country has 10.6 million inhabitants.

The Czech landscape is exceedingly varied. Bohemia, to the west, consists of a basin drained by the Elbe and the Vltava rivers, surrounded by mostly low mountains. Moravia, the eastern part of the country, is also quite hilly. It is drained mainly by the Morava River, but it also contains the source of the Oder River.

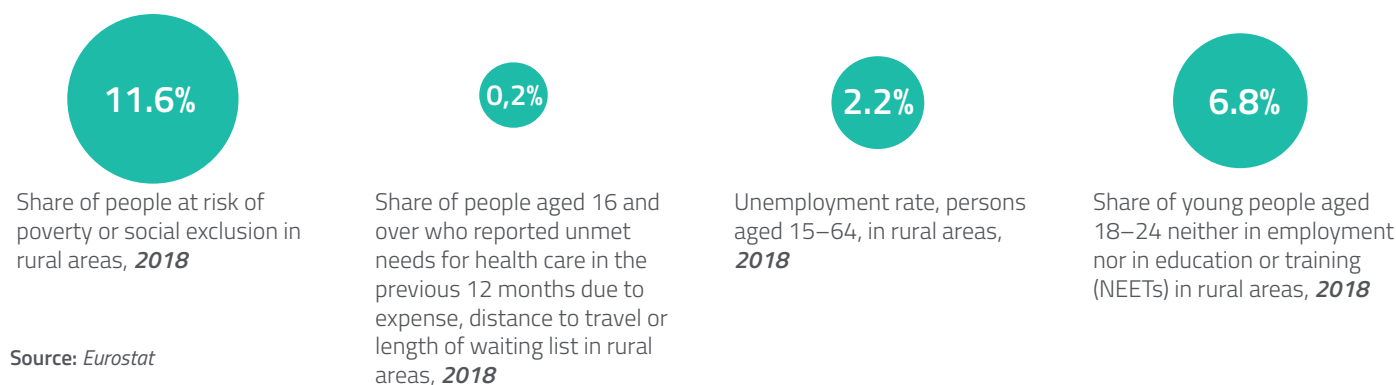
The Czech Republic has a two-tier subnational government system, with no hierarchical link.

Regions were established in 2000. Municipalities are regulated through the Municipal Act in the same year. The municipal level includes municipalities, towns (mesto) and 25 statutory cities (statutarní mesto). The latter have a special status granted by an Act of Parliament and can establish districts at the sub-municipal level

with their own mayor, council and assembly - but only eight cities have chosen this option. So the settlement structure and its hierarchy distinguishes greatly from the rest of the EU countries, as it is highly fragmented. There are more than 6,250 municipalities, out of which the majority have population of less than 500 inhabitants.

Sustainability of growth is one of the main key challenges. Multinationals have continued to locate lower value-added activities in the Czech Republic, but there is a significant shift underway of activities that rely on less-skilled labour to even lower wage countries. Without innovation and structural change, this pattern of growth will not bring income levels up to those in wealthier EU member states and leaves the Czech Republic vulnerable to economic downturns. More diversification is therefore a must. Beside that, the aging population will pose a challenge for the pension and health systems in the future and is another main demographic challenge ahead.

RURALITY (2)



Source: Eurostat

NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Neither organizational, nor legal and financial framework of rural mobility policy in Czech Republic have been prepared. Some projects of development of rural infrastructure exist, but neither action plans nor national policy, have been created in the area of rural mobility policy until now.

Public transport is operated on the basis of separate transport systems, with integrated transport systems (i.e., systems connected in terms of traffic, tariffs and information) being organized with limited functionalities only, without more significant connections among regions.

In some regions an integrated transport system still forms only a superstructure to the public transport system (making the use of urban and suburban transport easier), rather than a principle connecting all modes of transport in the whole territory of the region.

In many cases differences persist in the opinion on how to organize public transport between the region and the core city, which complicates the creation of integrated transport systems.



INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Regional governments have full competence in regional transport together with local governments. There is an obligation to organise public transport at regional level but municipalities have the faculty to organise transport and mobility on their own territory. This is done respectively via an AOT or an AOM (Transport or Mobility organizing authority). In practice, the situation is very different in the districts and regions.

Some districts receive finance from cities and municipalities (for example South Moravia), some other districts order all regional bus services and municipalities to pay (almost) nothing (for example Ústí nad Labem). Other cities and municipalities are intensively involved in the (for example the Central Bohemian regional bus services in Prague).

ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Public transport services are currently regulated by the Act on public services in passenger transport and by national and regional public transport plans. Further direction of the public transport system including the selection from among the options for system organization will be laid down in the Public Transport Conception, which will propose a new structure of public transport organization, the requisite amendments of national law and a proposal for the funding of the system.

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Urban public transport systems – organized under the conditions of transportation companies which are set-up and owned by the cities – have a long tradition in the Czech Republic and are well-known operational networks, especially in large cities. Public transport systems can currently be found in more than 100 different sized cities in the Czech Republic, ranging from the smallest where there is often only one bus line in operation; providing a link between the main residential areas of the city and places of basic services such as schools, offices, medical facilities, shops, etc., up to large cities where bus networks operate along with trolleybus networks, trams and, in the case of Prague, metro networks.

Due to its position in Central Europe, Czech Republic is furthermore well-advantaged to make the most of its good transport accessibility. The country is covered with a dense network of railways and roads, but it does not always meet the standards demanded by modern transport.

Railway network density is historically higher in the northern part of the Czech territory. The main corridors are the axes Dresden – Prague – Brno – Vienna and Katowice – Ostrava – Breclav – Vienna.



Photo from Envato

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

For contracts on public services concluded after 3 December 2009, the key law is Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council No 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/7. This regulation lays down the competitive tendering procedure as the basic method for the selection of a transport operator for public services and contains certain exemptions allowing the

contracting authority to award a public services contract directly.

Regional governments guarantee transport services in regions through public transport. The transport services are implemented by: deciding on licenses within administrative proceedings; approving timetables; and the financial settlement of services of public interest.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Construction, modernization and maintenance of transport infrastructure are financed by the State Transport Infrastructure Fund (STIF), 50% of which comes from co-financing, and 50% is financed from local resources.

The STIF is not a recipient of finances from EU funds, nor does it act as a financial manager of infrastructural loans. In this way the state budget remains the main financing source (through STIF) for highways and class I roads, which are state-owned, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport. Some Czech transport operators use the EU programme Marco Polo to get financial support for the implementation of combined freight transport.

The national transport network gets its improvements through the Operational Programme – Transport (EU structural funding matching the resources from the Czech state budget) which is extended through regional operational programmes to the local level. The programme is managed and administrated by the Czech Ministry of Transport and is designated to beneficiaries such as the infrastructure owners and administrators, owners of rail fleet, rail transport operators, owners of transshipment mechanisms for combined transport.

As for mobility management, the following priority axes are useful, as they modernize or prepare the infrastructure for alternatives to car use: modernization of the TEN-T rail network (one priority axis or the main axis of rail transport) and also rail corridors outside the TEN-T networks. Another important axis is “modernization and development of Prague metro system and road traffic management systems in Prague”. This is useful for keeping the public transport modal share in Prague and enhances even more its attractiveness.

As for the infrastructure and guaranteeing mobility in regions, state co-financing is provided. The important part is the state co-financing for public transport to ensure continuity of public transport service in regions.

Since 2010, the districts have been receiving money from the state for this purpose – so-called “memorandum” (similar to regionalization funds in Germany). But there have been attempts by the federal state to reduce this budget. Nevertheless, there is a budget secured for the period 2019 to 2034 and some districts have already started the preparation for tenders.

OTHER INFORMATION

This positive decentralization of competences from the national to the regional level increased the degree of Regional Authorities’ emancipation. However, a consequence of this situation is the growth of some regional disparities in the supply of PT services in the territory of the Czech Republic, which is mainly due to the heterogeneous approach to PT organization (economic, spatial, modal, integrated) at the level of NUTS3.

The Jeseník Region is one of the less developed Czech regions from many aspects, but an analysis of PT connections, frequencies and connection times in the region, has demonstrated a fairly positive situation during the evaluation of PT local service.

The PT service is considered to be a key quality attribute to living in rural areas, mainly because some rural inhabitants, who are more likely to be socially excluded, benefit from the services.

A national coordinator will be appointed to methodically guide the individual independent contracting authorities (overlapping of public transport services of different regions). An important element will be the coordination of the creation of public transport plans, which must be comparable in different regions and at different levels and must serve as one of important foundations for the decision making regarding the scope and modernization of rail infrastructure.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND MINISTRIES ADDRESSING RURAL AREAS

TITLE	ROLE
RDP	Rural Development in Czech Republic is managed nationally through one Rural Development Programme (RDP), funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and national contributions. The RDP sets out priority approaches and actions to meet the needs of the specific geographical area it covers.
KORDIS	KORDIS is operating the Traffic Clearing Centre – registration of users and sold tickets, distribution of this information to the control facilities of DPMB, KORDIS, Czech Railways and bus carriers, in the next stages will ensure the sale of one-off tickets and their processing.
IDSK	Integrated Transport of the Central Bohemian Region (IDSK).

LINKS TO WEBSITES

- www.dataplan.info/img_upload/7bdb1584e3b8a53d337518d988763f8d/b13-00298_ministerstvo_dopravy_2014_2020_eng-05_1.pdf
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- www.mdcr.cz
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- www.researchgate.net/publication/311865264_Factors_Affecting_Development_of_Rural_Areas_in_the_Czech_Republic_a_Literature_Review
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- www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/profile-Czech-Republic.pdf
- www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/member-state/czech-republic
- www.szz.hr/portfolio-item/project-rumobil
- www.idsk.cz

REFERENCES

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- Input from The Czech Embassy in Brussels