



THE BOHEMIAN FOREST REGION BORDERING THE DANUBE

FACTS AND FIGURES

Population

With 57,987 inhabitants, the region has a population density of 69 inhabitants per km². Since the year 2001 the total population of the region has decreased (a fall of 2.2% between 2001 and 2013), leading to the prediction that population numbers will stagnate. Net migration also demonstrates this negative tendency. Remarkably, the group of 15-25 year old inhabitants is larger in the region than in Upper Austria. The proportion of foreigners in the region is 3% less than in Upper Austria.

Economy

4,931 workplaces provide employment for 21,370 people. Every fifth person in employment works in the manufacturing sector, approximately 13% work in the land and forestry sector as well as in commerce. Every 10th person employed earns a living in the building industry and /or in the health and social services sector. Business and trade dominate the regional economic landscape, followed by commerce and tourism. The information and consultancy sector is also becoming increasingly significant.

Education

Even though over one third of the population has attained the secondary school certificate, the proportion in this group has shown a sharper fall since 2001 (down 19%) when compared with the whole of Upper Austria (down 14%). There is a marked increase in the total population in Upper Austria attaining higher educational standards (i.e. up 57.1% in Higher Vocational Colleges and up 54% in universities).

Tourism

Tourism in the region is developing very well indeed. The data show that, since 2001, the number of overnight stays has increased more in this region than the rest of Upper Austria. Of 277,000 overnight stays in the region in 2013, 176,000 can be attributed to the Bohemian Forest region (16 councils). Around 64% of the tourists who stay overnight do so in the north. Approximately two thirds of the visitors are Austrian and a third come from abroad, mainly from Germany.

Agriculture and Forestry

The 2010 survey of the agricultural structure of the Bohemian Forest region bordering the Danube showed that farmers were split 42% full time and 53.4% part time (49.2% in Upper

Austria). This indicates that the region is not one of the more agriculturally favoured areas of Upper Austria, and therefore more and more farmers have to choose between taking on an additional job and facing the closure of their farming business. With regard to livestock, in this region cattle farming is of significantly greater importance than in Upper Austria as a whole, where pig farming predominates.

Environmental Conditions

The Bohemian Forest Region bordering the Danube is a low mountain range, with altitudes ranging from 268m along the Danube and up to 1,378m in the Bohemian Forest. The mountains are the key feature of the landscape in the north, and the Danube is the key feature in the south. The region is a perfect example of a small scale farming landscape. Compared to other areas of the Muehlviertel it has more forest cover, at just under 40%. However, this varies considerably within the region (28.1% in Altenfelden, 71% in Schwarzenberg).

Energy

The region is characterised by many hours of sunshine and little fog, as well as a high proportion of forests. Renewable agricultural resources can be used for energy generation or as raw materials in manufacturing. There are many small hydroelectric plants (more than 100 installations) because the topography is suitable. The photovoltaic surfaces on public buildings supply energy of a value of 1.3 MW. Energy cells on the roofs of private properties supply nearly double this amount.

Culture and Regional Development

In the Bohemian Forest region bordering the Danube, cultural institutions and associations provide many cultural activities and initiatives as well as facilities for education. In addition to the traditional forms (bands and music schools, museums etc) from the nineties onwards there has been an increase in events concerned with contemporary art and culture, together with new means of providing these. Town centres and market places play an indispensable role in what may be seen as an idyllic cultural landscape. However, many of these locations are under threat from decline due to falling levels of use.

Demographic data

The annual number of births remains stable at between 550 and 590. The balance of births is slightly positive (plus 115 in 2012). However, the rural migration rate is slightly negative (minus 232 inhabitants). There are great regional variations in this rate, with larger numbers emigrating from the north. There is also some immigration in the south of the region, because of its proximity to the capital, Linz. Since 2001, there are more one-person households (up 15%) as well as childless couples (up 25%). The general trend of an aging population can also be observed in this region. A decrease in 45 year olds has been observed in all social classes since 2001 while, at the same time, there were significant increases in people over 80.

Earnings data for men and women

The Bohemian Forest region bordering the Danube still shows the same large gap between the incomes of men and women as elsewhere.

Commuter journeys

More and more people commuting to Linz are discovering the joys of public transport: according to a traffic survey, 22 % of the daily 21,000 commuters to Linz take the local train on route B127-L581, representing an increase of 13% since 2001. Due to the increase in people commuting, the number of drivers also increased by 4%.

Social Networks and Facilities

The region has quite a dense network of social facilities and initiatives.

- The Institute for Work and Education Upper Muehlviertel: The institute provides support for job seekers in the region through its various business subjects and projects.
- The company Arcus Sozialnetwork GmbH has at its core the theme of 'inclusion', and also offers accommodation and work programmes.
- Parishes provide attendance and care services on a voluntary basis.
- Public social care institutions provide the important infrastructure for district homes for the elderly and care homes.
- A youth interest group coordinates activities for young people.

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