

OFFICIAL NAME: Czech Republic

CAPITAL: Prague

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 78,863 Sq Km (30,449 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 10,355,500



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: The Czech Republic is a landlocked country located in the heart of Europe. It is bound by Poland to the north, Austria to the south, Germany to the west and Slovakia to the east. The country can be divided into three topographical regions. (1.) Bohemia which is the western region of the country with the Ore Mountains rising in the northwest from the Paleozoic rock hill ranges while the wooded hills of the Bohemian forest lie to the southwest. Towards the southeast the gentle uplands of the Moravian Hills separate Bohemia from the plains of Moravia. (2.) Moravia which is the eastern lowland area that lies southeast of Bohemia. The lowland plains of Moravia separate the Bohemian region from the Carpathian Mountains of Slovakia and have formed a narrow corridor between the plains of Poland and the Danube Valley. Moravia is drained by the Danube and Morava Rivers. Major Cities (pop. est.); Prague 1,217,000, Brno 390,100, Ostrava 326,200, Plzen 172,300, Olomouc 105,900 (1994). Land Use; forested 33%, pastures 11%, agricultural-cultivated 42%, other 14% (1993).

CLIMATE: The Czech Republic has a typical continental climate with warm humid summers and cold dry winters. In the north the mountain winters are more severe and generally snow falls for 40 to 50 days in winter with fog persisting in the low lying areas. Average annual precipitation in Prague is about 510 mm (20 inches) while average temperature ranges are from -4 to 1 degrees Celsius (25 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 14 to 23 degrees Celsius (57 to 73 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Czech who account for 81% of the population while Moravians account for 13.2% and Slovaks for 3%. Other ethnic minorities include Magyars who account for .2%, Gypsies for .3%, Poles for .6%, Germans for .5% and others for .9% of the population.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 131 persons per sq km (340 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 75.7% urban, 24.3% rural (Czechoslovakia-1988). Sex Distribution; 48.6% male, 51.4% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 67.6 years male, 74.8 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 21% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 23% 30 to 44, 17% 45 to 59, 12% 60 to 74, 5% 75 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 11.8 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 11.7 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 0.1 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 9.9 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 39% of the population Roman Catholic while 4% are Evangelical Lutheran. Other religious minorities include Greek Orthodox Christians which account for .2% while 31% are atheist and 16% are unidentified.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Czech, although German and Slovak are also widely spoken. Both Russian and English are taught in schools as second languages.

EDUCATION: Adult and having attained: less than primary education 1.4%, primary and incomplete secondary 33.1%, secondary 58.3%, higher 7.2% (1992). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over virtually 100% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1918 after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire the independent republic of Czechoslovakia was established. In Sept. 1938 Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the German areas of Czechoslovakia or Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. On Mar. 14, 1939 the Slovak state declared its independence and the following day the Nazi's annexed the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia. In Mar. 1945 Edward Benes who was elected President of Czechoslovakia in 1935, agreed to form a National Front government with Klement Gottwald, leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz). On May 10, 1945 the National Front returned to Prague after the liberation from Nazi occupation, by the Soviet Red Army. In 1946 Gottwald was elected Prime Minister and in 1948 the communists forced Pres. Benes to form a government made up entirely of communists. In June 1948 Pres. Benes resigned and was succeeded by Gottwald. Pres. Gottwald embarked on a nationalization program which took over all businesses, farms, schools, industries and churches. In Mar. 1953 Pres. Gottwald died and was succeeded by Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky, who in turn was succeeded by Antonin Novotny after Pres. Zapotocky's death in 1957. In 1960 a new constitution was established which was modeled around that of the Soviet Union and the country's name was changed to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. During the 1960's Czechoslovakia's intellectuals called for more freedom of expression and many Slovaks renewed their efforts to gain recognition for Slovak rights. In Jan. 1968 Alexander Dubcek replaced Novotny as First Secretary of the CPCz and introduced a program of liberal reforms called the "Prague Spring" which included freedom of the press as well as increased contact with noncommunist countries. Leaders of the Soviet Union and other East

European nations feared Dubcek's program would weaken communist control in Czechoslovakia and under the Warsaw Pact troops from Soviet Union, Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary as well as Poland invaded Czechoslovakia on Aug 20th, 1968. The Red Army remained while others withdrew by late 1968. In Jan. 1969 a federal system of autonomous Czech and Slovak governments was introduced as a result of the Prague Spring reforms. In Apr. 1969 Dubcek was replaced by Gustav Husak as First Secretary which resulted in further anti-Soviet protest. In May 1970 a new 20 year Treaty of Friendship was signed with the Soviet Union. During the 1980's economic stagnation developed and in Dec. 1987 Husak was replaced by Milos Jakes as head of the CPCz, although Husak remained President. In Aug. 1988 some 10,000 demonstrators took part in a protest which marked the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968. During 1989 many pro democracy demonstrations were held which began the Velvet Revolution and in Dec. 1989 a new coalition government was formed. Pres. Husak resigned and was replaced by the dissident playwright as well as leader of the Velvet Revolution, Vaclav Havel. On Jun. 8, 1990 the first free elections in more than four decades took place. The return to democracy also instigated an insurgence for Slovak independence during 1991. In Mar. and Sept. 1991 there were calls from Slovak politicians for a declaration of sovereignty from Czechoslovakia, that resulted in the Czech republic demanding a referendum on the issue. Also in 1991 the government continued with its complex and controversial privatization program. In June 1992 the federal and regional parliamentary elections brought the independence matter to a head and on Aug. 27, 1992 Slovak Prime Minister, Vladimir Mecair and his Czech counterpart, Vaclav Klaus announced after marathon talks in Brno that Czechoslovakia would no longer exist as a single state as of Jan. 1, 1993 opening the path for the independent Slovak and Czech republics. In Jan. 1993 Vaclav Havel was elected President of the Czech Republic while Klaus formed a four-party coalition that held an absolute parliamentary majority and supported his rapid movement towards a market economy through privatization and integration into Europe. However, this rapid marketization movement was delayed through a lack of willingness on the part of the government in implementing major structural reforms and the continuation of state subsidies for ailing industries throughout 1993.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Czech Koruna (plural; Koruny) (Kc) divided into 100 Halura.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$28,182,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$6,580,000,000 (1993). Imports; Kc 423,964,000,000 (1994). Exports; Kc 411,457,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; Kc -12,507,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 5,597,242 or 50.3% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 3.5% (1992).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Germany, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Switzerland, Bulgaria and other former USSR republics.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Antimony, Cereals, Coal, Iron Ore, Lignite, Livestock, Magnesium, Mercury, Potatoes, Sugar Beets, Timber, Uranium.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Cement, Ceramics, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Oil and Gas Refining, Ornaments, Paper Products, Sheet Glass, Textiles, Transport Equipment.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Clothing, Coal, Food, Footwear, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Motor Vehicles, Railway Vehicles, Textile Yarns and Fabrics.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 9,453 km (5,874 mi) (1992), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km 30,622,000,000 (20,973,000,000 short ton-mi) (1991). Roads; length 55,892 km (34,730 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 2,435,645 (1991), trucks and buses 232,703 (1991). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; N/A.

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 55 with a total circulation of 6,000,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 2,732,000 (1993). Television; receivers 3,180,000 (1993). Telephones; units 1,961,100 (1993).

MILITARY: 92,900 (1994) total active duty personnel with 73.1% army, 0.0% navy and 26.9% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.8% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).