

50. Central Europe

= heart of Europe with many great plains (Poland and Hungary) and high mountains (Slovakia and Austria)

= *Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia*, since the WWII until 1989 except of Austria all of the countries were a part of communist eastern bloc => transition from communist, centrally-planned economy towards a *free market economy*

= flat landscape provides easy target for invaders (Russia, Austro-Hungary, Prussia and Ottoman Turks)

= the *Danube* river = major waterway + dams (Gabčíkovo)

= *lignite reserves* (Hungary) => air pollution ⇔ coal-fired power plants

= *root vegetables* (beet, potatoes)

Poland

Capital: Warsaw

Population: 39 million

GDP/capita (2001): 4,100 USD

= mainly flat country, larger than CZ + SK + H together

- old industries = *coal mining* (Upper-Silesian basin) and *shipbuilding* (Gdansk + Gdynia), many small farms were merged into larger state-run farms
- nowadays boom of services (tourism in High Tatras) and electronics + local folk arts and crafts flourish
- Germany = main trading partner, 1/5 of the workforce is employed in agriculture
- Warsaw: destroyed during the WWII
- Krakow: medieval buildings => major power during the 15th and 16th centuries, 1 of the most air-polluted cities ⇔ steelworks
- Polish-speaking Roman Catholics
- other large cities: Krakow, Katowice, Wroclav, Poznan, Lublin, Gdansk



Czech Republic

Capital: Prague

Population: 10.2 million

GDP/capita (2001): 5,500 USD

= the most industrialized country in central Europe with modern economy and good standard of living

- *mountains!*
- 3 traditional regions: *Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia*
- very productive farms – wheat and rye (1 of the highest yields in central Europe) concentrating on milk and meat production
- *brewery*, vehicles, plastics (chemical industry), textiles, glassware (Bohemian glass), car manufacturing industry (Mladá Boleslav)
- Prague: 1 of the most beautiful capitals in Europe, booming commercial centre
- other large cities: Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Hradec Králové, Pardubice, České Budějovice



Hungary

Capital: Budapest

Population: 10 million

GDP/capita (2001): 4,700 USD

= fertile plain, occupied by descendants of former nomadic horsemen

- lot of spas and hot springs (mineral-rich waters)



- wide variety of crops is grown in Hungary, e.g. olives, figs, grapes => wine
- 2/3 of FDI flow directly to the capital city
- metal production, chemical + textile industry + electrical goods
- Budapest: *Buda* (the old royal capital) + *Pest* (modern business + government) => many foreign visitors
- famous gastronomy: *goulash*
- other large cities: Győr, Pécs, Miskolc, Szeged, Debrecen

Austria

Capital: Vienna

Population: 8,2 million

GDP/capita (2001): 26,200 USD

= mountainous republic, in the past it was the centre of vast Austro-Hungarian empire

- mountainous western part (Alps) and flat eastern lowlands
- member of the EU since 1995
- highly industrialized country, e.g. iron and steel industry + heavy engineering and chemical industry in Linz
- Vienna: old, historical city
- steep Alpine valleys => hydro-electric power plants
- gastronomy = range of influences (*schnitzels* = veal or pork cutlets) + cakes (pastries/cookies)
- tourism = summer mountain hiking and winter sports
- other large cities: Linz, Graz, Salzburg, Klagenfurt, Innsbruck



Slovenia

Capital: Ljubljana

Population: 1.9 million

GDP/capita (2001): 9,800 USD

= southern Alps => tourism (karst region – limestone scenery)

- strategic position
- large forests => furniture making, pulp industry
- production of cars, motorcycles, trucks and refrigerators
- Slovene people have kept their Slovenian language and folk culture
- Ljubljana: 1 of the smallest Europe's capitals (300,000 inh.)



Keywords

lignite reserves, root vegetables, shipbuilding, brewery, glassware, goulash, schnitzel, Alps, tourism, Inn, Danube, furniture making, Austro-Hungarian empire