

City Introduction & Context

Indicator		Units	Year of data
Population	300 500	Inhabitants	2017
Area	214	km ²	2017
Population Density	1404	Inh/km ²	2017
GDP	13770	€/Capita	2016
Köppen climate classification	Dfb		



Image 1: Panorama of Ostrava with Lower Vitkovice and Beskydy mountains

Ostrava, the third most populated Czech city, is the **capital of the Moravian-Silesian region** situated on the north-east part of Czechia, near to Slovak and Polish borders. Ostrava got its name from the river Ostravice, which divides the town into its Moravian and Silesian parts. The city is located between two large mountain areas (Beskydy and Jeseniky) at the confluence of four rivers (Ostravice, Odra, Opava, and Lucina).

Ostrava forms important part of international **industrial agglomeration** with approx. 5 mil. inhabitants living within the distance of 100 km of the Czech, Polish and Slovakian part of the agglomeration. GDP per capita (13 770 EUR) corresponded to 72 % of EU-average in 2015. The gradually decreasing unemployment reached 7,8 % in 8/2017. One third of employees work in industry and construction sector represented by more than 15 600 companies; less than 1 % is employed in agriculture/forestry. Average gross monthly wage in Ostrava corresponds to 1060 EUR which is slightly above national average. Ostrava has 3 universities attended by 25500 students, Moravian-Silesian Innovation Center, IT4Innovations and other institutions forming new economic development of the city.

Moody's assigned the **rating of A1** to the city of Ostrava in 2/2017. In the course of 20 years, the rating has been steadily rising from Baa1 to the present A1, which proves sustainable quality management, overall economic performance, prudent capital expenditure planning, and declining indebtedness.

Ostrava is composed of 23 municipal districts. The **city is polycentric**, consisting of old town city centre and 2 residential districts affected by the land use planning during the communist period. All parts are

interconnected via public transport forming part of the integrated regional transport system (chapter 3).

The city is a major road and railway hub of the region. There are ten railway stations in the city, 2 of them situated on TEN European Multimodal Corridor leading from Poland to the Austria. The 25 km-distanced international airport was lately connected to the railway. City dispose of 244 cyclo paths (1 of them leading through neighbouring large urban areas to 40-km-distanced Beskydy).

Ostrava is one of the Czech cities with the **largest amount of green areas per inhabitant** (over 90% of Ostrava inhabitants live less than 300 metres from a green area). In comparison with other Czech and European cities, Ostrava has an exceptional number and scale of protected nature areas.

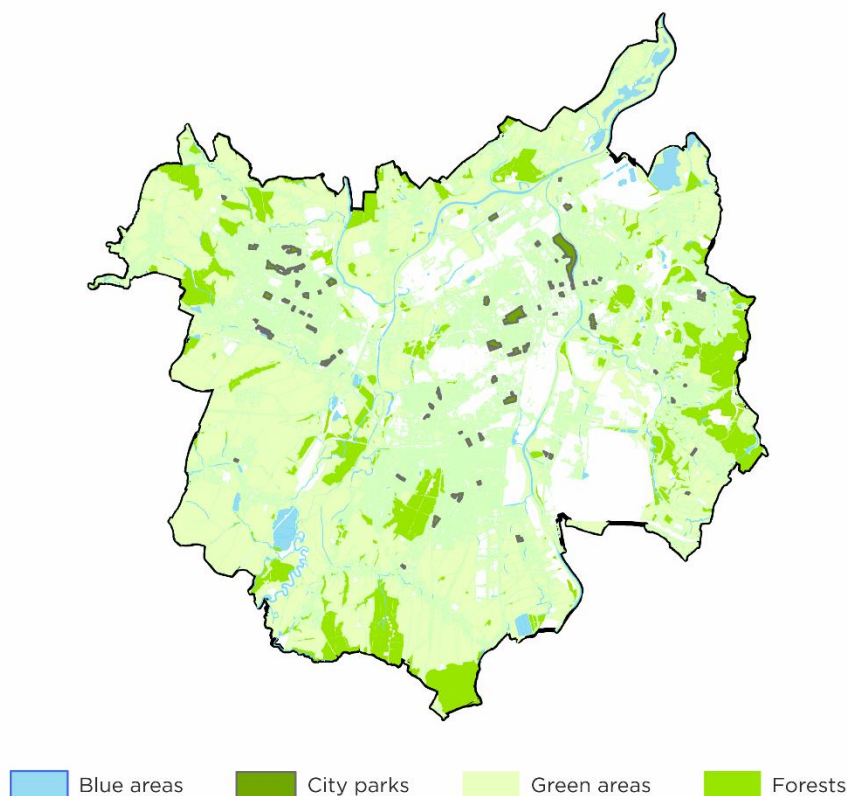


Figure 1: Blue and green areas and parks in Ostrava

Ostrava was **founded in 1267** but the first evidence of human settlement in in the city area goes back to the Stone Age. During several centuries, Ostrava was rather small town, nevertheless, an important spot on the map of medieval market trails. In 1763, the **discovery of coal** in Ostrava resuscitated the economic life of the region. A swift growth in agglomeration initiated the **establishment of an ironworks** in the village of Vitkovice in 1828. A connection to the railway in 1847, enabled Ostrava to become one of the most significant industrial centres of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the second half of the 19th century. The increasing industry also called for an influx of people. Moravian Ostrava has only 2000 inhabitants in 1830 while the population reached 144 thousand inhabitants in 1900 (ie. 72-fold).

After the birth of the independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, Ostrava retained its significant economic position thanks to its ironworks and mines and slowly transformed into an administrative, social and

cultural centre. During Nazi occupation, the largest industrial enterprises came under German administration and were refocused toward war manufacturing. Through the 1950s, Czechoslovakia concentrated on the development of mining, the steel industry and other sectors of heavy industry. Ostrava became its centre and the “**steel heart of the republic**”. New factories were established, attracting another influx of inhabitants and new neighbourhoods grew up in the peripheral quarters of the town, which made the polycentric shape of the city. While the number of inhabitants reached 220 thousand in 1930s, in 1970s increased up to 300 thousand and the peak was 327000 inhabitants in 1990s. The scale of industrialization and the concentration of heavy industry crossed bearable limit of the city, caused **severe environmental damages** and optimal, sustainable development of the city was drastically affected. Ostrava still faces unstable economic structure with deep-rooted disproportions and inevitable revitalization of contaminated areas (soil/water). These areas, together with polluted air remain **crucial Ostrava’s challenges**.

Considerable political and economic changes came after Velvet Revolution in 1989. Since 1990, Ostrava has undergone major process of restructuring including a reduction of heavy industry. This has brought marked improvements in the local environment. In 1994, more than two centuries of mining were terminated. The Vitkovice blast furnaces, which are still a conspicuous dominant feature of the city, were turned off in 1998 and the company has concentrated on machine engineering.



Image 2: New science museum reflecting the revitalized brownfield of Lower Vitkovice

The Flood of July 1997, known as a “thousand-year flood”, dramatically affected the city. 49 persons died and the damage was estimated over 153 million EUR. On the other hand, modern flood-protection measures were adopted.



Image 3: Cityhall on revitalized Ostravice riverbank)

Today, Ostrava is presented as “smart city” with unique industrial culture. Activities, described in EGCA chapters, clearly demonstrates the city’s sustainable progress in the last years. Strategic Plan 2017-23 (2030), awarded among URBACT 2017 good practices, new Adaptation Strategy to climate change (**determining key climate challenges** of the city), Sustainable Mobility Plan prepared in 2014, the concept of the Smart City and the Smart Region awarded by the Czech Ministry of Regional Development, together with successful huge restructuring projects (Nova Karolina, Lower Vitkovice) and active participation in numerous international projects proves Ostrava’s role of sustainable city as well as the strong long-term political will to achieve significant positive changes.

A vibrant regional capital



1 Building an interconnected city



2 Revitalizing the historic city centre

Wealth in people



3 Being a centre for top-quality education



4 Enhancing the business environment



5 Supporting communities and citizens' involvement in public life

A healthy city



6 Creating a great environment for all generations



7 Bringing the city closer to nature

Image 4: Ostrava's Strategic Development Plan 2017-2023 – priorities and strategic goals

Except applied public notices (regulating noise, local heating sources and some other minor issues), the city has no legislative power. An outstanding **procedure** was the city's court appeal against the Czech Government for ineffective and insufficient measures adopted in air quality protection. The appeal was refused.

Conversion rate: **26 CZK per 1 EUR**

(The conversion rate applied in the whole document corresponds to rounded ECB rate on September 2017, Source: [ECB rate on September 2017](#))



Application Form for the European Green Capital Award 2020