

Corsica

Overview:

A mountainous island territory of France in the Tyrrhenian Sea of the western Mediterranean.

Territory:

Corsica is about 183km from north to south and 83km from east to west. It is divided in half by a mountain range running from northwest to southeast. It has many peaks over 2000m, and very diverse landscapes creating microclimates which host a rich diversity of plant life. Its highest point is 2,710m and its lowest 0m. Total Coastal Length: 1000km

Location:

In Tyrrhenian Sea in western Mediterranean, 82km west of Italy, 160km south-east of France, 14km north of Sardinia.

Latitude and Longitude:

42 15 N, 9 15 E

Time Zone:

GMT +1

Total Land Area:

8682

EEZ:

Climate:

The island has long summers from May through October and cold winters with snow on its peaks until June. The average winter temperature is 12 degrees Celsius, and summer temperatures 27 degrees Celsius. The coastal areas have a Mediterranean climate, and at 1,500m the climate becomes alpine. The northern half of the island gets much more precipitation than the south.

Natural Resources:

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2002	5,052,000,000.00 USD
2147483647	2,001.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2002	19,133.00 USD
2001	18,561.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2002	2.5%	14%	83.6%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2003	2%	15%	83%

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

The average unemployment rate in Corsica is quickly coming down due to expansion in the private sector (10% increase between 1997 and 2002, reversing a twenty year trend). Despite the creation of new jobs unemployment almost doubles (9,000 to 15,000) in the winter months. Incomes on the island are some of the lowest in France, and it is considered to be France's poorest and most subsidized region.

Labour Force:	
	0

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2003	10.3%

Industry:

The Agri-food business is the second largest contributor to the economy after tourism. This includes both farm and industrial production. Employment in

the agri-food sector increased by 11% and production by 20% in 2002. Most sales are within Corsica (71%), with one-fourth in continental France and only 5% exported, but this latter figure is growing. Among the ten largest "industrial" employers, three are bakeries.

Niche Industry:

The government is providing incentives for national and international investment in the island – especially encouraged are initiatives and settlement focused on the interior of the island in order to repopulate it and invigorate the economy. There are many grant and loan opportunities for setting up new businesses, and the local structures are finding ways of facilitating this so that the island benefits. Industrial opportunities are being promoted as currently industry is extremely under-exploited. The rate of enterprise creation is currently 14.4% (in comparison to the national rate of 11.1%). The rate of failure of new enterprises is only 1.3% (natl. 1.7%).

Tourism:

Tourism is Corsica's main economic sector. Although up until recently it has been seasonal, the government has encouraged and is slowly succeeding in attracting tourists in what is traditionally the off-season which is helping to balance the economy. The government sees tourism's pressure on the environment as an opportunity to promote sustainable development rather than as an impediment to it. A large proportion of tourists visit the island for the purpose of hiking, camping, and water-based activities so it is in the interests of the government to promote environmental preservation. Only one-third of foreign visitors stay in hotels. Half of them camp. The major tourist groups visiting the island are Italian, German, Swiss, British, Dutch, and Swedish. The main tourist activities are skiing (there are three centres), hiking, diving, sailing, extreme sports (whitewater canoeing, paragliding, sea kayaking, mountain biking), river and lake fishing, horseback riding.



Imports and Exports:	
The main export buyers are Italy, the USA, Germany and Switzerland, and the main products are wine, cooked meats, cheese, olive-oil, chestnut flour, honey, biscuits, and farmed fish.	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports: 4

There are four airports on the island. Ajaccio (four out of six travelers to the island) in the south-west, Bastia in the north-east, Calvi (with the highest number of international arrivals) in the north-west, and Figari in the south. These four have daily flights from mainland France (Marseille and Nice). There are daily flights from Paris to Ajaccio and Bastia, and services to Calvi and Figari several times a week. There are also flights from other regional French airports (more in the summer), as well as a few direct flights from European cities (again, mainly seasonal).

Number of Main Ports: 7

The chief passenger ports are Bastia, Ajaccio, Bonifacio, Calvi, L'Île Rousse, Propriano, and Porto Vecchio. The main cargo ports are Bastia and Ajaccio. From France there are lines (Corsica Ferries, SNCM, CMN) from Nice and Toulon to Ajaccio, Bastia, L'Île Rousse, and Calvi (also to Propriano, Bonifacio, and Porto Vecchio, but less frequently). From Italy there are services from Genoa, Livorno and Savona to Bastia. There are also ferries between Sardinia and Corsica.

Internal:

Air

Road:

Bastia, Ajaccio and Calvi are connected by a historic railroad line which was the first real bridge across the mountains dividing the island in two. Bus lines connect the main city centres throughout the year but during the summer there are more bus lines to more out of the way destinations. The road system is better areas than in others, with a lot of winding roads with no passing lanes, and many roads that have yet to be paved.

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

There are many independent car-rental dealerships as well as moped agencies on the island. Bicycles can also be rented. There are also a number of companies that transport tourists from one coastal centre to another via ferry-boat. Land taxis are available but relatively expensive. Horse and donkey rides are being exploited in the tourist season.

Economic Zones:

Energy Policy:

The main generator of energy is imported fossil-fuels, but the government is interested in promoting a shift over to alternative energy and is attracting businesses that are involved with alternative energy production. Currently about 30% of energy is production is hydraulic and the island is in the process of developing effective wind-energy farms.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Official Currency:
Euro

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

The Regional Park covers one third of the island's surface and includes 82 communes. The park runs from northwest to southeast including the highest mountain range on the island. Corsica has the highest mountains and the most rivers of any Mediterranean island. Its highest point is 2,710m, but it has 20 other mountains over 2,000m. The average altitude is 560m. The main mountain range in Corsica runs from north-west to south-east, effectively dividing the island into two. East of the mountains is traditionally known as "over here", and west as "over there." For a long time there was no road between Bastia and Ajaccio. Corsica has a UNESCO World Heritage Site, five nature reserves, 23 flora and fauna areas of special interest, and a growing acreage owned by the Conservatoire de Littoral (currently 27,000 acres), a national conservation group. Ownership of the state forests has been transferred into the hands of the regional government. The island has rich vegetation on all but the highest slopes – three quarters of the island is covered by forest, and only 15% is cultivated. There are nine alpine volcanic lakes (covering about 2,500 acres), and 17 main rivers and tributaries, stretching 2,035km. The water on the island is famous for its purity. It is said to have an almost total absence of pesticides. There are 2,980 plant species in Corsica of which 131 are endemic. There are many species of birds, two tortoise parks, and many reptiles and insects due to the low use of artificial pesticides and fertilizers.

Agriculture/Forestry:

In 2000, 155,890 hectares of land was devoted to agriculture (15% of the land). Animal husbandry is practiced (bovine, milk sheep, goats, and pigs), and fruit and nuts are grown. The main fruits are citrus, clementines, kiwis, plums, and figs. Olives are grown for oil. Almonds and hazelnuts are also grown. Corsica grows 98.9% of France's citrus fruit, 99.5% of its clementines, 13.2% of its kiwis, 4.4% of its plums for prunes, 10.9% of its chestnuts, 2.5% of the olives used for olive oil, 3% of its hazelnuts and 4.3% of its figs. Great emphasis has always been placed on quality, which is based on small-scale artisanal production. With coastal migration the agricultural lands are being abandoned, and those that remain in agricultural production are ageing. Olive production is currently increasing, but the average age of growers is 60 and most have other occupations to supplement their farming. The Corsican government is currently putting a great deal of emphasis on rural and agricultural development to complement and support the tourist trade and prevent continued desertification of the island's interior.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

Marine Life:

Although 80% of the Corsican population lives and works on the coast, 70% percent of the coastline is excluded from potential development and therefore remains in its natural state. All of the waters surrounding Corsica are within the Whale and Dolphin Sanctuary (RIMMO – Reserve Internationale Maritime en Mediterranee Occidentale). The reserve was created in 2002 and covers 83,000 square km. It is especially high in plankton, which is what attracts the dolphins and whales. It has been estimated that there are 2-3,000 whales in the area, and 25,000 dolphins.

Critical Issues:

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Haute Corse is in the north and its capital is Bastia. Corse de Sud is the southern area and has its capital in Ajaccio, which is also the Regional capital and the seat of the regional government, the Collectivite Territoriale de Corse (CTC).

Political System:

On May 15, 1975, Corsica became the 22nd region of France with a Regional Council (Assembly) and its president, and an Executive Council with its president (assisted by the Council of Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs of Corsica). Administratively Corsica is divided into two departements and one region of France. Haute Corse is in the north and its capital is Bastia. Corse de Sud is the southern area and has its capital in Ajaccio, which is also the Regional capital and the seat of the regional government, the Collectivite Territoriale de Corse (CTC). The political boundaries are defined by the geographical ones – the mountains, which run from the northeast to the southwest of the island. The east is traditionally known as "over here", or "the land of the commons", and the west as "over there", or "the land of the lords." The Regional Assembly has no legislative powers, but may be consulted by the Prime Minister on issues pertinent to the island. The Executive Council is composed of seven ministers selected from the Assembly (from which they must resign), headed by a president. The consultative Economic, Social and Cultural Council (Conseil Economique, Social et Culturel – CESC) is responsible for assisting in Corsica's medium-term objectives for economic, social and cultural development as well as the means to accomplish these. Each of the departements has its own General Council and the division of competencies between the regional and the departement authorities is not always clear. There is a lot of overlap which results in inefficiency and makes Corsica the most over-administrated region in France with the highest number of elected officials per capita. A considerable number of competencies have been transferred from the national to the regional government over time. In 1982 a new category of territorial collective was established and Corsica became one of these due to its history, insularity, and desire for a greater degree of autonomy. The legislation that stipulated this new degree of autonomy was called Le Statut Particulier de la Corse. It has had a number of revisions, the most recent being in 2002. Currently the island has a high degree of autonomy and is responsible for education and training, communications, culture and environment, development of the territory, economic aid, agriculture, sports and tourism, accommodation, local

services and transport, professional formation and energy, and infrastructure and planning. NB: Autonomy in managing these things does not mean they do not receive economic support in these areas from the national government. A number of these areas receive a large amount of funding from the national government.

Political Parties:

Important Legislation:

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

Republic of France

Citizenship:

French

Paradiplomacy:

Corsica is a member of IMEDOC (Iles de la Mediterranee Occidentale). It is not currently represented at the European Parliament.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Corsica suffers from a demographic deficit as a result of emigration between 1900 and 1955 when it lost one-third of its population. This trend has only been reversed recently due to immigration. Corsica is one of the least densely populated regions of France with a density of 30 people per square km. About half of the island's population lives in the two cities of Ajaccio (government centre) and Bastia (business centre), and two-thirds of the population lives in coastal areas. It has 365 villages, most inhabited by less than one hundred people. This means that 50% of the island has a population density of less than 10 people per square km. Despite immigration, Corsica's population is still ageing. It has been estimated that by 2030 over 30% will be 60 years old and up.

Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
	0	0	%

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up

Migration:

Currently 10% of the population is foreign. The largest groups are Moroccan (14,000) and Portuguese (4,000). There are half a million Corsicans in mainland France and another one million in other areas of the world. Most of them are concentrated in Marseille, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. Corsicans represented the largest percentage of French living in colonies, which often served as a stepping-stone to a final settling point. A high number of Corsicans in the Diaspora return to the island annually on holiday.



Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expedctancy:

Crude Death Rate:

Ethnicity:

There are both genetic and linguistic differentiations between the north and south (either side of the mountain range). There are also differences in the people according to whether they have French roots or Tuscan roots. Those living in the north are said to be more modern and those in the south more traditional.

Class Division:

Languages:

The official language in Corsica is French, but a large number of islanders speak Corsican, or Corsu, which is an Indo-European language of Romance or Latin origin. Until the end of the 19th century it was transmitted orally which accounts for its many variations. The language has no legal status and the French government has not yet ratified the European Minority Charter.

Religion:

Literacy:

Education System:

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	

Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:											
		Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
		Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Medical Services:

In 2003 Corsica had 491 general practitioners, or 186 per 100,000 inhabitants. It had 452 specialized practitioners, or 171 per 100,000 inhabitants. It had 222 dentists (84 per 100,000 inhabitants), and 1,847 nurses (698 per 100,000 inhabitants). In 2002, Corsica had 813 public establishments (666 with no overnight facilities, and 147 with patient beds), and 863 private establishments (448 out-patient, and 415 overnight). The island also has 279 psychiatric establishments. The number of hospital beds is 2,458, or 929 per 100,000 inhabitants.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Like most Mediterranean islands, Corsica has been occupied by numerous groups including the Romans, Pisans, Genoese, British, and the French. The island had been virtually independent from 1755-1769 as a result of rebelling against their Genoese rulers. Bankrupt and unable to end the rebellion, the Genoese sold the island to the French in 1768 under the Treaty of Versailles. After the 1789 revolution the Corsicans rebelled again, calling for union with Great Britain. This they achieved for a short time as a result of losing the Napoleonic wars, but the island was regained by the French at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. During the Italian occupation in 1943 they again rebelled. In order to minimize the massive post-war emigration which was the result of an economic and cultural decline on the island, the government instituted the Plan D'Action Regional in 1957. The plan was reactivated in 1958 in order to facilitate the relocation of 17,000 settlers from Algeria following independence in 1962 (where they received preferential treatment in the allocation of land in the east, something that was not appreciated by the Corsicans).

Referenda:

There has been a strong movement for a greater degree of autonomy, which was finally heeded by the national government with the drawing up of a referendum which if it had passed, would have granted the island a greater degree of autonomy. The referendum was held on July 6, 2003 and a very narrow majority of Corsican voters opposed the proposal. It is important to note that 40% of Corsicans are employed by the French government and that the proposal would have modified the current political institutions on the island, merging the two administrative regions into one with a single assembly – thus undoubtedly eliminating a number of positions. Despite the fact that the legislation was not passed, the desire for greater recognition of the Corsican people, their identity, culture, and language is strong. Currently only 13% of the population are in favour of independence, many favour a greater degree of autonomy, and others want full union with France. There is a strong military group that has been fighting for greater independence on the island for some time, and 20% of political prisoners on the mainland are Corsican.

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Archaeological Sites: Corsica has many archaeological sites, especially in the mountainous areas, from Neolithic, megalithic, as well as iron age, down through medieval times and later. The Corsican coast was ringed by Genoese towers, many of which have been destroyed with time. There are currently about ninety of them remaining. They used to serve as warning beacons and in the defence of the island. **Festivals:** There are many festivals in Corsica throughout the year celebrating and commemorating the arrival of conquerors, the life and death of Christ, wines, cheese, and other farm products, Napoleon's birthday, the patron Saint of fishing, and others. The most famous non-religious festival is the Foire a la Chataigne, the faire of the chestnut. **Handicrafts and Art:** There is quite a well-established and diversely talented community of artists on the island. Some of the things they make are traditional wind-instruments, sculptures, blankets made from Corsican wool, pottery, ceteras (a local mandolin), bronze pieces, traditional knives, coral jewellery, as well as paintings and drawings inspired by the island.

Sources:

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Please address queries to:
Institute of Island Studies
University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
550 University Ave
Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

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