



EconoMag

The Show that demystifies Economics

Global Cities – part 2

Paris©

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Paris is seen as Europe's principal rival to London because it's the only other city on the continent that can actually match London's vast cultural and economic diversity and global influence as both a tourist destination and a business hub. When looking at population and GDP both cities are actually quite close to each other when comparing the whole of Greater London with Paris and its surrounding suburbs of Ile de France. In terms of size Paris itself is only 105 km² whereas London has 1572 km². That's why in many rankings Paris and its entire metropolitan area, which measures 2845 km², are taken into account. So, in our profile today, we will refer to this whole region, otherwise the comparisons wouldn't be fair, since the main business district of Paris, called La Defense, is not in Paris proper, but located outside its Peripherique, the circular roadway surrounding the actual city.

La Défense is Paris' financial district; and this is where you will find some of the largest French companies such as Total and Société General. It is situated across parts of three towns: Puteaux, Courbevoie and Nanterre, and is directly connected to Paris by metro, trains and buses. La Defense houses 3,500,000 square meters of office space, less than the City of London, but it is spread out over a larger area, which is why La Defense is considered the biggest Central Business District of any city in Europe. The tallest building at La Defense is the "Tour First", originally built in 1974 to a height of 159 meters, but from 2007 to 2011 it underwent a major renovation and expansion, resulting in a complete transformation, which saw the building grow to 231 meters, making it the tallest skyscraper in France.

Of course, Paris not only has La Defense to fend for its economic status, as to the south west of the city you will find the Val de Seine, also known as the Media district, where there is a high concentration of radio and television stations such as TF1, BFM and Canal+.

The main economic sector of Paris and its metropolitan area is the services industries, comprising about 84% of the region's workforce, or about 5.3 million people. Another interesting point is that Paris, including the Ile de France, is still highly diversified compared to other cities of its caliber, as the entire area is still the leading industrial region of France; and agriculture there has one of the highest production rates in the country.

Finally, Paris is considered as the world's most popular tourist destination, although sometimes in stiff competition with London for this title. The tourism sector accounts for 12.8% of jobs in Paris, while tourists themselves represent 50% of museum visits in the city, and 8% of the total revenue of the RATP, Paris' mass transport company. In all this makes up

about €8 billion annually for the city's metropolitan region. The main sites that tourists visit are the Louvre, the most visited museum in the world; the Chateau de Versailles; Montmartre; the emblematic Eiffel Tower; and of course, Disneyland Paris!

With all its economic importance to Europe and the world, Paris actually has a serious problem that might be its downfall in the years to come, and then its comparisons with London will become old news. According to the journalist Eric Leboucher and the architect Jean Nouvel, Paris, along with its surrounding region, is going through an economic decline and losing jobs at a faster rate than any other capital city in the world. Paris seems to be blinded by its brilliant and glorious past, but in the present day it refuses to remain economically competitive with other large metropolises. Paris is still far ahead of other major European cities in terms of its population, but with fewer jobs this can be a troublesome situation in the future.

As for a city with a large population, tomorrow we will visit the most populated metropolis in the world: Tokyo!

