

Examine the factors that influence the development of one economic activity in a European region (not Ireland) that you have studied.

(30 marks)

Answer:

I have chosen to examine the factors that influence the development of tourism in the Mezzogiorno, Southern Italy.

This industry is a key pillar of development in the region. There are many factors leading to the development and success of this industry. The Mezzogiorno has a wealth of culture from the ancient civilisations of N. Africa, Greece and the Roman Empire. Southern Italy has for millennia been a meeting point of cultures from the near East, northern Africa and Europe itself. The climate of the Mezzogiorno can be described as Mediterranean (warm temperate oceanic climate), with warm hot summers and mild moist winters. A major factor to the summer climate is the influence of the Azores; a high-pressure belt that brings with it dry descending air that creates cloudless skies in the summer. Temperatures in Naples during the summer often exceed 30°C. This is a major attraction for tourists who visit from northern Europe in the summer, e.g. UK and Ireland.

The region has numerous physical factors which contribute to its success. The region has an unspoilt countryside with 85% being upland and hilly providing scenic vistas. Volcanic mountains such as Etna, Stromboli and Vesuvius also offer attractions for tourists who may have an interest in the likes of Pompeii and its volcanic history. The coastlines look out to the Adriatic and the Mediterranean and provide beaches and bays for family holidays, e.g. Sorrento in the bay of Naples. The many small islands, e.g. Capri - part of the Amalfi coastline, also play an important role in this economy. The history of the region stretches back for hundreds of years and offers insights into the Greek and Roman empires which were so influential in Europe. The Mezzogiorno's landscape also provides many ruins from the various cultures that have inhabited the area, e.g. the Moors, Arabs.

To complement the tourist industry, a well developed infrastructure has been put in place with, for example an 'autostrada' (motorways) and airports, e.g. Calabria. The Cassa Per il Mezzogiorno, set up to improve the economy of the south, injected money into the tourist sector as has the E.U. through funds such as the E.R.D.F. and the E.S.F. New ferry connections to the islands, Sicily and Sardinia have also helped the region. All of these factors have led to the tourist industry becoming a major employer in the region.