

Regional Geography and Economy of the European Countries



Textbook
for the course 293NPADV362B by

Istvan Tózsza
Read by Chris Rajkowsky

Corvinus University of Budapest
Department of Economic Geography
and Futures Studies

International Study Program

Budapest
Hungary
2014

Contents

Europe – an Overview	04
Regional Economic Conditions of the European Countries	13
Regional Summaries of the European Union Countries	
• Austria (Österreich)	24
• Belgium (Belgique / België)	27
• Bulgaria (Bǎlgarija)	30
• Croatia (Hrvatska)	32
• Czechia (Česko)	34
• Cyprus (Kypros)	37
• Denmark (Danmark)	39
• Estonia (Eesti)	41
• Finland (Suomi)	43
• France	45
• Germany (Deutschland)	51
• Greece (Ellada)	57
• Hungary (Magyarország)	60
• Ireland (Éire)	64
• Italy (Italia)	66
• Latvia (Latvija)	73
• Lithuania (Lietuva)	75
• Luxembourg (Lëtzebuerg / Luxemburg) <i>mini state</i>	77
• Malta	78
• Netherlands, The (Nederland)	80
• Poland (Polska)	83
• Portugal	86
• Romania (România)	89
• Slovakia (Slovensko)	92
• Slovenia (Slovenija)	95
• Spain (España)	97
• Sweden (Sverige)	103
• United Kingdom (The UK)	107
Regional Summaries of the Non EU – European Countries	
• Abkhazia (Абхазия) <i>unrecognized</i>	113
• Albania (Shqipëria)	115
• Andorra <i>mini state</i>	117
• Armenia (Hayastan)	118

• Azerbaijan (Azərbaycan / Азәрбајҹан) <i>partly European</i>	120
• Belarus (Беларусь / Biełaruś)	121
• Bosnia Herzegovina (Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна и Херцеговина)	123
• Georgia (Skartvela)	125
• Iceland (Ísland)	127
• Kazakhstan (Қазақстан / Qazaqstan) <i>partly European</i>	129
• Kosovo (Kosovë) <i>unrecognized</i>	131
• Liechtenstein <i>mini state</i>	132
• Macedonia (Македонија / Makedonija)	133
• Moldova (Молдова)	134
• Monaco <i>mini state</i>	136
• Montenegro (Црна Гора / Crna Gora)	138
• Nagorno-Karabakh (Нагорный Карабах) <i>unrecognized</i>	140
• North Cyprus (Kıbrıs) <i>unrecognized</i>	142
• Norway (Noreg)	143
• Russia (Россия / Rossiya) <i>partly European</i>	145
• San Marino <i>mini state</i>	150
• Serbia (Србија / Srbija)	151
• South Ossetia (Южная Осетия) <i>unrecognized</i>	153
• Switzerland (Schweiz / Suisse / Svizzera)	155
• Transnistria (Приднестровска) <i>unrecognized</i>	158
• Turkey (Türkiye) <i>partly European</i>	160
• Ukraine (Україна / Ukraïna)	162
• Vatican, The (Vaticanum) <i>mini state</i>	164
Regional differences in Europe's economic development	165
The greatest regional economic impact in Europe	166
Information society	167
Sources	168

Europe – an Overview

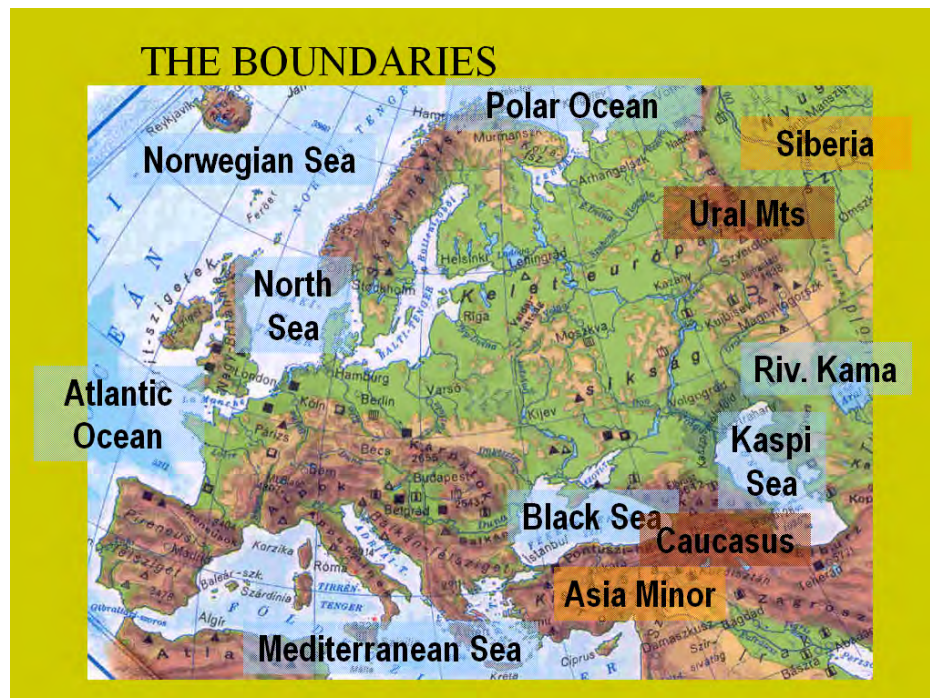
As the cradle of European civilization was the Prehellenic Island of Crete in the Mediterranean, it is evident that the name of Europe comes from the ancient Greek, too. Europa was originally a princess of Phoenicia in the Near East, where Mediterranean commerce was first developed. She was a daughter of the first Phoenician king, Agenor, and a nymph, symbolising North Africa, Lybia. She was so beautiful that the king of gods, Zeus wanted to seduce her in the image of a white bull with golden horns. Zeus, in the form of a bull, took Europa to the island of Crete, where their descendants founded the first European civilization, the Minoan, under the rule of King Minos. The name Europe has two Greek interpretations. One is 'Eur opé' meaning 'wide face' referring to the full moon. The other is more interesting from a geographic point of view: 'Eu ropé' meaning 'good for the willow tree'. What land is good for the willow? The land which is rich in water of course, and this is true for the European continent, indeed.

The European Continent is the smallest but is the most dissected, containing numerous bays and inland seas, peninsulas, high mountain ranges, large rivers. Since geographical conditions are not ideal (the soils are poor, winters are cold, summers are hot) early men in Europe were forced to find ways to protect themselves from the weather by clothing, to improve agricultural production through the invention of iron tools and domestication of animals from a very early time. This led to specialization of skills and the formation of craftsmanship very early on. The specialization of labour produced extra goods such as clothing, ironware, pottery etc. Because of the continent's high degree of dissection large empires like those in Egypt, China, India, Peru etc. could not emerge. A lot of small kingdoms and duchies were founded instead. This is reflected by the very large variety of languages spoken in such a small continent, too. Since there was no super kingdom or a large empire occupying the whole continent, surplus goods were not collected by any strong central power, instead, they were taken to market places, thus starting to form a market economy as early as the middle ages. The bourgeois class rose at an early stage of history, no wonder the industrial revolution started in Europe, in England as early as the seventeenth century. Thus Europe came to be the workshop and the first industrial power of the world. Colonialization further helped the leading European nations (the Spanish, Dutch, French and English) to become the rulers of the world. After all we can say the fostering geographical conditions and the great degree of geographical dissection made Europe the first economic power in the world up until World War 1 and the rise of the USA.

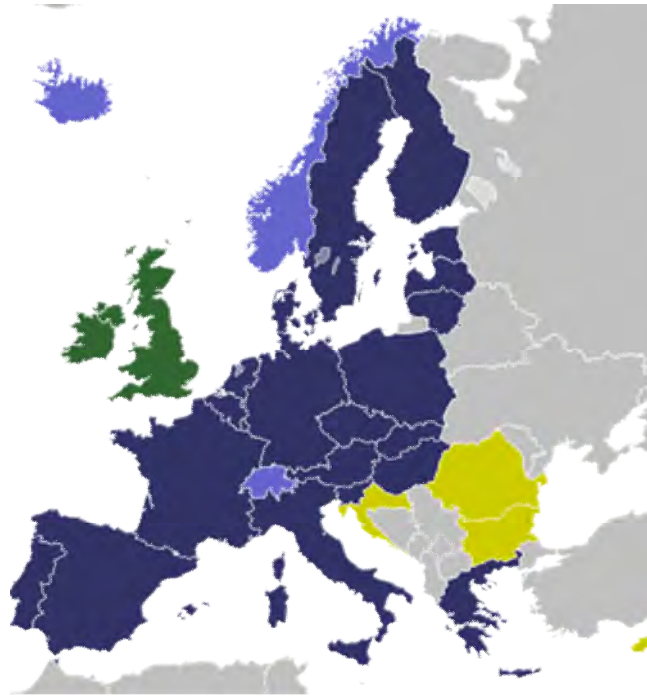
The geographic boundaries of Europe are, from north to south: the Polar Ocean, North Sea, Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The Eastern boundary of Europe and Asia is marked by the water divide of the Ural Mountains and the River Kama flowing to the inland Kaspi Sea. There are 51 countries occupying the territory of Europe, from the world's tiniest state (Vatican City) to the world's largest country, Russia. However, this latter is situated only partly in Europe and partly in Asia. There are two other countries of the 51 with only a small part in Europe and most of their territory in Middle Asia and Asia Minor. These are Kazakhstan and Turkey respectively. There are again two countries that are not recognized by international law, still they exist under unstable political circumstances. They are North Cyprus (part of the island of Cyprus) and Kosovo (a former part of Serbia). Also, there are 7 countries that are so small with respect to their population and territory that they are referred to as mini states (Malta, Luxembourg, Lichtenstein, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City). Thus we can say there are 39 'pure European' and normal sized countries in Europe. Their number increased after the collapse of the Soviet system in Central and Eastern Europe, when 18 new, independent republics were formed in the former Soviet Union (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, the Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan) and Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo). Also Czechoslovakia was split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. And one country, the so called East German Democratic Republic could reunite with the former 'West' Germany.



The countries of Europe, with the 27 European Union member states in light blue.



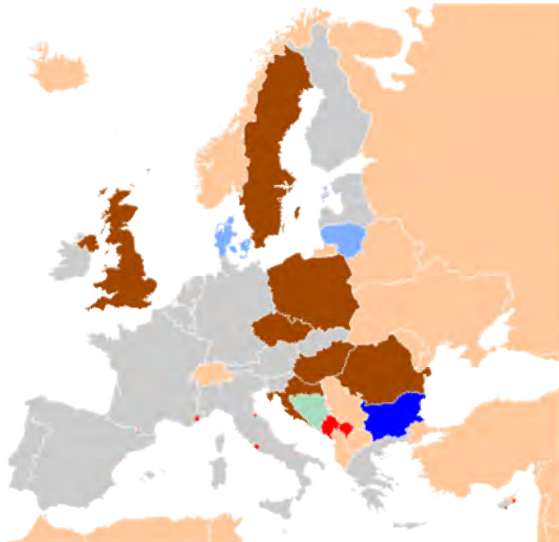
The geographic boundaries of Europe, from North to west: Polar Ocean, Norwegian Sea, North Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea (Africa), the coasts of Asia Minor, Black Sea, water divide of the Caucasus Mountains, Kaspian Sea, River Kama, the water divide of the Ural Mountains (Siberia).



The customs situation of Europe regarding the impact of the Schengen Agreement (S. A.) facilitating the free flow of citizens among countries

	Fully Schengen members, having implemented the S. A.	22 EU member states
	Associated non EU Schengen members, having implemented the S. A.	Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, ministates
	EU members not having implemented the S. A.	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Romania
	EU members having applied some Schengen laws	Ireland, the UK
	non EU countries not having applied Schengen laws	non EU states

Source: Wikipedia; Schengen Area



	Eurozone countries	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia	
	ERM ¹ members	Denmark, Lithuania,	
	EU member, with currency pegged to the euro	Bulgaria	
	EU member with free floating currency	Croatia, Czech, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the UK	
	non EU member, not pegged to the euro	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Norway, North Cyprus, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey,	
	non EU member, using euro	Montenegro, Kosovo, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, Vatican	
	non EU member, currency pegged to the euro	Bosnia Herzegovina	

Currencies related to the Euro in Europe

Source: Wikimedia; Atlas of Europe

¹ ERM = Exchange Rate Mechanism; the rate of exchange of the currency belong to the European Monetary System and is defined by the European Committee



Language relations and barriers in Europe

Spoken languages can help international trade and thus economic development, especially if they overlap the political boundaries of countries. In old times Latin was the universal European language to support communication, as it was taught in all schools all over the continent. Today in Europe Russian, German, French, English, Spanish, Ukrainian, Italian and Polish are spoken by the largest groups of people. The most frequent means of international communication is, however, **English** in Europe, like elsewhere in the world, followed by **French** and **German**. The majority of the languages spoken in Europe belong to the Indo-European Language Family, with the exception of some Ural-Altaic ones and a Semitic one (Jewish). See the main subdivisions and the actual languages of the Indo-European Family below:

West Branch of the Indo-European Language Family						
Thraco-Illyrian and Caucasian Group	Hellenic Group	Celtic Group	Latinic Group Latin (<i>extinct</i>)	Germanic Group		
				West Germanic Subgroup	East Germ. Subgroup	North Germ. Subgroup
Albanian Armenian Georgian Kabardian Abkhaz <i>Debated:</i> Basque	Greek <i>Extinct:</i> <i>Doric</i> <i>Ionian</i> <i>Achaian</i> <i>Aiolian</i>	Irish Scottish Welsh <i>Extinct:</i> <i>Gaulish</i> <i>British / Breton</i> <i>Cornish, Manx</i>	Italian Sardinian, Corsican French, Walloon Occian, Maltese Spanish, Catalan Galician, Portugese Romanian, Moldovian	German Dutch Flemish Frisian English	<i>Extinct:</i> <i>Gothic</i> <i>Burgundian</i> <i>Vandalic</i>	Danish Swedish Norwegian Icelandic Fareorese

The countries' official languages are printed in bold. In Belgium, however, Walloon and Flemish are the official languages.

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

East Branch of the Indo-European Language Family					
Aryan Group		Slavic Group			Baltic Group
Iranian Subgroup	Indian Subgroup	West Slavic Subgroup	East Slavic Subgroup	South Slavic Subgroup	
Persian	Hindi, Gipsy	Polish	Russian	Croatian	Lithuanian
Pamirian	Nepalese, Cylonese	Czech	Belorussian	Serbian, Slovenian	Lettish
Kurdish	Bengalese, Vietnamese	Slovakian	Ukrainian	Macedonian	
Afghan	<i>Extinct: Sanskrit</i>			Bulgarian	<i>Extinct: Prussian</i>

The languages spoken in Europe are printed in bold and with the exception of Gipsy, they are also official languages of countries. The languages indicated under the Iranian and Indian subgroup are just examples.

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

Languages spoken in Europe which are not Indo-European languages and belong to other language families	
Semitic Language Family:	Hebrew-Jewish, Arabic
Ural-Altaic Language Family:	Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Karelian, Sami (Lappish)

Official languages of countries are printed in bold.

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

Government types

(with recommended short definitions)

Source: [CIA World Factbook](#), 2013

- **Absolute monarchy** - a form of government where the monarch rules unhindered, i.e., without any laws, constitution, or legally organized opposition
- **Anarchy** - a condition of lawlessness or political disorder brought about by the absence of governmental authority
- **Authoritarian** - a form of government in which state authority is imposed onto many aspects of citizens' lives
- **Commonwealth** - a nation, state, or other political entity founded on law and united by a compact of the people for the common good
- **Communist** - a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian, party holds power; state controls are imposed with the elimination of private ownership of property or capital while claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people (i.e., a classless society)
- **Confederacy (Confederation)** - a union by compact or treaty between states, provinces, or territories, that creates a central government with limited powers; the constituent entities retain supreme authority over all matters except those delegated to the central government
- **Constitutional** - a government by or operating under an authoritative document (constitution) that sets forth the system of fundamental laws and principles that determines the nature, functions, and limits of that government
- **Constitutional democracy** - a form of government in which the sovereign power of the people is spelled out in a governing constitution
- **Constitutional monarchy** - a system of government in which a monarch is guided by a constitution whereby his/her rights, duties, and responsibilities are spelled out in written law or by custom
- **Democracy** - a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but which is usually exercised indirectly through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed
- **Democratic republic** - a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them
- **Dictatorship** - a form of government in which a ruler or small clique wield absolute power (not restricted by a constitution or laws)
- **Ecclesiastical** - a government administrated by a church

- **Emirate** - similar to a monarchy or sultanate, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of an emir (the ruler of a Muslim state); the emir may be an absolute overlord or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority
- **Federal (Federation)** - a form of government in which sovereign power is formally divided - usually by means of a constitution - between a central authority and a number of constituent regions (states, colonies, or provinces) so that each region retains some management of its internal affairs; differs from a confederacy in that the central government exerts influence directly upon both individuals as well as upon the regional units
- **Federal republic** - a state in which the powers of the central government are restricted and in which the component parts (states, colonies, or provinces) retain a degree of self-government; ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who chose their governmental representatives
- **Islamic republic** - a particular form of government adopted by some Muslim states; although such a state is, in theory, a theocracy, it remains a republic, but its laws are required to be compatible with the laws of Islam
- **Maotism** - the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism developed in China by Mao Zedong (*Mao Tse-tung*), which states that a continuous revolution is necessary if the leaders of a communist state are to keep in touch with the people
- **Marxism** - the political, economic, and social principles espoused by 19th century economist Karl Marx; he viewed the struggle of workers as a progression of historical forces that would proceed from a class struggle of the proletariat (workers) exploited by capitalists (business owners), to a socialist "dictatorship of the proletariat," to, finally, a classless society - Communism
- **Marxism-Leninism** - an expanded form of communism developed by *Lenin* from doctrines of *Karl Marx*; Lenin saw imperialism as the final stage of capitalism and shifted the focus of workers' struggle from developed to underdeveloped countries
- **Monarchy** - a government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of a monarch who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right; the monarch may be either a sole absolute ruler or a sovereign - such as a king, queen, or prince - with constitutionally limited authority
- **Oligarchy** - a government in which control is exercised by a small group of individuals whose authority generally is based on wealth or power
- **Parliamentary democracy** - a political system in which the legislature (parliament) selects the government - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor along with the cabinet ministers - according to party strength as expressed in elections; by this system, the government acquires a dual responsibility: to the people as well as to the parliament
- **Parliamentary government (Cabinet-Parliamentary government)** - a government in which members of an executive branch (the cabinet and its leader - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor) are nominated to their positions by a legislature or parliament, and are directly responsible to it; this type of government can be dissolved at will by the parliament (legislature) by means of a no confidence vote or the leader of the cabinet may dissolve the parliament if it can no longer function
- **Parliamentary monarchy** - a state headed by a monarch who is not actively involved in policy formation or implementation (i.e., the exercise of sovereign powers by a monarch in a ceremonial capacity); true governmental leadership is carried out by a cabinet and its head - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor - who are drawn from a legislature (parliament)
- **Presidential** - a system of government where the executive branch exists separately from a legislature (to which it is generally not accountable)
- **Republic** - a representative democracy in which the people's elected deputies (representatives), not the people themselves, vote on legislation
- **Socialism** - a government in which the means of planning, producing, and distributing goods is controlled by a central government that theoretically seeks a more just and equitable distribution of property and labour; in actuality, most socialist governments have ended up being no more than dictatorships over workers by a ruling elite

- **Sultanate** - similar to a monarchy, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of a sultan (the head of a Muslim state); the sultan may be an absolute ruler or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority
- **Theocracy** - a form of government in which a Deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, but the Deity's laws are interpreted by ecclesiastical authorities (bishops, mullahs, etc.); a government subject to religious authority
- **Totalitarian** - a government that seeks to subordinate the individual to the state by controlling not only all political and economic matters, but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population

From **regional development** point of view in Europe there are four main state types: federal, regional, decentralized and unitary. If we take the role and function of the regions in each the essence can be summarized in a table shown below:

	EUROPEAN STATE TYPES			
REGION	FEDERAL	REGIONAL	DECENT.	UNITAR
LOCAL PA				
FINANCE			Autonomy	Statistics
LEGISL.	Constitution	Derivated	Decrees	
C.GOV. REP.				
E.G.				

In a federal state, the local governments in the region do not have too many administrative functions as authorities; in a regional type, local governments are slightly stronger, while in the unitary type local governments of a region are very strong as local authorities. All of the former socialist totalitarian countries became unitary states, which have strong local and central levels, but lack the regional one.

The financial independence of the regions is strong in a federal state, weaker in a regionalized one. In a decentralized state type regions have some autonomy in financing, but in a unitary state the financial role is expressed only in statistics.

Legislation on the regional level is strong in a federal state. The laws made by the regional parliament are subordinated to the constitution. In a regionalized type the regional laws have to be derived from the laws of the central government. In a decentralized state regions can make only decrees, while they can do nothing in the unitary type of state.

The representation of the regions in the central government is strong in the federal and almost nonexistent in the unitary type. When the UK is symbolized as an example for the unitary state we should think of only England or Scotland alone.

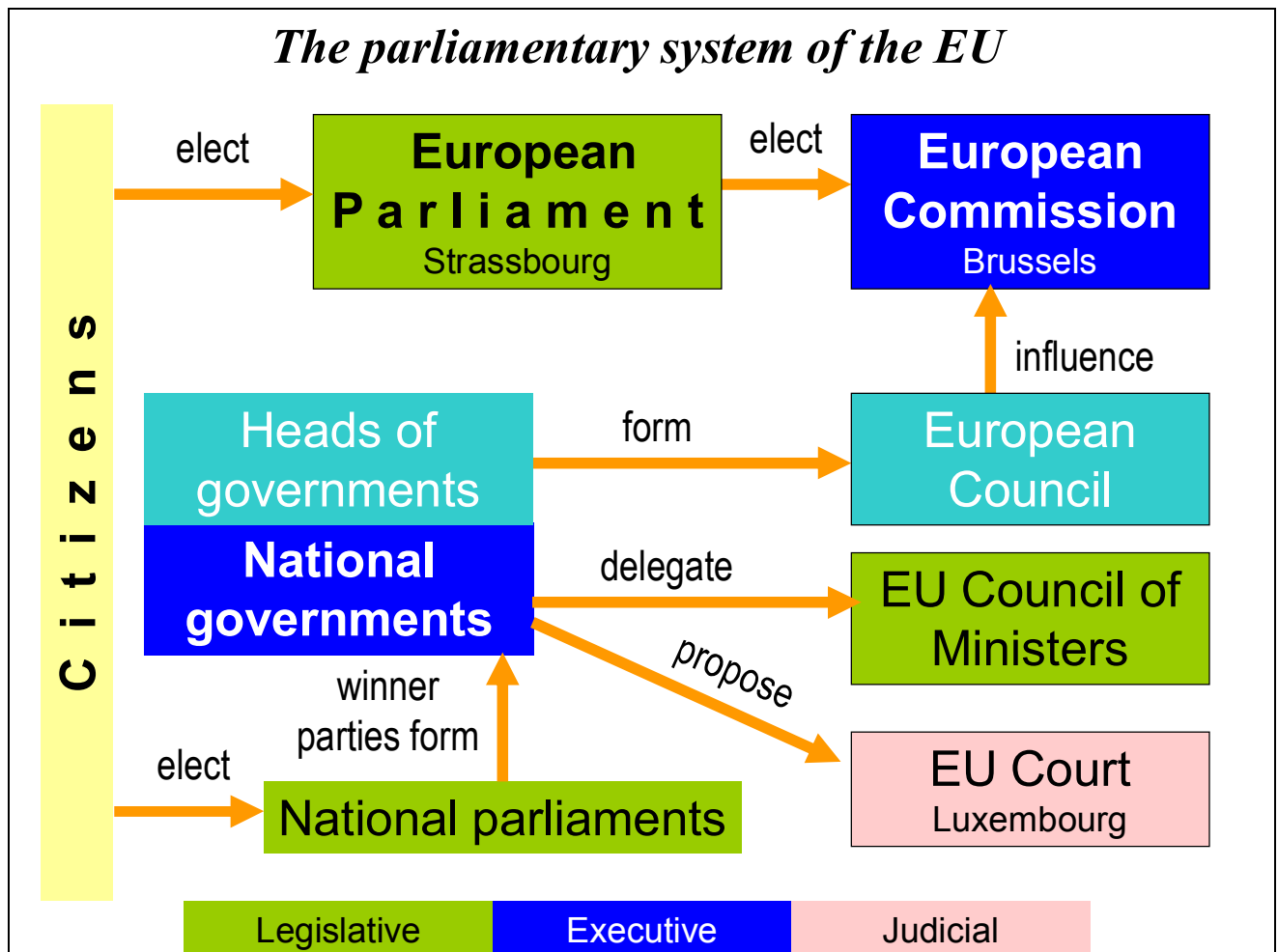
Country	Peoples 267	Socialists 188	Liberals 85	Greens 58	Conservative s 54	Freedom 48	Left greens 34	Non-inscrits 48
96	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXX	XXXXXXXX XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.	XXXXXXXXXX	XX
78	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXX	XXXXXX	.	X	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX
78	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXX	.	.	.	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX X	XXX	XXXXXX
73	.	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX	X	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	X	X
54	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXX	.	.	XXXXXXXXXX XXX	.
54	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXX	.	.	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX XXX	.	.	XXXX
35	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XX	XXX	.	.	.	.	.
26	XXXXXXXXXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	.	XXX	XXXX
21	XXXX	XXXX	XXXXXX	XX	XXXX	.	.	X
21	XXXX	XXXX	XXXXXX	XX	XXXX	.	.	X
21	XXXXXX	XX	.	.	X	.	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
21	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXX	.	XX	.	.	.	XXX
21	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.	.	.	.	XXXX	.
13	XXX	XXXXXX	XXX	XXXX	.	XX	X	.
18	XXXX	XXXX	X	XXX	.	.	.	XXXX
17	XXXXXX	XXXX	XXXX	.	XX	.	.	.
13	X	XXX	XXX	X	XXXX	.	X	.
13	XXX	XX	XXXX	X	XX	.	X	.
13	XXXXXX	XXXX	X	.	XX	.	.	.
11	XXXXXX	XX	X	X	X	.	.	.
11	XXXX	X	X	.	X	.	XXXX	.
11	XXX	XX	XX	X	X	XX	.	.
8	XXXX	X	.	X	X	X	.	.
8	XXXXX	X	X	X	.	.	.	.
6	XX	XX	.	.	.	.	XX	.
6	X	X	XXX	X	.	.	.	.
6	XXX	X	X	X	.	.	.	.
6	XXX	XXX	.	.	.	.	.	.

The number by countries and the **EU political party affiliations** of the European Parliament members (EU MPs) after the elections in **2014**

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/map.html>

The most EU MPs are delegated by Germany (96), while the least (6) by Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg and Malta. The EU MPs political affiliation is reflected by their belonging to any of the 8 political parties the largest of which are the right wing European Peoples' Party (267) and the left wing Socialist Party (188).

The figure below shows the parliamentary system of the European Union with the division of power among legislative (green), executive (blue) and judicial (pink) branches. The European Council consisting of the heads of national government has an informal executive role, while the EU Council of Ministers supports and influences the EU legislation as a professional (trade) policy institution.



EU enlargements (The name EU was created in 1993 included in the Maastricht Treaty)

The founding members of the EU as members of the European Common Market (**1958**) are: France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux states (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). Enlargements took place in **1973** (the UK, Ireland and Denmark); in **1981** (Greece); in **1986** (Portugal and Spain); in **1990** (German reunion with East Germany); **1995** (Austria, Finland, Sweden); in **2004** (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia); in **2007** (Bulgaria, Romania) and in **2013** (Croatia).

Further accession **negotiations** are under way with Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. **Candidates** are Albania and Macedonia. **Potential candidates** are Bosnia-Hercegovina and Kosovo.

The EU has a **free trade agreement** with Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. In its Eastern **Partnership** there are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Consequently there is only one country left that can be considered as the 'natural' economic – political competitor of the EU within Europe: **Russia**.

Regional Economic Conditions of the European Countries

When the state of the economy in Europe is studied in its regional distribution, it is useful to have an index that can represent economic strength.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is positively correlated with the standard of living, so it is often used to measure a country's economic performance as well. GDP stands for the market value of all goods and services produced or performed within a country or a region a year.

GDP is constructed and calculated or estimated from the following factors:

$$\text{GDP} = C + \text{Inv} + G + (\text{ex} - \text{im})$$

Where C = the annual private consumption within a country or region; Inv = gross investment; G = government spending; ex = total value of gross exports; im = gross imports.

In Europe, where there are some 50 countries, the rapid way to have a quick look at the distribution of economic development is to use the GDP per capita calculated and/or estimated at the country level.

Because statistical data cannot always be trusted and because the nationwide values of GDP (and its component factors) can sometimes only be estimated, it is advised to take several GDP approaches into consideration. The most widely used GDP calculations are published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA (CIA). In the table below the order of the European countries shows GDP/capita, estimated for the year 2014 calculated on the basis of the integration of IMF – WB – CIA data of the previous years.

Nº	COUNTRY	GDP	Nº	COUNTRY	GDP	Nº	COUNTRY	GDP
1.	Monaco (<i>mini state</i>)	133	20.	Spain <i>EU</i>	30	39.	Turkey (<i>partly European</i>)	9
2.	Luxembourg (<i>mini state</i>) <i>EU</i>	128	21.	The Vatican (<i>mini state</i>)	26	40.	Azerbaijan (<i>partly European</i>)	8
3.	Norway	109	22.	Slovenia <i>EU</i>	25	41.	Belarus	8
4.	Switzerland	91	23.	Malta (<i>mini state</i>) <i>EU</i>	25	42.	Bulgaria <i>EU</i>	8
5.	Liechtenstein (<i>mini state</i>)	81	24.	Greece <i>EU</i>	24	43.	Montenegro	7
6.	Sweden <i>EU</i>	64	25.	Estonia <i>EU</i>	22	44.	Serbia	6
7.	Denmark <i>EU</i>	63	26.	Portugal <i>EU</i>	21	45.	Macedonia	6
8.	San Marino (<i>mini state</i>)	59	27.	Czech Republic <i>EU</i>	20	46.	Albania	4
9.	Austria <i>EU</i>	54	28.	Cyprus <i>EU</i>	19	47.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	4
10.	The Netherlands <i>EU</i>	52	29.	Slovakia <i>EU</i>	19	48.	Ukraine	4
11.	Finland <i>EU</i>	52	30.	Latvia <i>EU</i>	16	49.	Kosovo (<i>partially recognized</i>)	4
12.	Belgium <i>EU</i>	51	31.	Russia (<i>partly European</i>)	15	50.	Armenia	4
13.	Iceland	50	32.	Poland <i>EU</i>	14	51.	Georgia	4
14.	Germany <i>EU</i>	48	33.	Lithuania <i>EU</i>	14	52.	Nagorno-Karabakh (<i>n recog</i>)	2
15.	Ireland <i>EU</i>	48	34.	Croatia <i>EU</i>	13	53.	Moldova	2
16.	Andorra (<i>mini state</i>)	47	35.	Hungary <i>EU</i>	13	54.	Abkhazia (<i>non recognized</i>)	2
17.	The United Kingdom <i>EU</i>	45	36.	North Cyprus (<i>n recog</i>)	13	55.	Transnistria (<i>non recognized</i>)	2
18.	France <i>EU</i>	44	37.	Kazakhstan (<i>p European</i>)	13	56.	South Ossetia (<i>non recognized</i>)	1
19.	Italy <i>EU</i>	36	38.	Romania <i>EU</i>	10			

The order of the **European countries** regarding **GDP/capita in thousand USD in 2014**

The 21st state, The Vatican (*mini state*) is not a subject to data supply this figure is estimation. Abbreviations: *n recog* = non recognized or partially recognized countries; *p European* = partly European i.e. a part or the larger part of the country lies in Asia. Source of the data: World GDP Ranking 2014 Est. (www.knomea.com)

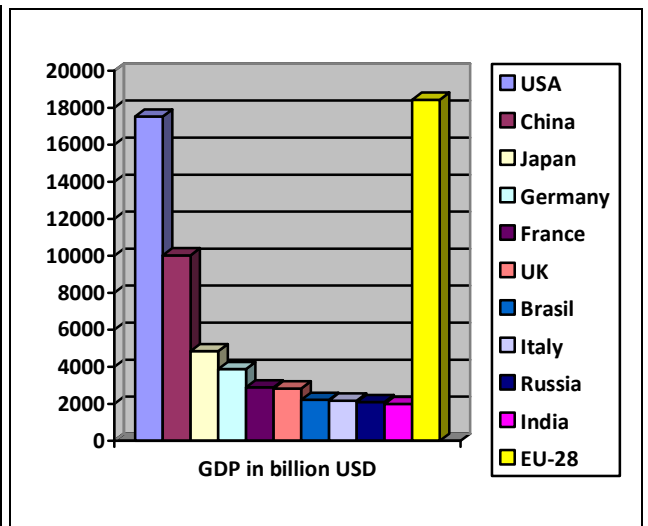
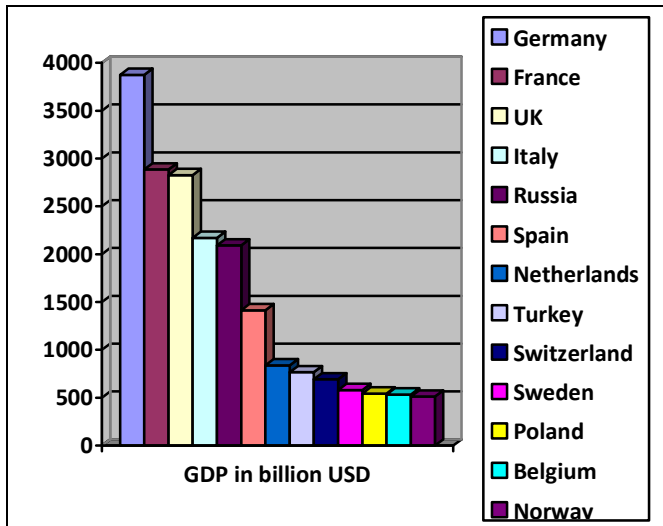
The regional distribution of the GDP/capita shows living standards are very high in the very small, so called mini states of Europe. Other countries heading the list are Norway, Ireland and Switzerland out of which Ireland is an EU country. This can be explained by the reconstruction of Irish economy a decade ago, when the American information communication industry (Intel) entered the island. Also, the number of Irish population is not too large. Norway is a country of traditionally high living standard, supported lately by the North Sea oil deposits and the richness of hydroelectric power. The Scandinavian, Benelux countries, the UK, Germany and France are the most developed ones expressed in the standard of living, while the poor countries are situated in the Balkans and in South Eastern Europe. From among the post socialist countries Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Estonia, Poland and Hungary can be mentioned as being in the middle, from 29 to 18 thousand USD annual incomes per person.

However, the absolute volume of GDP is the index describing the economic strength of the country. If the integrated data of the IMF, the WB and the CIA from 2008 are taken, the situation is quite different.

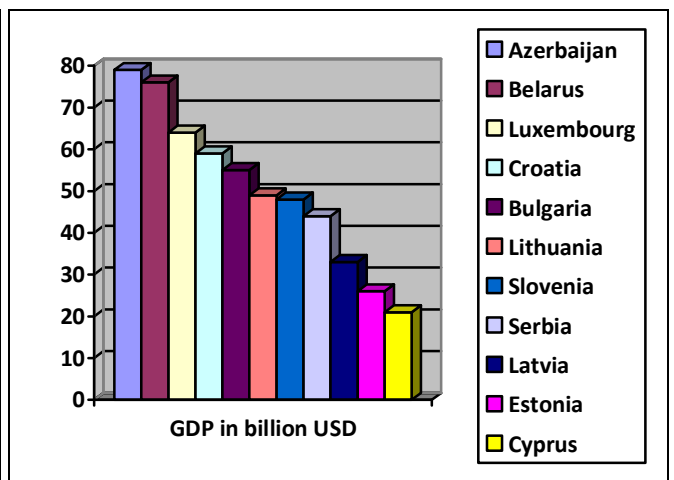
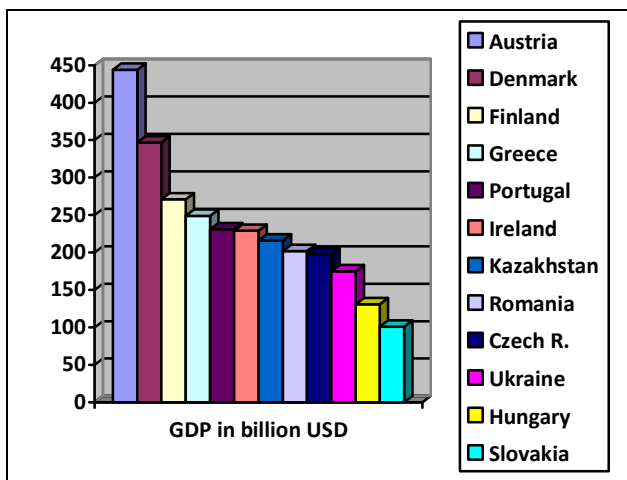
The order of the European countries regarding GDP in billion USD in 2014								
Nº	COUNTRY	GDP	Nº	COUNTRY	GDP	Nº	COUNTRY	GDP
	The USA (<i>world's 1st</i>)	17528	17.	Greece <i>EU</i>	249	38.	Georgia	16
	China (<i>world's 2nd</i>)	10027	18.	Portugal <i>EU</i>	231	39.	Iceland	15
	Japan (<i>world's 3rd</i>)	4846	19.	Ireland <i>EU</i>	229	40.	Albania	13
1.	Germany <i>EU</i> (<i>world's 4th</i>)	3875	20.	Kazakhstan (<i>partly European</i>)	216	41.	Armenia	11
2.	France <i>EU</i> (<i>world's 5th</i>)	2885	21.	Romania <i>EU</i>	202	42.	Macedonia	11
3.	The UK <i>EU</i> (<i>world's 6th</i>)	2827	22.	Czech Republic <i>EU</i>	198	43.	Malta (<i>mini state</i>) <i>EU</i>	10
	Brazil (<i>world's 7th</i>)	2216	23.	Ukraine	175	44.	Moldova	8
4.	Italy <i>EU</i> (<i>world's 8th</i>)	2171	24.	Hungary <i>EU</i>	131	45.	Kosovo (<i>partially recognized</i>)	7
5.	Russia (<i>p. European; 9th</i>)	2092	25.	Slovakia <i>EU</i>	101	46.	Montenegro	4
	India (<i>world's 10th</i>)	1995	26.	Azerbaijan (<i>partly European</i>)	79	47.	Monaco (<i>mini state</i>)	4
6.	Spain <i>EU</i>	1415	27.	Belarus	76	48.	Andorra (<i>mini state</i>)	4
7.	The Netherlands <i>EU</i>	838	28.	Luxembourg (<i>mini state</i>) <i>EU</i>	64	49.	North Cyprus (<i>non recognized</i>)	3.9
8.	Turkey (<i>partly European</i>)	767	29.	Croatia <i>EU</i>	59	50.	Lichtenstein (<i>mini state</i>)	3.0
9.	Switzerland	693	30.	Bulgaria <i>EU</i>	55	51.	San Marino (<i>mini state</i>)	1.9
10.	Sweden <i>EU</i>	580	31.	Lithuania <i>EU</i>	49	52.	Transnistria (<i>non recognized</i>)	0.8
11.	Poland <i>EU</i>	544	32.	Slovenia <i>EU</i>	48	53.	Abkhazia (<i>non recognized</i>)	0.5
12.	Belgium <i>EU</i>	534	33.	Serbia	44	54.	Nagorno-Karabakh (<i>n.recog.</i>)	0.4
13.	Norway	512	34.	Latvia <i>EU</i>	33	55.	South Ossetia (<i>n recognized</i>)	0.2
14.	Austria <i>EU</i>	444	35.	Estonia <i>EU</i>	26	56.	Vatican City (<i>mini state</i>) <i>no data</i>	
15.	Denmark <i>EU</i>	347	36.	Cyprus <i>EU</i>	21			
16.	Finland <i>EU</i>	271	37.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	19			

* Source: www.knomea.com (IMF, WB, CIA), 2014

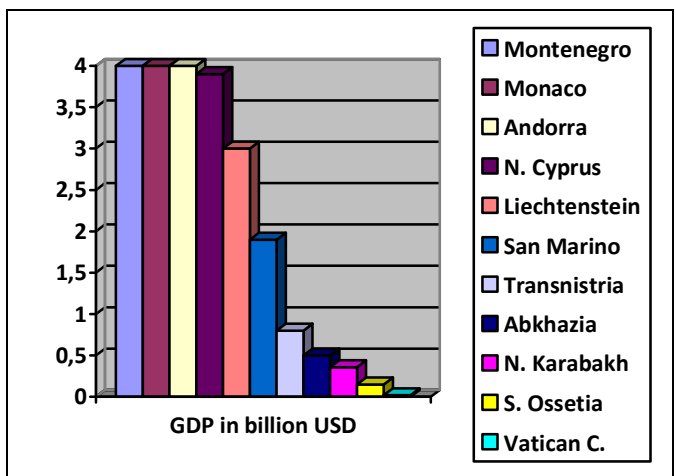
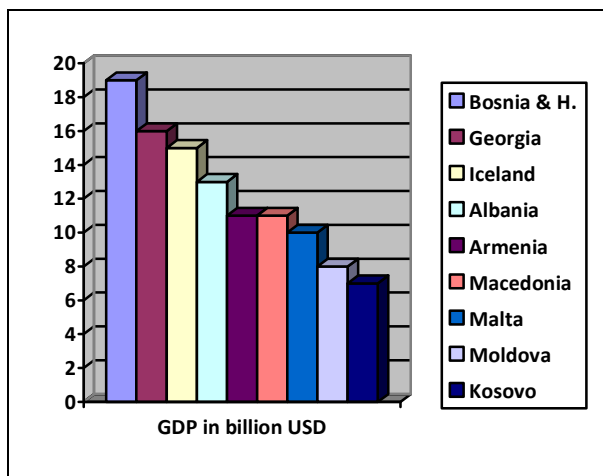
Following the three economic super powers of the world (the USA, by far the first, followed by China and Japan) Germany takes the lead in Europe, with about one fourth of the economic output of the USA. Among the top ten strongest economies there are France, the UK, Italy and Russia from, Europe. France and the UK have a similar economic output, though with some 1000 billion USD less a year than Germany. Russia, after the transition to market economy has been degraded to a level of another 1000 USD less than France and the UK. Russia's output is very similar to Italy's. The next European economic powers are Spain, the Netherlands. Within Europe, one has to pay attention to the dynamically growing economic performance of Poland and Turkey, since they are situated in the traditionally less developed Eastern and Southern parts of Europe.



The Table on the **left** shows the Gross Domestic Products in 2014 for the first 13 European countries. Source: www.knomea.com World GDP ranking 2014 estimations based on the previous years. To compare Germany's first place see to the global conditions see the Table on the **right** showing the world's top ten countries. In this chart the 18 437 USD total GDP of the EU-28 countries precedes the 17 528 USD GDP of the USA in 2014, indicating that the EU could be as well the strongest economic integration in the world.



The Table on the **left** shows the countries, the GDP of which ranks between **500 and 100 billion USD** in 2014. The Table on the **right** shows the countries with GDP values between **100 – 20 billion USD** in 2014



The Table on the **left** shows the countries, the GDP of which ranks between **20 and 5 billion USD** in 2014. The Table on the **right** shows the countries with GDP values less than **5 billion USD** in 2014

Apart from the mini states, the highest living standard can be found in the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland), the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria. Apart from the non recognized countries with political tensions threatening economy, the living standard slope reaches its worst condition in the Balkan countries (Bulgaria /EU member/, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina), the Caucasus countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) and in some Eastern European ones (Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova).

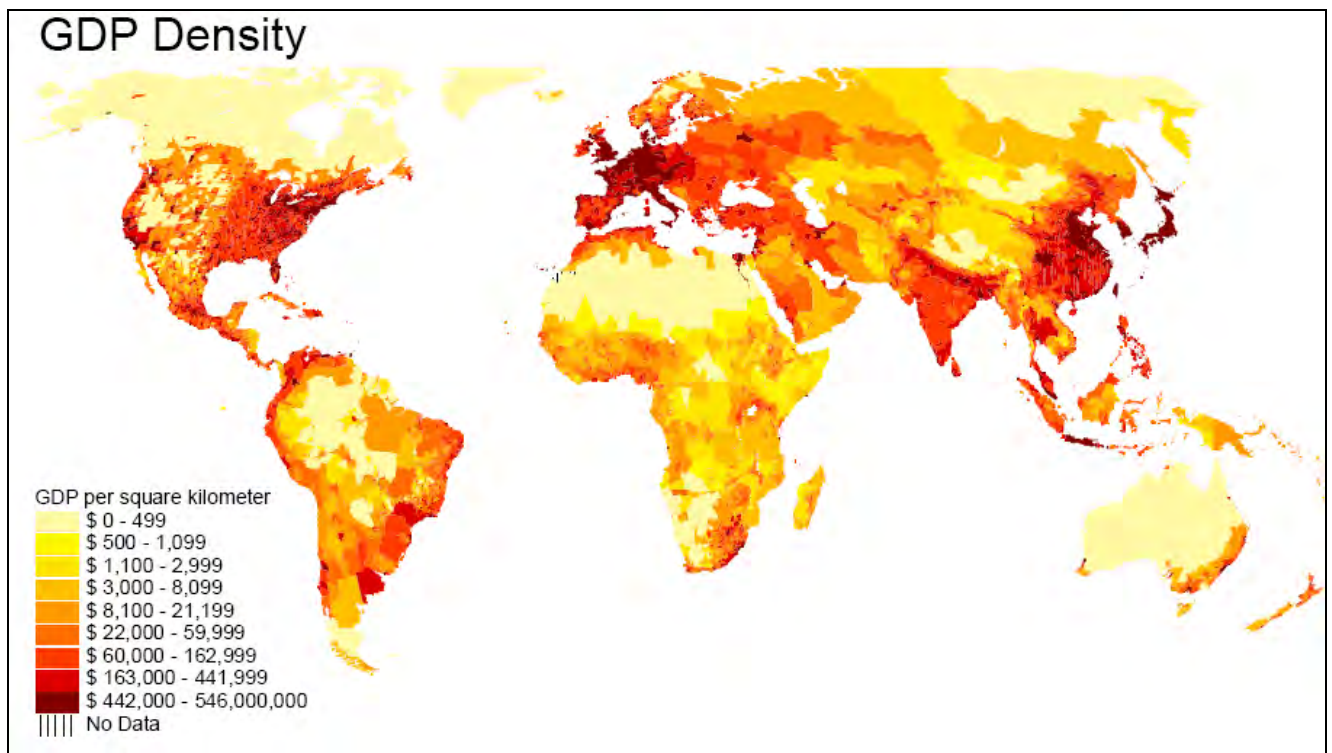
The largeness of a country is traditionally considered on the basis of her population number. The table showing the dimensions of the European countries represents the number of their citizens in millions. We find that in this sense by far the largest European country is Russia with some 113 million population on the European part of the country only which is 77 % of her total population, and makes up 38 % of the population of the whole of Europe alone. Turkey could be the second with her 81 million population, though if we consider only the European part of the country it is only 10 million and if we add the population of Istanbul too, as a European city, Turkey numbers 24 million 'only'. The other country which is actually an Asian one, is Kazakhstan, but because two of her westernmost regions can be considered as regions lying on European land in a physical geographical sense, the population of these two regions is listed as European Kazakhstan with 1,7 million people. Finally Azerbaijan is taken as a European country though her southern parts belong to Asia in physical geographical sense. Thus, apart from Russia, there are only 7 countries with considerable population between 80 – 40 million. The large majority (more than 4/5) of the European countries have relatively little population in a global sense that is less than 10 million.

From an economic point of view, Europe has been divided into two: (1) the Western, Northern and Southern parts and the Western regions of Central Europe which belong to the countries with a strong economy, and a high living standard, while (2) the very huge area of the Eastern parts are weaker. This can be explained by historical facts dating back to the Roman Empire and to different regional energies supporting the lands beside the Atlantic Ocean (opening up the possibility of navigation, exploration and colonization), while keeping the nations, settled down in the central and Eastern parts of the continent, away from the Atlantic gateways of Europe. Think of the efforts performed by the enlightened Russian czar, Peter the Great who built a new Russian capital at Saint Petersburg in order to acquire a port towards the Atlantic region. Nations like the Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Moldovan, Slovakian, Hungarian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Belorussian ones, etc. never had the opportunity to colonize far away continents, unlike Spain, the Netherlands, France and England. Though the Central and Eastern European geographic isolation is also true for the Germans, they, being situated in a less unfavourable geographic setting, and talented with handicraft technologies of long tradition, could break out from their geographical isolation. At the expense of two world wars ... The German extension towards Eastern Europe², however, also added to the *casus belli* (cause for war) on part of the two historical European world powers: France and England.

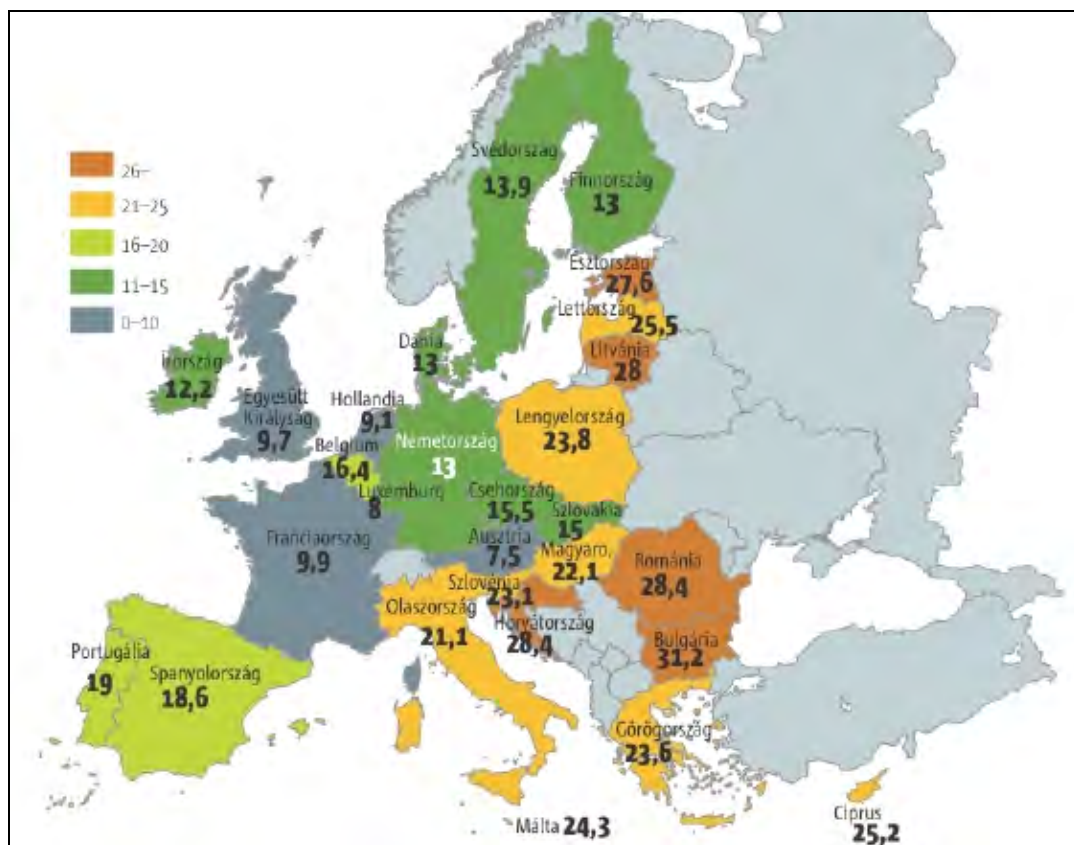
Western, Northern and Southern Europe is not homogeneously well developed, however. There are underdeveloped regions in the North European countries (Lapland and the far north), in the South of Europe (inland Spain, south Italy, north east Greece, south Portugal) and even in West Europe (rural France and Ireland).

There is an interesting map below showing the distribution of the total GDP per square kilometre all over the world. Though the data are not up to date (1999) the regional tendencies still prevail even today, telling us about three giant hubs of the world's economic sources of power: (1) New England and the Mid-Atlantic areas of the USA; (2) Japan, South Korea and the coastal parts of China; (3) Western Europe.

² Germans have exercised a strong economic influence all over Eastern Europe, e.g. today's most important Russian industrial regions were developed by German settlers by the River Volga and the Donetsk Basin. Also, in today's Ukraine, Romania, the Baltic States, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Czechia and Hungary, the first medieval manufactures, and later the most important industrial regions were mostly initiated and founded by German settlers.



Source: Gallup et al 1999



Estimated, regional output of the **black economy** in the % of GDP of the EU countries (Black economy is applied to untraceable and hence untaxable business dealings that are not reflected in a country's GDP calculation) Source: Metropol.hu 6.Sept 2014

The regional distribution of **black economy** in the EU reveals that Austria (7.5), Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the UK and France (9.9) have the most transparent economic systems with the amount of black economy below 10 % of the GDP. Corruption in the EU economy is estimated the highest where the black economy exceeds 20 % of the GDP. These are: Bulgaria (31.2), Romania and Croatia (28.4),

Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary (22.1) and Italy (21.1). The rest rank between 20 and 10 %: Portugal (19), Spain, Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Germany (13), and Ireland (12.2). The distribution shows some geographical marks as far as the economy in the Eastern and Southern member states is more corrupt than in the Northern and Western states. Exceptions on both sides are represented by Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and Finland (a little bit higher than expected) and Portugal, Spain, Slovakia (a little bit lower than expected) respectively.

There is an interesting way to estimate the wealth of regions from space ... at night. Next page, there is a satellite map of Europe composed of images taken at night. The distribution of light informs us about the amount of (cheap) energy at the disposal of different regions or countries. As for a single City it is Moscow that emits and consumes the largest amount of energy. The Randstadt (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague) together with Brussels stand for an equally large dose. In England London, Manchester, and Newcastle and in Scotland Glasgow are prominent. Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Saint Petersburg, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Naples, Milan, Bologna, Venice, Athens, in Poland Lodz and Wroclaw can also be recognized for their abundant energy supply.



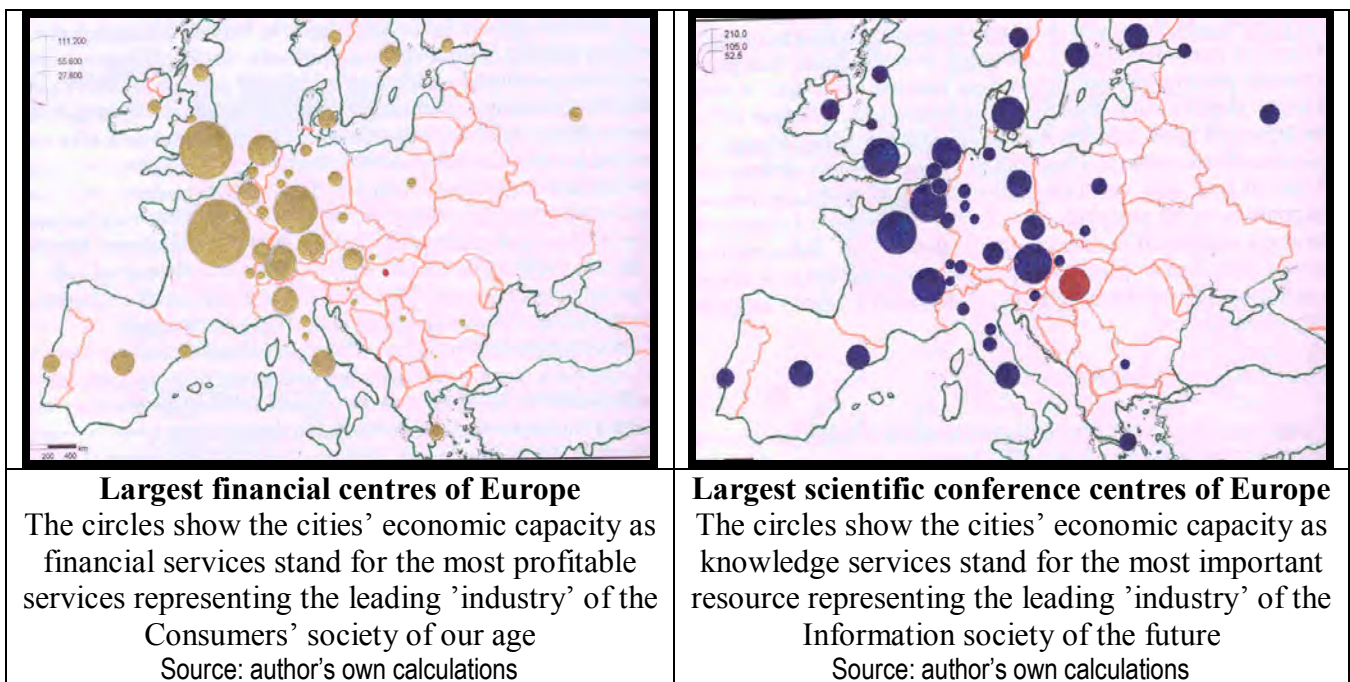
Europe by night – a satellite image
Source: NASA

As for regions, England, South Wales, the south of Sweden, the Dortmund – Düsseldorf region in Germany, the Donetsk Basin in the Ukraine and Russia, the coastlines of Italy, Spain, Norway, the Gulf of Bothnia can be spotted. The dark regions that stand for the traditionally less widely known regions include almost the whole of the Balkan Peninsula with Romania, Ireland, Scotland, the Alps, the inner lands of Spain and even France.

The regional distribution Economic power The following maps show some major European cities. In the Middle Ages those towns which possessed fertile and good quality croplands had the strongest

economies. Later, at the time of the Industrial Revolution those towns which had coal and iron ore mines and could accommodate heavy industry became the centres of economy. In our times, at the end of the consumers' society the economic strength of cities can be estimated from the proportion of their population of working age employed in the services. The highest prestige service is the monetary or banking service, resulting in by far the highest profit of all services. Therefore, if the strongest cities of Europe are to be mapped, a possible way is to collect data on their employment in the banking sector of economy.

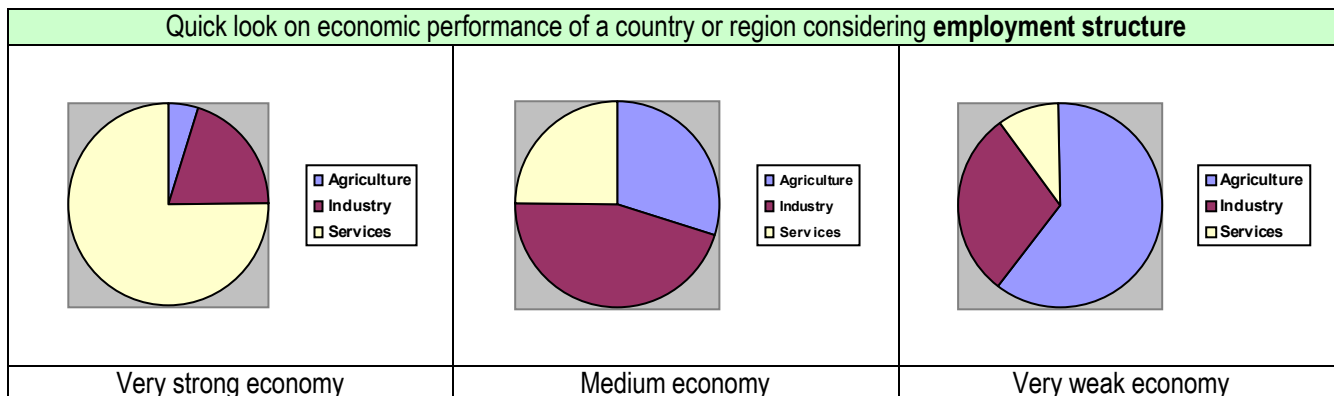
The greatest economic potential is shown by Paris, closely followed by London and Frankfurt. The next group is headed by Zurich, Amsterdam, Milan, Munich, Rome, Vienna, Brussels, Madrid and Strasbourg. The less important economic centres include Stockholm, Lisbon, Copenhagen, Glasgow, Oslo, Berlin, Dublin, Moscow (the largest European city), Barcelona, Athens, Helsinki, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Luxembourg, Manchester, Bologna, Cologne, Dortmund, Genève, Bern, Prague and Warsaw. The large central European cities like Budapest, Bucharest, Beograd, Zagreb are on the same level with Florence e.g., while such big capital cities like Kiev, Saint Petersburg, Sofia or Minsk cannot even be perceived on the map below on the left.



When trying to outline the future's possible trends in economic development, one has to bear in mind the major resource of the society that is just beginning. This is information society. While in the medieval society the arable land symbolised the main resource of economy, in the Industrial society the coal and iron. In the Consumer society those cities, region and countries are the richest that have oil and gas deposits, because everything – including the high prestige services use hydrocarbon-based energy, as the basic resource. The basic resource of the Information society, however, shows the imaginable most democratic geographical distribution compared to the unjust distribution of the previous resources. It is human intelligence or knowledge. In Information society those cities which have the highest amount of knowledge are going to be the winners in economic competition. This can be represented by the numbers of universities, research institutions, innovation centres, international scientific conferences ... If this last one is taken, future cities of economic strength can be seen in the above map on the right.

The same cities are considered, though this time their order changes. Vienna takes the lead, very closely followed by Paris, London, Brussels, Copenhagen, Strasbourg and Budapest, then Amsterdam. The next group of cities include: Helsinki, Stockholm, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague, Munich, Oslo, Moscow, Dublin and Lisbon, then Glasgow, Athens, Warsaw, Rotterdam and Saint Petersburg.

Since the most important profitable sector of economy is represented by services in today's Consumer society, we can obtain a quick view of a country's or a region's economic development simply from the proportion of employees working in agriculture, industry or services. The less people are employed in agriculture, the more developed the agriculture is (due to biotechnologies, machines, chemicals, fertilizers). There is a transition of economic importance from industry to services. So the larger the proportion of the working age population employed in the economic sector of services, the more developed and the stronger the national or regional economy is.



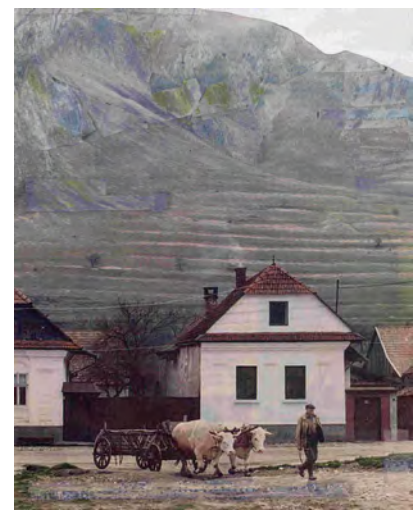
The division of the European geographic regions include West, North, South, East and Central:

West Europe (10)	<p>British Isles: Ireland (EU member since 1973), the UK (EU member since 1973)</p> <p>France (EU member since 1857), Belgium (EU member since 1957), the Netherlands (EU member since 1957), Luxembourg (EU member since 1957), Switzerland, Liechtenstein (mini state), Germany (EU member since 1957), Austria (EU member since 1995)</p>
North Europe (6)	<p>Scandinavian Peninsula: Norway, Sweden (EU member since 1995)</p> <p>Finland (EU member since 1995), Estonia (post USSR since 1991 and EU member since 2004), Denmark (EU member since 1973), Iceland (Mid-Atlantic island)</p>
South Europe (20)	<p>Pyrenean Peninsula: Portugal (EU member since 1986), Spain (EU member since 1986), Andorra (mini state)</p> <p>Apennine Peninsula: Italy (EU member since 1957), Monaco (mini state), San Marino (mini state), the Vatican (mini state)</p> <p>Balkan Peninsula: Croatia (post YU since 1991, EU member since 2013), Serbia (post YU since 1991), Montenegro (post YU since 2006), Bosnia Herzegovina (post YU since 1992), Kosovo (post YU and partially recognized since 2008), Macedonia (post YU since 1991), Bulgaria (EU member since 2007), Albania, Greece (EU member since 1981), Turkey (partly European)</p> <p>Mediterranean islands: Malta (EU member since 2004), Cyprus (EU member since 2004), North Cyprus (non recognized since 1983)</p>
East Europe (14)	<p>Latvia (post USSR since 1991, EU member since 2004), Lithuania (post USSR since 1990, EU member since 2004), Belarus (post USSR since 1990), Moldova (post USSR since 1991), Ukraine (post USSR since 1990), Russia (post USSR since 1991, partly European) Kazakhstan (post USSR since 1991, partly European), Transnistria (post USSR non recognized since 1990)</p> <p>Caucasian Region: Georgia (post USSR since 1991), Armenia (post USSR since 1991), Azerbaijan (post USSR since 1991, partly European) Abkhazia (post USSR, non recognized since 1992), Nagorno-Karabakh (post USSR, non recognized since 1991), South Ossetia (post USSR, non recognized since 1990)</p>
Central Europe (6)	<p>Czech (post CZ since 1992, EU member since 2004), Slovakia (post CZ since 1992, EU member since 2004), Poland (EU member since 2004), Hungary (EU member since 2004), Romania (EU member since 2007), Slovenia (post YU since 1991, EU member since 2004)</p>

The above table shows the political division of Europe. However, the physical geographic boundaries are more complicated than the political division. The map below shows the geographical boundaries of Central Europe, following watershed divides, rivers, canals and even the transition zones of the population of different religions or cultures, although within the political border of one country. Because of cultural links and economic traditions Germany and Austria are considered as west European countries despite their territories lying mainly in Central Europe. Also, because of cultural and historical links, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine will be taken as East European, Romania as Central European, and Italy as South European in spite of the fact that their territories lie respectively on the Central, Southern or East parts of Europe in physical geographical sense.





Central Europe – geographic boundaries (The Baltic Sea, Kiel Canal, North Sea, River Enns, River Rhine, water divide between the Western and Eastern Alps, the Alps foothills, River Sava, River Danube, water divide of the Eastern Carpathians, Catholic – Pravoslav ethnic boundary in the Ukraine, River Bug, Estonia.)



The farther east one goes in Europe the higher environmental degradation one finds

Regional Summaries of the European Union Countries

Austria (Österreich)

National flag		Official name	Coat of arms
		Republic of Austria Native name(s): Republik Österreich	
Capital city and population (million): Vienna 1.6		Language(s): German + Hungarian and Croatian (in Burgenland), Slovenian (in Carinthia and Styria)	
Country's population (million): 8.2		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 87 871
Administrative division			
Region: Bundesland	Seat	Region: Bundesland	Seat
Burgenland	Eisenstadt	Steiermark (Styria)	Graz
Kärnten (Carinthia)	Klagenfurt	Tirol	Innsbruck
Niederösterreich (Lower Austria)	Sankt Pölten	Vorarlberg	Bregenz
Oberösterreich (Upper Austria)	Linz	Wien (Vienna, Capital City Region)	Wien
Salzburg	Salzburg		

Geography

Half of the country's territory is occupied by the high mountain ranges of **the Alps**, and one third is covered with hills. The rest is plains, along the north-east border (Burgenland) and along the river Danube's valley in the north (Lower Austria). The main river is the **Danube**.

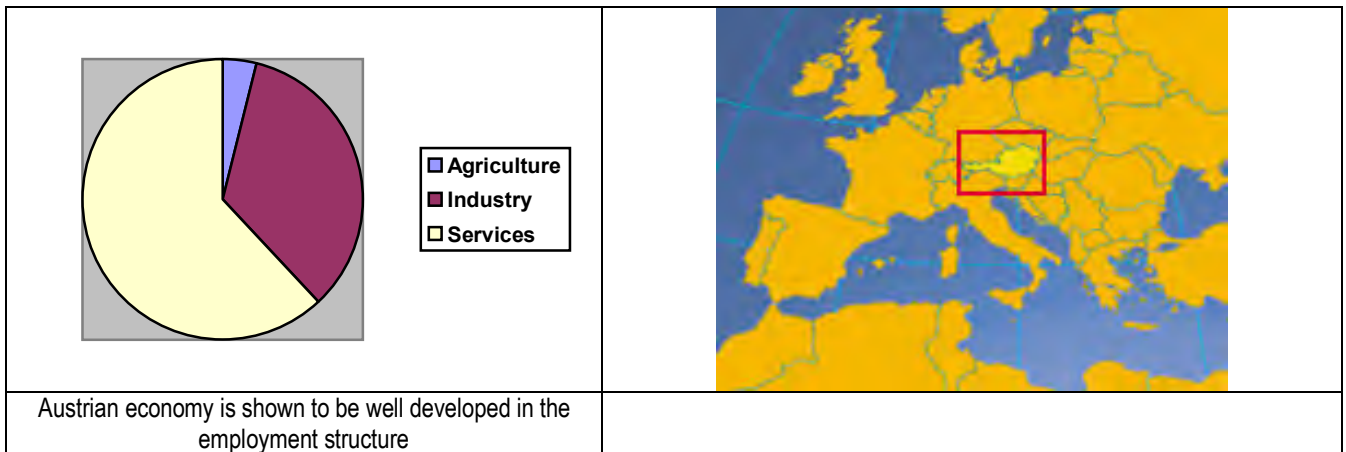
Economy

The traditional branch of the Austrian economy is mining **salt** (the name of the famous historical, touristic and musicians' town of Salzburg also refers to it). Another resource for mining is **magnetite** needed for fireproof tiles and bricks. The magnetite deposits of Austria are significant in a global sense as well. The main source of energy production is **hydroenergy**, since 70 % of the country's energy demand is covered by this pure, non polluting source of energy. The geographic environment of Austria (high mountains with rapid and abundant rivers) is very favourable for water-based energy production. However, Austria has to import crude oil and natural gas for energy supply.

Because of the mountainous regions **wood and paper industry** is traditionally well developed. Metallurgy (**steel and aluminium** production) is based on imported iron and bauxite ore. **Engineering** produces cars and electronic equipments.

Agriculture is not too important as far as cropland cultivation is concerned: it is limited to the small area of plains. Animal husbandry, **cattle breeding and dairy industry** have long traditions on the slopes of the hills and mountains.

The most important branch of economy is, however, **tourism** both in summer and winter. The many landscape beauties and **winter sport** facilities make Austria one of the most frequent touristic destinations in Europe. The capital city (**Vienna**) is the most important regional centre of Central Europe. It had been the seat of the large European empire of the Habsburg Dynasty for centuries, and today it is very rich in historical landmarks, famous buildings, monuments and cultural attractions.



Administration

Austria is a **federal republic**, with 9 regions (bundesland) fairly independent from the central government in local legislation and finances.

Society



The majority (85 %) of the Austrians are Roman Catholics. There are very few national minorities (Italians, Slovenians and Hungarians) living in Austria. The larger half of the population dwell in urban areas. The local Austrian population, with the exception of Vienna which is an international and open city, is very closed, foreigners are not welcome to integrate easily. Yet, there is a large number of foreign employees coming mainly from the Balkan countries, South Europe (Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania and Turkey).

Landmarks

- *Saint Stephen's Cathedral*, the *Opera House* and the *Burg* (Royal Castle) = Famous and frequented historic imperial monuments in the heart of Vienna.
- *Prater* = The Town Park and amusement park of Vienna.
- *Ice wine* = Made from a type of white grapes picked after the first frosts, and grown in Burgenland in the north-east part of the country on the hills by Lake Neusiedler See (lake).
- *Wiener schnitzel* = Pork chop fried in breadcrumbs, the most typical Austrian food.
- *Croissant* = A kind of biscuit in the shape of a half Moon, in memory of the Battle of Vienna against the Turkish troops in the Middle Ages. (Half Moon is the national symbol of the Turks.) Also, coffee (brought to Europe by the Turks) spread from Vienna all over Europe, for the first cafés were opened here.
- *Dachstein* = A high range of the Alps, the central peak of which is visited by tourists, travelling up by cable car. There is the 'Skywalk' a frequented view-point, and several glaciers for skiers in summer, too.
- *New Year's Concert* = The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra traditionally gives a concert on New Year's Day that is broadcast all over the world. Austria is the land of classical music, with composers like the Strauss brothers, Mozart and Schubert.

- *Gross Glöckner* = the highest (3797 m) peak in the Austrian Alps and a large glacier.
- *Hohe Tauern* = High ~, the highest range of the Alps east of the Brenner Pass, includes the highest mountains in Austria.
- *Yodel* = Traditional Alpine song of very rapid and high voices.
- *Edelweiss* = Small white flower symbolizing the wildlife of the Alp Mountains.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Austria:*
- The *Historic Centre of Salzburg* owes much of its Baroque appearance to Italian architects. *It* is a place of arts, especially music, as it used to be the residence of Mozart, the great Austrian composer of music.
- The *Historic Centre of Vienna* is rich in architectural ensembles, including Baroque castles and gardens, the late-19th-century Ringstrasse lined with grand buildings, monuments and parks.
- The *Schönbrunn Palace* was the residence of the Habsburg emperors and is full of outstanding examples of Baroque decorative art with its gardens and the site of the world's first zoo from 1752.
- The *Historic Centre of Graz and Schloss Eggenberg* is an exemplary model of the living heritage of a Central European urban complex.
- The *Wachau Cultural Landscape* is a stretch of the Danube Valley between Melk and Krems, a landscape of high visual quality.
- The *Hallstatt – Dachstein Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape* as an Alpine region is an outstanding example of a natural landscape of great beauty which contains evidence of a fundamental human economic activity.
- *The Semmering Railway* is a 41 km long mountain rail built between 1848 and 1854, with high standard of tunnels, viaducts and other works has ensured the continuous use of the line up to the present day.
- The *Lake Neusiedl* is the westernmost large alkali lake in Europe and has been the meeting place of different cultures in its varied landscape, which is the result of an evolutionary and symbiotic process of human interaction with the physical environment.

Belgium (Belgique / België)

National flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Kingdom of Belgium Native name(s): Koninkrijk België Royaume de Belgique Königreich Belgien	
Capital city and population (million): Brussels 1	Language(s): Dutch, French, German	
Country's population (million): 10.4	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 30 510
Administrative division		
Region: Provincie / Province / Provinz	Seat	
Vlaams / Flamande / Flandern (Flanders)	Brussel / Bruxelles / Brüssel	
Antwerpen / Anvers	Antwerpen / Anvers	
Limburg / Limbourg	Hasselt	
Oost-Vlaanderen / Flandre orientale / Ostflandern (East Flanders)	Gent /Gand	
Vlaams-Brabant / Brabant flamand / Flämisch-Brabant (Flamish ~)	Leuven / Louvain / Löwen	
West-Vlaanderen / Flandre occidentale / Westflandern (West Flanders)	Brugge / Bruges / Brügge	
Waals / Wallonne / Wallonien (Wallonia)	Namen / Namur	
Waals-Brabant / Brabant wallon / Wallonisch-Brabant (Wallonish ~)	Waver / Wavre	
Henegouwen / Hainaut / Hennegau	Bergen / Mons	
Luik / Liège / Lüttich	Luik / Liège / Lüttich	
Luxemburg / Luxembourg	Aarlen / Arlon	
Namen / Namur	Namen / Namur	
Brussel / Bruxelles / Brüssel (Capital City Region)	Brussel / Bruxelles / Brüssel	

Geography

Belgium is situated in Western Europe, by the North Sea and the Ardennes Hills. The northern half of the country, Flanders lies on the German Plain with an oceanic climate. The southern half is situated in the region of the Ardennes Hills, and it is rich in coal and iron ore. Thus this region is a traditional heavy industrial area of Europe.

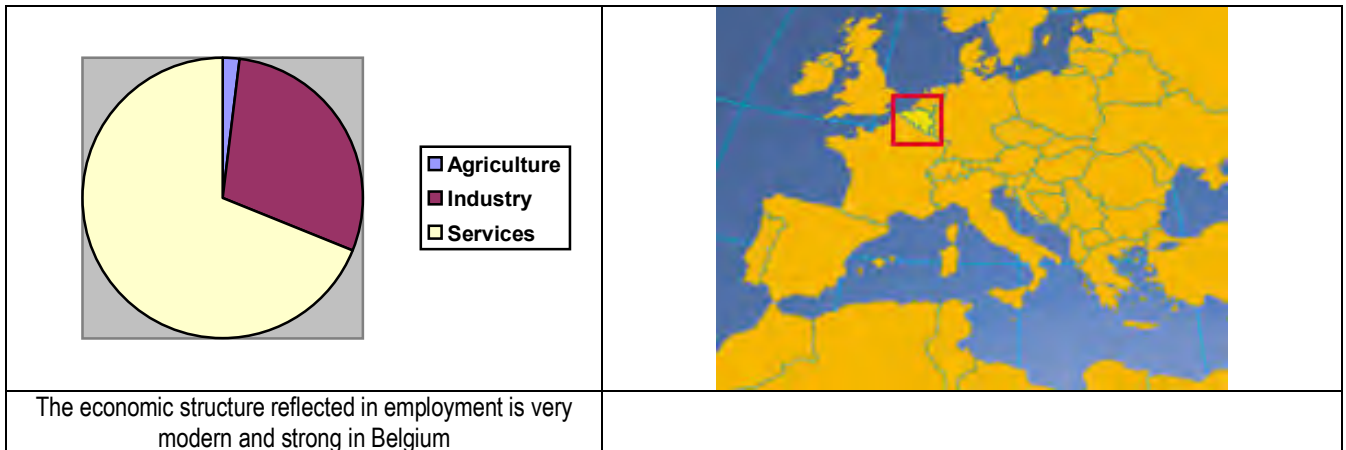
Economy

The **steel industry** was based on local coal and iron ore as early as the industrial revolution in Europe some 3 hundred years ago. However, the iron ore mines are exhausted today and Belgian economy imports iron as a raw material. Steel production per capita is the highest in Belgium in the global sense. The manufacture of **military equipments and weapons** is traditionally characteristic of Belgian engineering. The centre of engineering is in **Gent** and **Liege**. In energy production the coal based power plants were closed down and nuclear power plants and Dutch gas-heated power plants produce energy for Belgium. Another quality product of Belgian industry is **glass**, especially in Charleoi. In the food industry, **chocolate** production is noted with world famous quality sweets.

Antwerpen, the busiest Belgian city is a large port and it is referred to as the diamond capital of the world, because of its **jewellery** industry. Besides jewellery, Antwerpen is the centre of the pre-processing of all imported raw materials like precious metal ores and crude oil. Brussels is the centre of the European Union administration, and is especially known for its **lace**. The well developed agriculture in Flanders grows **flax** which provides the raw material for **textile industry** (hence the fine Brussels lace).

Belgium together with the Netherlands and Luxembourg form the **Benelux** formation which was the **first European economic integration** after World War I, started in 1948. In this sense the Benelux was the fore runner of the Common Market and later the European Union.

The transportation network (road and railway) is very dense in Belgium supporting economic activity. **Tourism** is attracted mainly by the many **historical monuments** especially in Brugge, Brussels and Gent.



Administration

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy of two large regions (Flanders with a Dutch-speaking Flemish population, Wallonia with a French-speaking Walloon population) and the capital region of **Brussels** the **seat of administration of the European Union**. There are no overseas dependencies of Belgium; the largest of them used to be Congo in Africa. The **headquarters of the NATO** is also seated in Brussels.

Society



Belgium is a site of regionalism as far as the Wallons (33 %) and the Flemish (58 %) are concerned. They stand for French and Dutch-German oriented cultures respectively. The rate of urban inhabitants is very high (97 % of the total population lives in cities and only 3 % in the countryside).

Landmarks

- *Manneken Piss* = a bronze statue of a little boy urinating. It is the symbol of Brussels, and was made by Jérôme Du Quesnoy in 1619.
- *Atomium* = a 102 metres high steel construction with 9 spheres 18 metres diameter each, connected to one another to symbolize the model of an atom. It was erected in 1958 for the World's Fair held in Brussels, Its designer was André Waterkeyn.
- *Mini Europe* = an amusement park with the small models of over 300 famous European buildings.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Belgium:*
- *Flemish Beguinages* in 15 towns = collections of small buildings used by Beguines, which were several lay sisterhoods of the Roman Catholic Church.

- *Grote Markt* (The Grand Place) = the central square of Brussels.
- *The 4 Lifts on the old Canal du Centre* and their environs in = are a series of hydraulic boat lifts and industrial monuments near the town of La Louvière in Wallonia.
- *Belfries* (bell towers) of Belgium and France = a transboundary property; an unequalled ensemble of 56 bell towers of Belgium and France which is designated as World Heritage Site, in recognition of an architectural manifestation of emerging civic independence in historic Flanders.
- *The Historic Centre of Brugge* (Bruges) = along with a few other canal-based northern cities, such as Amsterdam or Stockholm, it is sometimes referred to as 'The Venice of the North'. At one time it was the 'chief commercial city' of the world.
- *The town houses built by Victor Horta*, Belgian architect = Hotel Tassel, Hotel Solvay, Hotel van Eetvelde, Maison & Atelier Horta.
- *Spiennes of Mons* = the largest and earliest concentration of ancient Neolithic flint (a hard sedimentary cryptocrystalline form of mineral quartz) mines in Europe.
- *Notre Dame (Our Lady) Cathedral of Flanders* = is one of the most important architectural monuments in Tournai.
- *The Plantin-Moretus Museum* = is also a workshop in Antwerp, honouring the famous printers Christoffel Plantijn and Jan Moretus.
- *The Stoclet Palace* = is a private mansion in Brussels, and it is one of the most refined and luxurious private houses of the 20th century.

Bulgaria (Bǎlgarija)

National flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Bulgaria Native name(s): Република България (Republika Bǎlgarija)			
Capital city and population (million): Sofia 1.1		Language(s): Bulgarian			
Country's population (million): 6.9		Currency: 1 Lev = 100 stotinki		Territory (sq kms): 110 994	
Administrative division					
Region: Oblast	Seat	Region: Oblast	Seat	Region: Oblast	Seat
Blagoevgrad	Blagoevgrad	Loveč	Loveč	Smoljan	Smoljan
Burgas	Burgas	Montana	Montana	Sofija	Sofija
Varna	Varna	Pazardžik	Pazardžik	Sofija-grad	Sofija
Veliko Tǎrnovo	Veliko Tǎrnovo	Pernik	Pernik	Stara Zagora	Stara Zagora
Vidin	Vidin	Pleven	Pleven	Tǎrgovište	Tǎrgovište
Graca	Graca	Plovdiv	Plovdiv	Ĥaskovo	Ĥaskovo
Gabrovo	Gabrovo	Razgrad	Razgrad	Šumen	Šumen
Dobrič	Dobrič	Ruse	Ruse	Jambol	Jambol
Kǎrdžali	Kǎrdžali	Silistra	Silistra		
Kjustendil	Kjustendil	Sliven	Sliven		

Geography

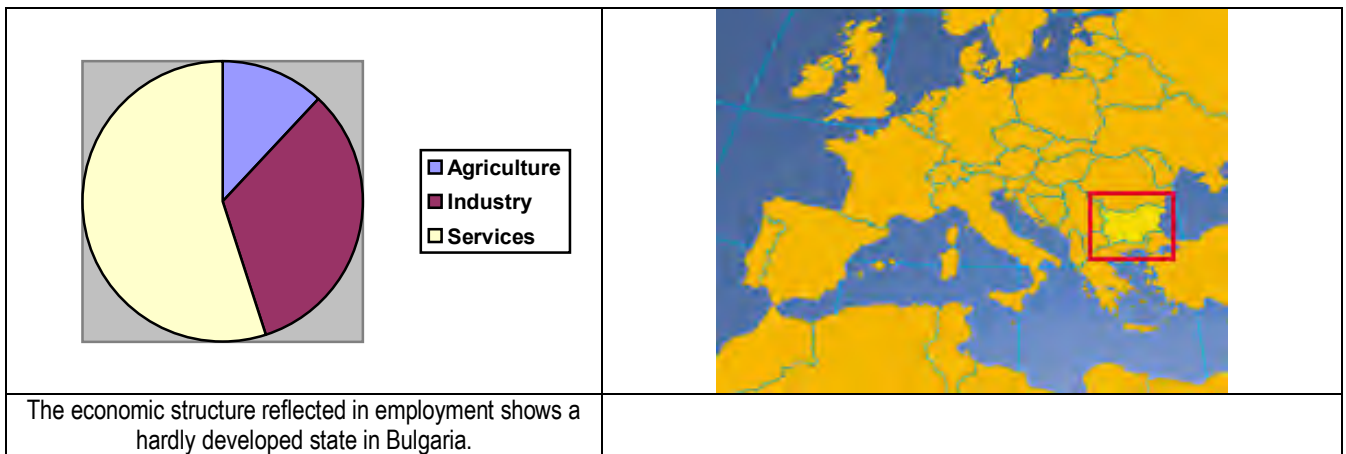
Bulgaria is situated in the Balkan Peninsula. The country is dissected by two east-west mountain ranges: the Balkan and the Rodope Mts. North of the Balkan Mts there is a plain sloping towards the River Danube bordering Bulgaria on the north. Between the Balkans and the Rodope there is the basin of the rivers Marica and Tundja. On the east Bulgaria borders the Black Sea. Its climate is continental. Bulgaria used to be under Turkish occupation for 500 years, up to 1878. It is a former socialist country and was admitted to the EU in 2007.

Economy

Bulgarian economy is rather underdeveloped, and is dominated by agrarian production rather than by industrial. Industry is based on the mining of **copper**, **lead** and **zinc** in the mountains. Energy production relies on **coal**-heated power plants and import. The former causes environmental pollution at some places. Engineering is producing agricultural machines and ships.

Agriculture grows **wheat**, **corn**, **sugarbeet**, **sunflower**, **tomato**, **pepper**, **cucumber**, **melon**. Besides vegetables, **fruit** growing is also widespread. The two most important product of agriculture are **tobacco** and **rose** oil which is an expensive (in price 1 kg of rose oil equals 1 kg of gold) raw material for perfumes. Bulgarian gardeners are considered the best experts in Europe; in many countries the masters of gardening who grow fruit and vegetables are named 'Bulgarian gardeners'. Sheep and goats are kept in great numbers.

Besides the capital city (Sophia), **Plovdiv** and **Varna** are the major urban and economic centres. The latter is a port situated on the Black Sea. The seaside offers facilities for summer holidaying **tourism**, especially from Germany.



Administration

There are 28 regions (oblasts) that are the gravity zones of Bulgarian major cities. Bulgaria is a republic consisting of 28 regions (oblasts) that were organized into 9 NUTS 2 level regions. Being a former socialist country, the country is a unitary type of state in transition into a decentralized type. It means that public administration function of the municipalities is strong, and the regions do not have much of an administrative role. They are used for EU statistics calculations and for the redistribution of financial grants given for regional development.

Society

69 % of the population lives in urban conditions, the rest in rural environment. Much of the population is Orthodox Christian and some 10 % are Muslim reflecting the the historical Turkish influence. National minorities include some 10 % Gypsies, 7 % Turkish, 3 % Macedonian.

Landmarks

- *Land of the Roses* = The valleys of the rivers Marica and Tundja. Their submediterranean climate is favourable for growing roses. Roses can be picked only at dawn and in the early morning, because the rose oil content decreases rapidly with the rise in temperature, so the loss is 40 % at noon compared to dawn. 1 kg of rose oil requires 4-5 tons of rose petals!
- *Zlatni pjasaci (Golden Sands) on the Black Sea* = Excellent, long, sandy beach by the Sea.
- *Minarets and mosques* = Muslim mosques, most of them monuments of the Turkish rule.
- *Boyana Church* = is a medieval Orthodox church situated on the outskirts of Sofia. World Heritage Site.
- *Madara Rider (or Horseman)* = is an early medieval large rock relief carved on the Madara Plateau. World Heritage Site.
- *Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo* = are a group of monolithic churches, chapels and monasteries, hewn out of solid rock and completely different from other monastery complexes. World Heritage Site.
- *Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak* = is a vaulted brickwork 'beehive' tomb. World Heritage Site.
- *Nesebar* = is an ancient city and a major seaside resort and touristic centre on the Black Sea coast, often referred to as the '*Pearl of the Black Sea*'.
- *Pirin National Park* = is a World Heritage wildlife reserve that encompasses the larger part of the Pirin Mts.
- *Rila Monastery* = the Monastery of Saint Ivan of Rila is the largest and most famous Eastern Orthodox monastery in Bulgaria. World Heritage Site.
- *Srebarna Nature Reserve* = comprises Lake Srebarna and its surroundings and is located on the Via Pontica, a bird migration route between Europe and Africa. World Heritage Site.
- *The Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari* = it reflects the fundamental structural principles of Thracian cult buildings. World Heritage Site.

Croatia (Hrvatska)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Republic of Croatia Native name(s): Republika Hrvatska Horvát Köztársaság Repubblica Croata		
Capital city and population (million): Zagreb 0,7	Language(s): Croatian + Hungarian (Medimurje), Italian (Istria)		
Country's population (million): 4.4	Currency: 1 Kuna = 100 lipa	Territory (sq kms): 57 000	
Administrative division: counties (županije)			
County (županija)	Seat	County (županija)	Seat
Bjelovarsko-bilogorska	Bjelovar	Požeško-slavonska	Požega
Brodsko-posavska	Slavonski Brod	Primorsko-goranska	Rijeka
Dubrovačko-neretvanska	Dubrovnik	Sisačko-moslavačka	Sisak
Istarska / Istriana	Pazin / Pisino	Splitsko-dalmatinska	Split
Karlovačka	Karlovac	Šibensko-kninska	Šibenik
Koprivničko-križevačka	Koprivnica	Varaždinska	Varaždin
Krapinsko-zagorska	Krapina	Virovitičko-podravska	Virovitica
Ličko-senjska	Gospić	Vukovarsko-srijemska	Vukovar
Međimurska / Muraköz	Čakovec / Csáktornya	Zadarska	Zadar
Osječko-baranjska	Osijek	Zagrebačka	Zagreb

Geography

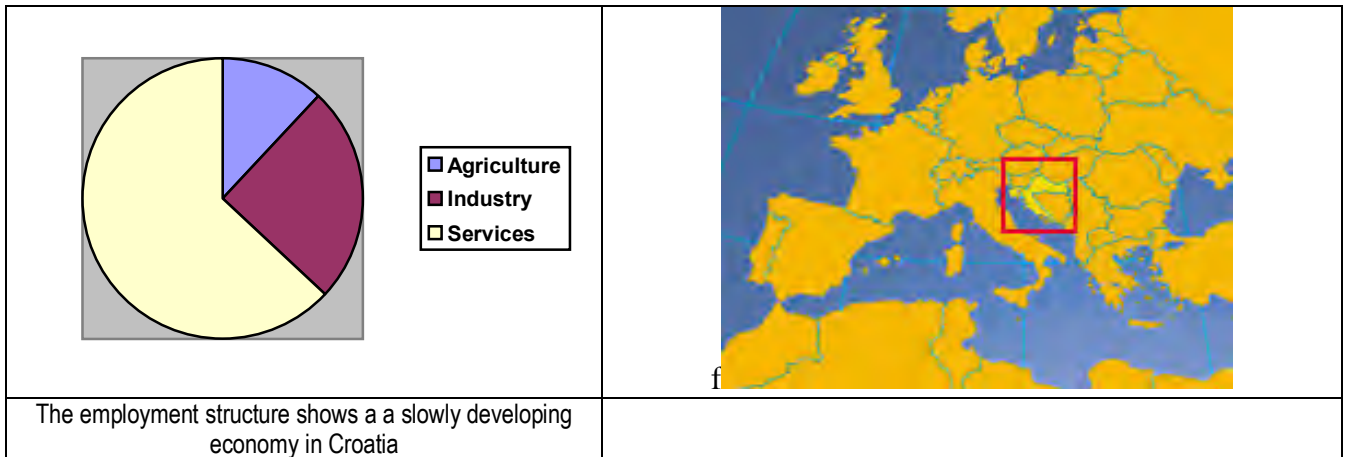
Croatia is situated in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula in South Europe. The northern half of the country is plainland (Slavonia), the southern half is a hilly region (Croatia proper). The southern part is elongated along the Adriatic coastland offering beautiful landscapes and ideal holidaying places (Dalmatia). The climate is continental and in the south Mediterranean. In history Croatia used to belong to the Hungarian Kingdom, but after World War I they separated to form Yugoslavia together with the Serbians and many more nations in the Balkan. In 1992, following the collapse of the Yugoslavian formation, a civil war broke out between the Croats and the Serbians in Bosnia. The political tension and the traces of the two Balkan civil wars can be felt even today in Croatia and Serbia. However, Croatia succeeded in joining the EU in 2013 as the 28th state.

Economy

Industry concentrates at the large **ports (oil refinery, chemistry, ship building)** like **Rijeka**; and major towns (**engineering, textile industry, electronics**) like **Zagreb**. The **copper mining** is also important based on local resources. There is a considerable **aluminium metallurgy** based on imported raw materials. Croatian agriculture grows **fruit, grapes and olives** in **Dalmatia**, along the Adriatic shore, and **wheat, maize and sugarbeet** in **Slavonia** on the fertile arable lands between the rivers Drava and Sava. Perhaps the most important branch of economy is **tourism** on the rocky coastland of the **Adriatic Sea** with lots small peninsulas and islands. Both Central and Western European tourists frequent Dalmatia in the summer. The centre of tourism is **Dubrovnik**, the 'Pearl of the Adriatic Sea'.

Society

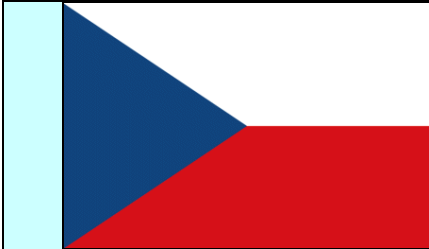

The national composition: 84 % Croats, 12 % Serbians, 2 % Hungarians and 2 % Bosnians. The majority of the population are Roman Catholic (80 %) some 10 % Orthodox Christian, 8 % Protestant Christian and 2 % Muslim.



Landmarks

- *Plitvice Lakes* = a national park with tuffaceous limestone formations with lakes and waterfalls; a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Dubrovnik* = the old town is built on a small peninsula stretching into the sea; it is a touristic Paradise. A UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Hvar Island* = the Mediterranean island of sunshine and lavender.
- *Other UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia* = (1) Historic Complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian. (2) Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč. (3) Historic City of Trogir. (4) the Cathedral of St. James in Šibenik. (5) Stari Grad Plain on the Island of Hvar. It is an agricultural landscape set up by the ancient Greeks in the 4th century BC, and remains in use today. The crops include grapes and olives and the site is also a natural reserve. The site is a good example of the ancient Greek system of agriculture.

Czechia (Česko)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Czech Republic Native name(s): Česká republika			
Capital city and population (million): Prague 1.2		Language(s): Czech			
Country's population (million): 10.1		Currency: 1 Koruna = 100 hollers		Territory (sq kms): 78 864	
Administrative division					
Region: Kraj		Seat		Region: Kraj	
Jihočeský kraj		České Budějovice		Plzeňský kraj	
Jihomoravský kraj		Brno		Hlavní město Praha	
Karlovarský kraj		Karlovy Vary		Středočeský kraj	
Královéhradecký kraj		Hradec Králové		Ústecký kraj	
Liberecký kraj		Liberec		Kraj Vysočina	
Moravskoslezský kraj		Ostrava		Zlínský kraj	
Olomoucký kraj		Olomouc		Pardubický kraj	
				Pardubice	

Geography

The country is situated in the geographical centre of Europe. It is surrounded by mountains and hills in every direction. The territory is occupied by two large basins: the Czech (west) and the Moravian (east). There are two main rivers crossing the country: the Vltava and the Morava. The mountains are rich in minerals. This is the reason why industry started to develop in Czechia in the middle ages. The territory used to be an independent kingdom of the Moravians in the early middle ages, and then it became part of the Austrian Habsburg Empire up to World War I when it became an independent country for the first time, together with Slovakia under the name Czechoslovakia. However, Czechia (or Bohemia) used to be the industrial workshop of the Habsburg Empire; it was the province with the strongest economy. In 1993 Slovakia seceded and Czechoslovakia was split into two. In 2004 it joined the EU.

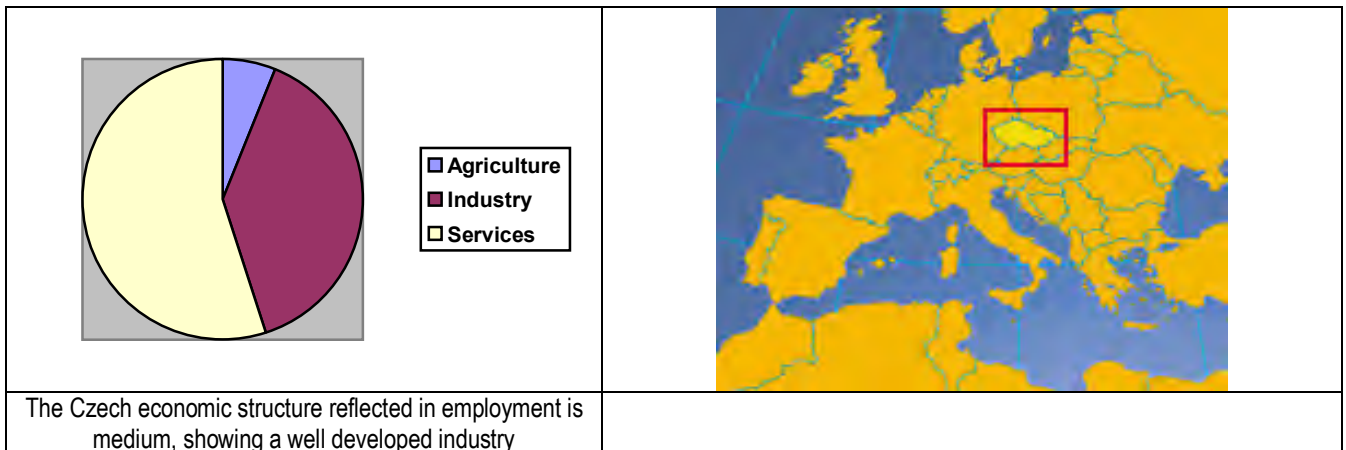
Economy

The most important branch of the Czech economy is engineering, producing vehicles (like **Skoda** automobiles and railway engines) and weapons, **military equipment**. The most significant centres are: **Prague** (the capital), **Brno** (seat of the Moravian region), **Plsen** (best known for its beer) and **Ostrava** (the centre of Silesian industrial region). **Black coal** is mined in Silesia (in the north east), in Moravia, and in the Sudeta Mts (in the north), and in the Czech Forest (in the south). Heavy industry was based on this resource.

In light industry **glass** and **furniture** production, the **textile** industry, **footwear leather** are notable. Based on a very fine clay mineral (**kaolin**) mined in the hills, the Czech **chinaware** (porcelain) is very famous. In the food industry the most well known product is beer (Pilsener).

The main plants grown include **potato**, malting **barley** and **hop** (for brewing beer), **rye** and **sugarbeet**. However, food has to be imported; the domestic cereals cannot meet the demand.

Tourists are best attracted to **Prague** because of its many mediaeval monuments and urban quarters. **Karlovy Vary** is a famous resort place with hot medicinal waters. The Czech Basin is rich in **mineral water** springs as well.



Administration

There are 14 regions (krajs) in the country, however, the country being a unitary type of state, the regions do not have elected members and legislative functions, they have but a statistical role.

Society

The largest national minority is represented by the Moravians (13 %). There are some Gypsies (2 %). As for religion, the Roman Catholic Church has some 40 %, while another 40 % of the population are atheists. This is due to the longdecades of the communist rule.



Landmarks

- *Karluv Most (Charles Bridge) in Prague* = Famous, and richly ornamented bridge in the city of Prague, part of the cultural world heritage.
- *Vaclav Square, Hradzin Castle* = the central square and the royal castle in the City of Prague.
- *Knedlo – zelo – vepro* = typical Czech meal (potato pastry with cabbage and pork).
- *Toy Museum of Prague* = the second largest collection inthe world, located in the Castle.
- *Plsen beer* = the most well known Czech beer.
- *Český Krumlov* = the historic centre of this Bohemian small city ise best known for the fine architecture and art of the historic old town and castle. World Heritage Site.
- *The Historic Centre of Prague* = has been the political, cultural and economic centre of the Czech state for more than 1,100 years. Since 1992, the extensive historic centre of Prague has been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, making the city one of the most popular touristic destinations in Europe, receiving more than 4.1 million international visitors annually.
- *The Historic Centre of Telč* = with a monumental 17th century Renaissance chateau and an English-style park, an original Gothic castle, the most significant sight is the town square, a

unique complex of long urban plaza with well-conserved Renaissance and Baroque houses with high gables and arcades.

- *Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk* = at Zelená Hora (Gruneberg) is the final masterpiece of Bohemian architecture combining Baroque with Gothic elements in both construction and decoration.
- *Historical Town Centre of Kutná Hora* = with the Cathedral of Our Lady, St. Barbara Church, Sedlec Ossuary, Church of St. James, Church of St. John Nepomuk, Church of Ursuline Convent, Jesuit College, Italian Court, Marian column. World Heritage Site.
- *The Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape* = with ponds, castles, chateaus, galleries, lodges, chapels. World Heritage Site.
- *Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž* = comprise a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Holašovice Historical Village Reservation (Holaschowitz)* = is a small historic village near the protected landscape area of Blansky Forest. The village was deserted after the Second World War, allowing its medieval plan and vernacular buildings in the South Bohemian Folk or Rural Baroque style to remain intact. It was restored and repopulated from 1990.
- *Litomyšl Castle* = a chateau complex with a monumental Renaissance castle. World Heritage Site.
- *The Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc* = is the biggest Baroque sculptural group in Czechia. World Heritage Site.
- *Villa Tugendhat* = is considered an icon of modern architectural masterpiece in Brno, and a paradigmatic example of functionalism. World Heritage Site.
- *St. Procopius' Basilica and Jewish Quarter* = World Heritage Site in Třebíč.

Cyprus (Kypros)

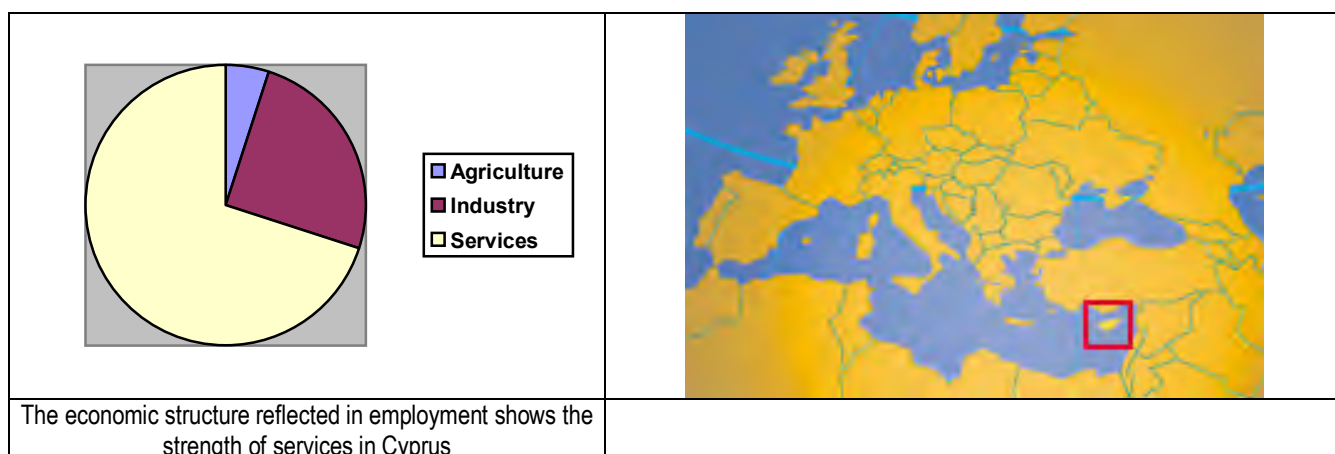
National flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Republic of Cyprus Native name(s): Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία (Kypriakī Dīmokratía) Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti		
Capital city and population (million): Nicosia 0.1	Language(s): Greek + Turkish		
Country's population (million): 1.1	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 9000	
Administrative division			
Region: Eparhía / Bölgesi	Seat	Region: Eparhía / Bölgesi	Seat
Eparhía Ammohōstoy	Ammóhōstos	Eparhía Leykōsías	Leykōsía
Eparhía Kerýneias	Kerýneia	Eparhía Lemesoy	Lemesós
Eparhía Lárnakas	Lárnaka	Eparhía Páfoy	Páfos

Geography

The island of Cyprus lies in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea some 100 km off the coast of Asia Minor and the Near East alike. The name Cyprus comes from copper, referring to the ore deposits. Its climate is Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters. No wonder the ancient Greek goddess of Love and Beauty (Aphrodite or Venus) chose Cyprus as her homeland. Cyprus has always been under the influence of Greek culture, though in 1975 Turkish troops invaded the northern part of it where there is Turkish population living, and North Cyprus declared independence in 1983, though not recognized in an international context. This situation did not change when Cyprus joined the EU in 2004.

Economy

The island is rich in **copper, iron, asbestos, chrome** ore and **gypsum**. Besides mining, **vegetables** and **southern fruits** growing (especially the **locust bean** = 'Saint John's bread' has to be noted), **wine** production and **fishery** are important in its economy. However, the most important branch is **tourism**.



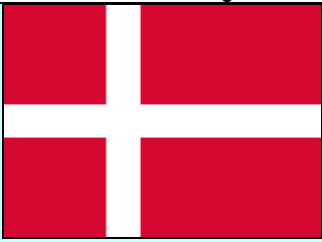

Society

The capital town of Cyprus is divided between Greek and Turkish population. Most of the Muslim population lives in North, only 2 % in the Republic of Cyprus. 95 % of the (Greek) population are orthodox Christians.

Landmarks

- *The Rock of Aphrodite* = a characteristic steep rock formation on the beach.
- *Green Line* = the political divide between the two (Christian and Muslim) parts of Nicosia.
- *Loukanika; koupepia* = traditional Cyprian meals: small sausage seasoned with coriander; minced meat rolled in grape leaves.
- *Larnaca* = the seaside centre of tourism in the south of Cyprus.
- *Paphos* = has been inhabited since the Neolithic period. The Greeks agreed that Aphrodite, goddess of Beauty and Love had landed at the site of Paphos when she rose from the sea. The legacy from its remarkable history makes the city an open museum, so much that UNESCO added the whole town to its World Cultural Heritage List in 1980.
- *Painted Churches* in the *Troodos* Region = is a World Heritage Site in the mountains.
- *Choirokoitia* = the site is known as one of the most important and best preserved prehistoric sites of the eastern Mediterranean. World Heritage Site.

Denmark (Danmark)

National flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Kingdom of Denmark Native name(s): Kongeriget Danmark Königreich Dänemark Kongsríkið Danmark Kunngæqarfik Danmarkí		
Capital city and population (million): Copenhagen 1.4	Language(s): Danish + Faroese (on Faeroe Islands); German (in South Denmark); Greenlandic (in Greenland)		
Country's population (million): 5.5	Currency: 1 Crown = 100 ore	Territory (sq kms): 43 094	
Administrative division			
Region: Regioner	Seat	Region: Regioner	Seat
Hovedstaden	Hillerød	Sjælland	Sorø
Midtjylland	Viborg	Syddanmark	Vejle
Nordjylland	Ålborg	--	--
autonomous territories (selvstyrende områder)			
Færøerne (Faeroe Islands)	Thorshavn	Grønland (Greenland)	Godthåb

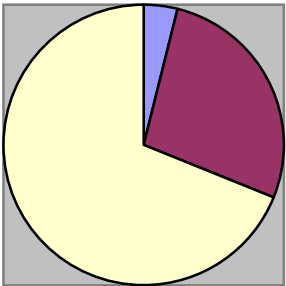
Geography

The country lies on 474 islands and one large peninsula (Jylland) in between the the Baltic and the North Seas. It is divided from the Scandinavian Peninsula by 3 straits: Skagerrak, Kattegat and Øre Sund. Denmark is a completely flat land. The ratio of croplands (65 %) is the largest in the world. Also, the agriculture of Denmark is the most effective one in the world. Its climate is Oceanic, mild and wet. Besides Jylland, the other 3 large islands are Sjælland (with the capital city), Fyn, and Lolland.

Economy

Cattle breeding and the **dairy industry** are the most developed in Denmark, in a global sense as well. They grow mostly **fodder plants** in the croplands. In animal husbandry the **pig livestock** is huge (actually the pig livestock per capita is first in the world, at more than 10 million). Danish **fishery** is also very important it is only preceded by Russia and Norway only in Europe. Denmark **exports milk cheese, pork, beef** in large quantities and good quality.

Its industry concentrates on **ship building, household equipment** and **electronics**. Since they grow barley as well, Danish **beer brewing** is famous for the drinks **Tuborg** and **Carlsberg**. **Medicine** production has to be noted.

 <div style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: blue;"></td> Agriculture</tr></table></div>	

Administration

Denmark is a constitutional monarchy with 14 districts and 2 overseas areas. The largest is Greenland where there are 50 thousand people (mainly natives: Inuits) living. It is the largest island in the world and only 20 % of it is free of ice. The Vikings from Denmark discovered it in 960 AD. They live on fishing. The other autonomous area is the Faeroes Islands half way between Iceland and Norway. There are also some 50 thousand inhabitants there who live on fishing and sheep livestock. Denmark joined the EU in 1973.

Society

Most of the population is Danish (97 %) and they are Protestant Christians.

Landmarks

- *Bicycle* = besides the Netherlands it is Denmark where bicycle riding has a long tradition. The bicycle stock per capita is the highest in Europe.
- *LEGO* = the world famous construction toy line; the company's headquarter is in Billund, Denmark.
- *Den lille havfrue* (the Little Mermaid) = a statue in Copenhagen port, taken from a fairy tale; it is said to be the most frequently photographed female figure in the world, and it is the symbol of Copenhagen as well.
- *Andersen, Hans, Christian* = a Danish author, the greatest teller of children's stories and fairy tales in European history.
- *Gravad laks, wienerbrod* = traditional Danish meals: smoked salmon; Danish cake.
- *Masterkranen* (Masting Crane) = a traditional shipyard crane in Copenhagen.
- *Vor Frelses Kirke* (Church of our Savior) = a baroque church in Copenhagen, famous for its corkscrew spire with an external winding staircase.
- *Grundtvig's Church* = a rare example of expressionist church architecture in Copenhagen.
- *Jelling Runic Stones* = massive carved runestones from the 10th century. World Heritage Site.
- *Roskilde Cathedral* = a brickstone church from the 12th century on the island of Zealand. A World Heritage Site.
- *Kronborg Castle* = a castle at Helsingør, immortalised as Elsinore in Shakespeare's Hamlet, on the northeastern tip of Zealand at the narrowest point of the Øresund, the sound between Denmark and Sweden. World Heritage Site.

Estonia (Eesti)

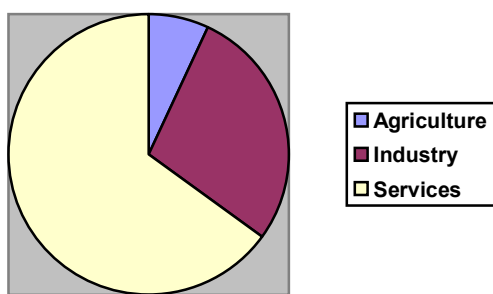
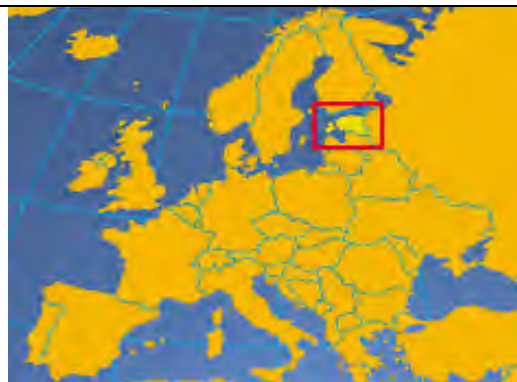
National flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Estonia Native name(s): Eesti Vabariik			
Capital city and population (million): Tallinn 0.5		Language(s): Estonian + Russian, Finnish			
Country's population (million): 1.2		Currency: 1 Crown = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 45 000	
Administrative division					
Region: Maakond	Seat	Region: Maakond	Seat	Region: Maakond	Seat
Harju	Tallinn	Lääne	Haapsalu	Saare	Kure-Saare
Hiiu	Kärdla	Lääne-Viru	Rakvere	Tartu	Tartu
Ida-Viru	Jõhvi	Põlva	Põlva	Valga	Valga
Jõgeva	Jõgeva	Pärnu	Pärnu	Viljandi	Viljandi
Järva	Paide	Rapla	Rapla	Võru	Võru

Geography

Estonia is situated on a totally flat land by the Baltic Sea. It is bordered by the Gulf of Finland in the north and the Riga Bay in the west. Estonians consider themselves to belong to Northern Europe. Its climate is humid and cold continental. In the eastern part of the country there is a large lake (Tshud) forming the border with Russia.

Economy

Most of the economic strength is concentrated in the capital city, Tallinn. In agriculture **rye**, **flax**, **vegetable** and **potato** cultivations are dominant. Based on the **flax** and the **forests** covering much of the land, the **textile** and **wood** processing industries are well developed. There is some **ship building** and **chemical industry** based on imported crude oil in the ports. The country is poor in energy and raw materials. Electronics and knowledge-based trades are increasing. In the **electronic-business** Estonia is developing fast, like Slovenia, Malta and Austria in Europe.

	
The Estonian economic structure reflected in employment shows a slowly developing economy.	

Administration

In history Estonia had been conquered either by Germans or Swedish or Russians. After World War I, it became independent until 1940 when it was occupied by the Soviet Union and became a Soviet republic. It finally became independent in 1991 and could join the EU in 2004. The country is divided into 15 districts. In modernizing government administration Estonia is doing very well: in electronic-government index it is among the first in Europe.

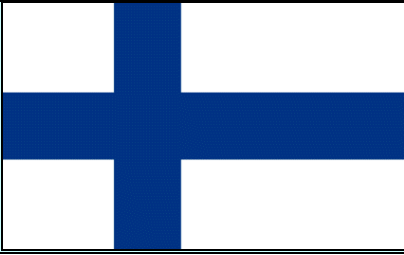

Society

The national composition is 62 % Estonian, 30 % Russian, 3 % Ukrainian, 3 % Belarussian and 2 % Finnish. As for their religion, 62 % of them are Protestants and 35 % follow Orthodox Christianity as. In Estonia the government invests a lot in human resources and this is manifested in the high level of Internet use.

Landmarks

- *Vana Tallinn* = a very strong and sweet traditional Estonian liquor.
- *Raeapteek (Town Hall Pharmacy)* = Europe's oldest, continuously functioning pharmacy in Tallinn (since 1422).
- *Toompea* = the old castle district in Tallin.
- *The Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallin* = much of the medieval Old Town still retains its charms. World Heritage Site.

Finland (Suomi)

National flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Finland Native name(s): Suomen tasavalta Republiken Finland Suoma republihkka			
Capital city and population (million): Helsinki 0.5		Language(s): Finnish + Swedish, Sami (in Lapland)			
Country's population (million): 5.2		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 338 144	
Administrative division					
Region: lääni		Seat		Region: lääni	
Etelä-Suomen		Hämeenlinna		Länsi-Suomen	
Itä-Suomen		Mikkeli		Oulun	
Lapin (Lapland)		Rovaniemi		Åland (Swedish autonomous province)	
				Seat	
				Turku	
				Oulu	
				Mariehamn	

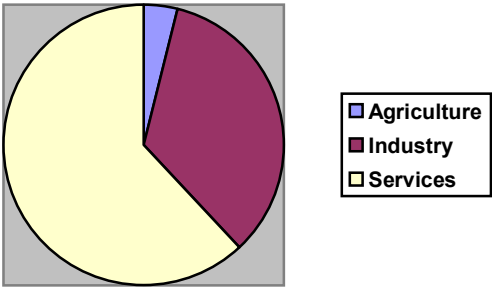

Geography

Finland lies in the eastern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. 66 + of the land is covered by pine forests. So the main natural resource of the Finnish is wood. The south eastern quarter of Finland there are many lakes (Lakeland). Most of the territory is plain, and in the north east it is slightly hilly. The climate is cool with long and cold winters.

Economy

Because of the extensive **forests**, the wood and paper industries are very well developed in Finland. Finnish wood industrial output and export (**wood**, **cellulose**, and **paper**) is the second in the world after Canada. **Engineering**, **ship building**, **textile** and **furniture** industry have to be mentioned, too. There is some **copper** mining. An **electronics** industry has developed lately in **information communications**: the **Nokia**.

In Finnish agriculture they grow **rye**, **potato**, wheat (in the south) and **fodder** plants. **Cattle** breeding and the **dairy industry** are important. Since rye and potato are the basic materials for distilling alcohol, **vodka** is the most widespread drink in Finland. In the Lapland region in the north there is **reindeer** breeding, too. Baltic Sea **fishing** is to be noted as well.

	
The economic structure reflected in employment is rather modern and strong in Finland	

Administration

The country is divided into 12 provinces and 6 regions. Among the regions there is one (the Island of Aland) that is populated by Swedish inhabitants. It is usually serving as a good example within the EU to demonstrate the exemplary and right way of treating national minorities.

Society

Finnish population make up 93 % of the country's and the rest is Swedish (6 %) and Lapp in the north. 89 % of the population are Protestant Christians.

Landmarks

- *Korvatunturi* = a hill (tunturi) named 'Ear Fell' in the north of Finland by the Russian border. This place is said to be the homeland of Santa Claus or Father Christmas (owing to a children's radio program broadcast between 1927 – 1956: Uncle Markus hour).
- *Santa Claus Village* = in Rovaniemi where there are attractions in connection with the legend of Father Christmas.
- *The Land of Ten Thousand Lakes* = the Finnish Lakeland is composed of 60 thousand lakes actually. These lakes are the traces of the last Ice Age in Europe.
- *Kaamos* = the long night (lasting for months) in winter in Lapland.
- *White nights* = the nights in summer, when the sun does not go down. Midnight Sun = when the sun sets well after midnight in summer.
- *Sauna* = hot steam bath, and ice cold water is a substantial part of Finnish culture.
- *Inari Competition* = a race held in April in Inari, for the reindeers of Lapland.
- *The Snow Show* = the festival of snow art sculpture in Lapland.
- *Old Rauma* = the city is known of its high quality lace, and of the old wooden architecture of its centre.
- *Suomenlinna* = is an inhabited sea fortress built on 6 islands, forming part of Helsinki. It is a World Heritage Site, popular with both tourists and locals, who enjoy it as a picturesque picnic site.
- *The Petäjävesi Old Church* = is a wooden church and a representative Lutheran church of the Scandinavian tradition. World Heritage Site.
- *Verla Groundwood and Board Mill* = situated in Jaala. World Heritage Site.
- *Sammallahdenmäki* = is a Bronze Age burial site in Lappi. It includes 36 granite burial cairns dating back more than 3,000 years. World Heritage Site.
- *The High Coast and Kvarken Archipelago* = is a World heritage Site affording an outstanding opportunities for the understanding of the processes that formed the glaciated and land uplift areas. The Kvarken islands are continuously rising from the sea in a process of rapid glacio-isostatic uplift, whereby the land, previously weighed down under the weight of a glacier, lifts at rates that are among the highest in the world. It is a transboundary property with Sweden.

France

National flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		French Republic Native name(s): République française Republik C'hall República Francesa Republica francesa			
Capital city and population (million): Paris 9		Language(s): French + Alsatian (in Alsace, Lorraine); Basque (in Aquitaine); Breton (in Brittany); Catalan (in Languedoc-Roussillon); Corsican (in Corsica); Flemish (in Nord-Pas-de-Calais); Occitan (in Aquitaine, Auvergne, Languedoc-Roussillon, Limousin, Midi-Pyrénées, Poitou-Charentes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Rhône-Alpes); Tahitian (in French Polynesia)			
Country's population (million): 66		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 674 843	
Administrative division					
Region: Région		Seat		Region: Région d	
Alsace / Elsass		Strassbourg / Strossburi		Languedoc-Roussillon / Llenguadoc-Rosselló / Lengadòc-Rosselhon	
Aquitaine / Aquitània		Bordeaux / Bordele / Bordèu		Limousin / Lemosin	
Auvergne / Auvèrnha		Clermont-Ferrand / Clarmont		Lorraine / Loutrengen	
Basse-Normandie		Caen		Midi-Pyrénées / Miègjorn-Pirenèus	
Bourgogne		Dijon		Nord-Pas de Calais / Noord-Nauw van Kales	
Bretagne / Breizh (Britanny)		Rennes / Roazhon		Pays de la Loire	
Centre		Orléans		Picardie	
Champagne-Ardenne		Châlons-en-Champagne		Poitou-Charentes / Peitau-Charantas	
Corse / Corsica		Ajaccio / Aiacciu		Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur / Provença-Alps-Còsta d'Azur	
Franche-Comté		Besançon		Rhône-Alpes / Ròse-Aups	
Haute-Normandie		Rouen		Île-de-France	
overseas collectivities (collectivités d'outre-mer)					
Mayotte		Mamoudzou		Polynésie française / Pōrīnetia farāni (French Polynesia)	
Saint-Barthélemy		Gustavia		Saint-Martin	
Wallis-et-Futuna		Mata-Utu		Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon	
overseas regions (régions d'outre-mer)					
Guadeloupe		Basse-Terre		Guyane (French ~)	
Martinique		Fort-de-France		Réunion	
--		--		Nouvelle-Calédonie (New Caledonia)	
				Nouméa	

Geography

The north and west part of France is mainly plainland, while the middle and eastern part is composed of hilly regions. The climate is Oceanic, mostly humid, but in the south it is Mediterranean. The

largest rivers are the Rhône (flowing via Lyon), the Seine (via Paris), the Loire (via Orléans and Nantes), and the Garonne (via Toulouse and Bordeaux). The major mountains include Massif Central in the middle; the Pyrenees in the south; the Alps, the Vogéz and the Ardennes in the east. The second highest peak in Europe, Mont Blanc (4807 m) can be found along the French-Italian-Swiss border. France is rich in minerals of which uranium is the most important. Aluminium earth and copper are also mined in the south.

Economy

France has one of the most important economies in Europe. The traditional branch of industry includes the manufacture of luxury items connected to **ladies' fashion** and **perfumery**. The most important economic branches are engineering of cars, motors, airplanes, weapons, nuclear power plant facilities. Three-quarters of French energy production comes from **nuclear power plants**. With this France is the first nuclear energy producer in the world.

Heavy industry was started in France in the region of **Lorraine**, based on **local iron** ore, though the mines have already been closed down and engineering industry uses Swedish and Brazilian iron. Since steel works rely on imported raw material, **metallurgy** was moved to the large ports (**Dunkerque** in Normandy and **Marseilles** in the south). The central region in and around Paris is well known for its engineering (automobiles: **Peugeot, Renault, Citroën**). French car makes are the fourth in volume in the world market. The **aeroplane** industry is situated in **Paris** and **Toulouse** in the Gasogne region in the south. The large Atlantic ports are **Bordeaux, Nantes, Brest, Cherbourg, Le Havre** and **Calais**.

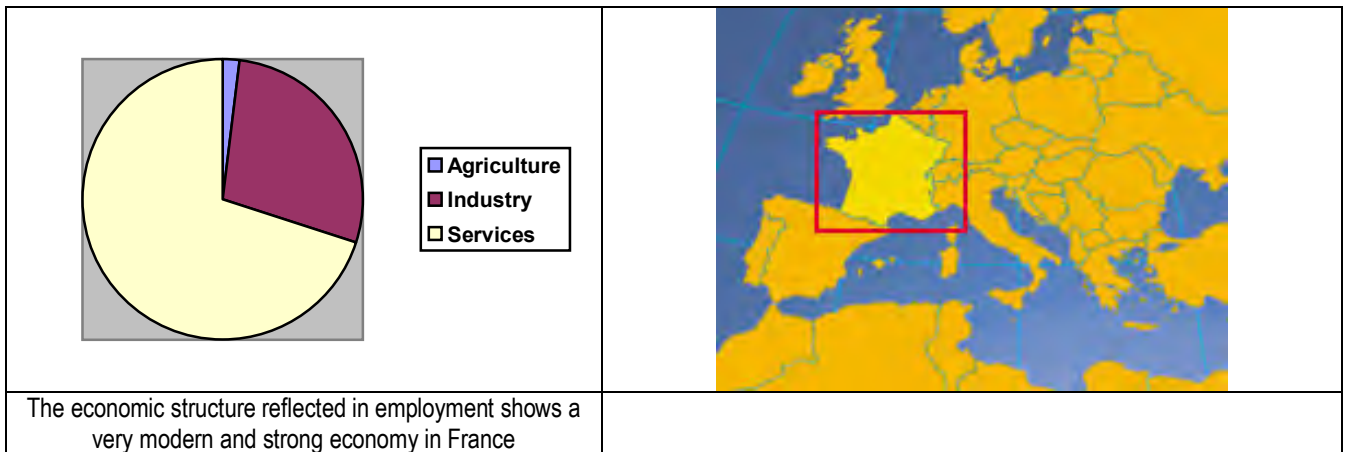
The **textile** industry is important and has long traditions, too, especially in **Paris**, and **Lyon** (silk industry), and in the north-east regions (in **Lille**). However, French industry is in the state of switching over to **electronics** and to the manufacturing of high technology instruments and computer techniques. **Chemistry** is mainly based on imported crude oil in the ports (**Marseille, Bordeaux, Le Havre**).

The major destinations of **tourism** in France are: **Paris**, the capital city; **Côte d'Azur** with the most beautiful seacoast of Europe on the Mediterranean Sea; and the **French Alps**, mainly for winter sports. Another destination is represented by the many beautiful palaces of the former aristocracy, built along a river in the **Loire Valley**.

In agriculture wine and cheese production are world famous. France is the first **wheat** producer and exporter in Europe. Besides wheat they grow **sugarbeet, maize** and **barley** as well. In the Mediterranean regions they grow **fruits** (**olives, orange, lemon, fig, chestnut** and **almond**) and **lavender**.

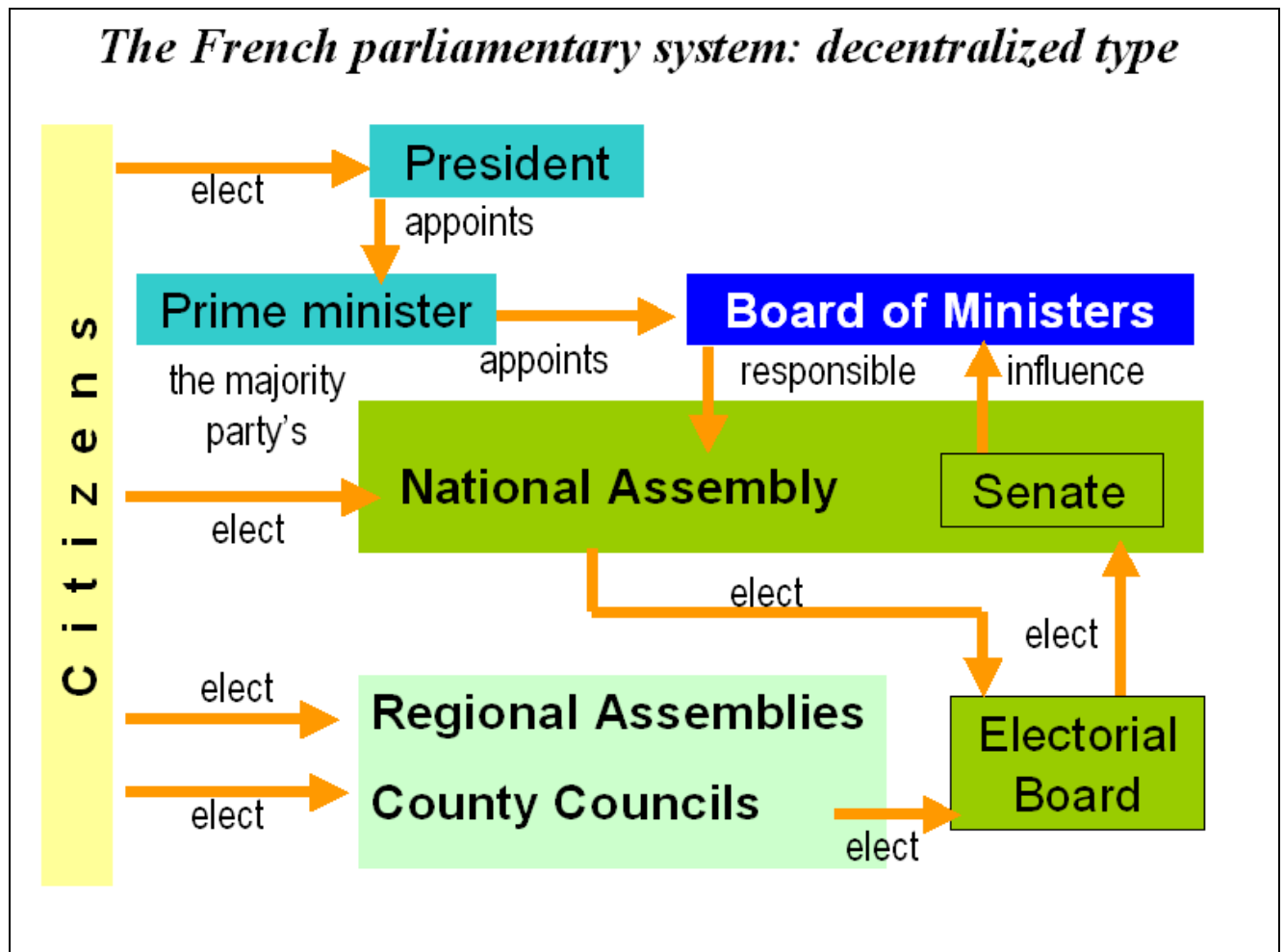
In **Bretagne** (Britanny), with an oceanic climate and with evergreen grass, the **cattle** breeding is important. French **cheese** production has long traditions. Also the **apple** growing is the first in Europe in Bretagne. In the north east the region of **Champagne** is the origin of grape plantations for **champagne** production. In the centre, **Cognac** gave its name to the famous wine **brandy** distillation. In the east, **Burgundy** produces world famous **red wines**. In wine production France is the first in the world together with Italy.

From an urbanisation point of view, Paris is a real metropolis and besides the few major town mentioned above, the vast majority of French settlements look rather **rural**, 'sleepy' country towns.



Administration

France used to have a world empire of colonies situated mainly in North Africa and in Indo-China. After World War II most of them gained independence. Today France has 96 départements and 4 overseas départements (French Guyana in South America, Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean Region and Réunion in the Indian Ocean); 4 overseas territories (out of which New Caledonia and the islands of French Polynesia can be mentioned in the Pacific Ocean); and 2 overseas associated territories of less significance. France is a typical decentralized state in between the unitary and the regionalized state types. It means that its local governments are strong in functions and authority, while its regions are less independent of the central government. It is a founding member of the EU.



There are four direct general elections in the decentralized type of administration. On the regional level both the county councils and the regional assemblies are elected directly. There is a double feedback in case of the electoral board, since its members are elected from among the county councils and from the national assembly. This latter's members are directly elected. The winner party in the national assembly will give the prime minister, but the prime minister also has to be appointed by the president, who is directly elected. The prime minister appoints with the approval of the senate the board of ministers responsible to the national assembly. The members of the senate are elected by the electoral board. So democracy has a very strong control in this parliamentary system.

Society

France is considered to be a Catholic country. In history its kings were known as the 'most Catholic rulers'. 76 % of the population is Roman Catholic. There are two issues causing social problems in France. One used to be the increasing number of immigrants firstly from the former French colonies in North Africa and Indo-China, though the tendency has slowed down recently. The other problem is the regionalism in the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean, since this region wants to separate from France and be an independent state.



Landmarks

- *Eiffel Tower; Notre Dame; Louvre; Champs Élysées; Montmartre* = world famous landmarks of Paris: the 320 m tall symbol of the city (built by Gustave Eiffel in 1889); the major cathedral 'Our Lady'; the famous museum, the widely known avenue and the urban quarter of the artists.
- *TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse)* = a railway line between Paris and Lyon; it is the 'high speed train', the fastest rail in Europe speeding at 300 - 500 kms an hour.
- *Napoleon, Bonaparte* = the greatest figure in French history conquering most of Europe in his time.
- *Champagne (Field)* = the quality drink produced in a French region and named after the area.
- *Tour de France* = a very popular and well known bicycle race held in July in the French countryside.
- *Escargot; croissant; crepes suzette* = traditional French meals: snails with wine; breakfast cake; brandy flavoured pancake.
- *Mont Blanc (White Mount)* = the highest peak of the Alps Mts (4807 m).
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in France:*
- *Church and Abbey* = known as Basilique Sainte-Marie-Madeleine was a Benedictine and Cluniac monastery in Vézelay in Burgundy.
- *Versailles* = the Palace and Park used to be the royal residence of the French rulers in the Île-de-France region. In French, it is known as the Château de Versailles.
- *The Vézère Valley* = is famed for its decorated caves, containing numerous prehistoric cave paintings and hominid remains.

- *The Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres* (Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres) = is a Latin Rite Catholic cathedral and is considered one of the finest examples of the Gothic style of architecture.
- *Mont Saint-Michel and its Bay* = is a rocky tidal island and a commune in Normandy.
- *The Palace of Fontainebleau* = located 55 kilometres from the centre of Paris, is one of the largest French royal Châteaux.
- *The Abbey of Fontenay* = is a former Cistercian abbey, founded by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux in 1118.
- *Amiens Cathedral* = the Cathedral of Our Lady of Amiens (Cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Amiens), is a Roman Catholic Cathedral and seat of the Bishop of Amiens.
- *Arles, Roman and Romanesque Monuments* = is a collection of monuments, including an amphitheatre and an obelisk.
- *Roman Theatre* = the Théâtre antique d'Orange ('Ancient Theatre of Orange') is an ancient monument and a triumphal arch in Orange Province, built early in the first century AD.
- *The Saline Royale* (Royal Saltworks) = is a historical building at Arc-et-Senans.
- *Gulf of Porto, Calanche of Piana, Gulf of Girolata, Scandola Reserve* = parts of the Corsican National Park in Corsica.
- *Abbey of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe* = is a Romanesque church begun in the mid 11th century, containing many beautiful 11th- and 12th-century murals which are still in a remarkable state of preservation.
- *The Place Stanislas* = known as the place Stan', is a pedestrianized square together with Place de la Carrière, and Place d'Alliance in Nancy, Lorraine Province.
- *The Pont du Gard* = is a major stonework; a Roman aqueduct that was constructed in the middle of the 1st century A.D. It is today one of France's top five tourist attractions.
- *Grande Île* = the historic centre of Strasbourg, an island in the Ill River. It is an old urban quarter exemplifying medieval cities.
- *Notre-Dame de Reims* (Our Lady of Rheims) = is the Roman Catholic cathedral of Reims, where the kings of France were once crowned.
- *Banks of the Seine* = in Paris.
- *Bourges Cathedral* (Cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Bourges) = a Roman Catholic cathedral.
- *The Canal du Midi* = meaning canal of the two seas, is a 240 km long canal.
- *Historic Centre of Avignon* = with the Papal Palace, Episcopal Ensemble and Avignon Bridge.
- *Carcassonne* = Historic Fortified City in the province Languedoc.

- *Monte Perdido* = Mont Perdu meaning *lost mountain* is the third highest mount in the Pyrenees (3355 m), located in Spain. The mountain forms part of the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, in the west of the Pyrenees, in the community of Aragon, Spain.
- *Historic Site of Lyon* = including the Roman district and Fourvière, the Renaissance district, Vieux-Lyon, the silk district (slopes of Croix-Rousse), and the Presqu'île, which features architecture from the 12th century to modern times.
- *Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France* = they are places (churches and hospitals) related to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Western Spain.
- *Jurisdiction of Saint-Émilion* = is a commune in Gironde, Aquitaine. Sights include Romanesque church, monolithic church carved from limestone cliff.
- *Loire Valley (Vallée de la Loire)* = is known as the Garden of France and the Cradle of the French Language. It is also noteworthy for the quality of its architectural heritage, in its historic towns, but in particular for its castles and many cultural monuments, which illustrate to an exceptional degree the ideals of the Renaissance and the Age of the Enlightenment on western European thought and design.
- *Provins* = the town of medieval fairs in the rural France.
- *The rebuilt City of Le Havre* = after World War II the city went under a reconstruction by Auguste Perret architect.
- *Bordeaux* = is the world's major wine industry capital. It is home to the world's main wine fair. The historic part of the city (Port of the Moon) is *an outstanding urban and architectural ensemble*.
- *Fortifications of Vauban* = consists of 12 groups of fortified buildings and sites along the western, northern and eastern borders of France.
- *Albi* = The Episcopal city of Albi, situated in the center, around the cathedral.

Germany (Deutschland)

National flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Federal Republic of Germany Native name(s): Bundesrepublik Deutschland		
Capital city and population (million): Berlin 3.5	Language(s): German + Danish, Frisian, Low German		
Country's population (million): 80	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 356 975	
Administrative division			
Region: Länder	Seat	Region: Länder	Seat
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony)	Hannover
Freistaat Bayern (Bavaria)	München (Munnich)	Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine - Westphalia)	Düsseldorf
Land Berlin	Berlin	Rheinland-Pfalz	Mainz
Brandenburg	Potsdam	Saarland	Saarbrücken
Freie Hansestadt Bremen	Bremen	Freistaat Sachsen (Saxony)	Dresden
Freie Hansestadt Hamburg	Hamburg	Sachsen-Anhalt	Magdeburg
Hessen	Wiesbaden	Schleswig-Holstein	Kiel
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Schwerin	Freistaat Thüringen (Thuringia)	Erfurt

Geography

Germany is situated in Central Europe. Its climate is a mixture of oceanic with westerly winds bringing humid air from the Atlantic, and continental with hot summers and cold winters. The north of the country is plain with weak, not too fertile soils (Germanic Plain). There are hilly regions in the middle (Eifel Mountains, Black Forest, Thuringian Wood) while in the south there are the high mountain ranges of the Alps. The two big rivers of the country (the Rhine in the west and the Danube in the south) have fertile valleys (River Rhine Valley and Swabian-Bavarian Basin). The Rhine region is especially good for growing wine.

In history the eastern part of Germany was occupied by the Soviet troops at the end of World War II. While the west and south parts of the country underwent a rapid economic renewal and development supported by the USA, the eastern part remained a socialist republic (named German Democratic Republic (GDR) with a relatively weak economy. In spite of the fast industrial investments specialized on local resources like brown coal, this part of Germany had remained underdeveloped compared to the west part. Even the capital city (Berlin) was divided into West and East Berlin, separated from each other by the ill-famed Berlin Wall, representing and symbolizing the 'iron curtain' and the 'cold war' between the Soviet (socialist) and the capitalist parts of Europe.

The political separation of the Germans lasted from 1945 to 1990, when with the assistance of the Hungarian government of the time; a huge number of East German tourists were let cross the Austrian border from Hungary without valid passports³. This political and social event initiated the collapse of

³ In the autumn of 1989 there was a Pan-European bicycle picnic organized by Hungarians in Burgenland, Austria, when everybody was let through the 'iron curtain' if riding a bicycle, without a passport to symbolize the friendship of the peoples of Europe. Borrowing from Shakespeare's tragedy entitled King Richard III, when the main character says the well known

the East German Communist Party and the political system, giving way to the reunion of Germany after 45 years of political separation.

Economy

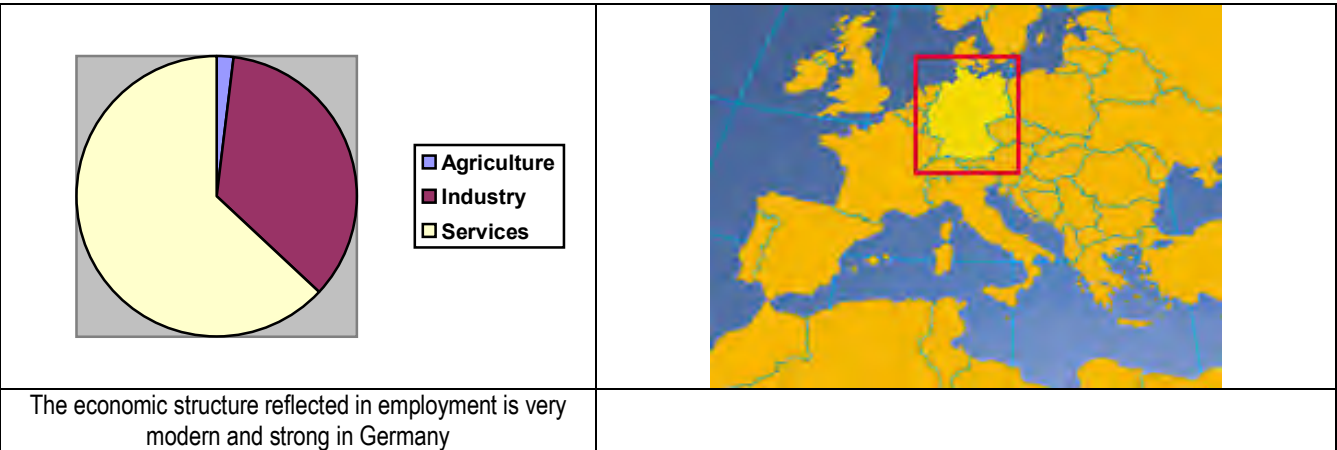
Germany is an industrial world power. Its industrial production alone contributes almost 30 % to that of the EU. As for international commerce, only the USA precedes Germany. Its hilly regions have been rich in coal and salt. Heavy industry and especially metallurgy was based on the black coal and imported iron ore. Engineering has long traditions with manufacturing motor cars and precious instruments. The chemical industry is also well developed, especially in the eastern part based on brown coal.

The homeland of the industrial revolution in the continental Europe is the **Ruhrland** in North Rhine – Westphalia Region. Almost half of Germany’s metallurgy is concentrated here. The Ruhr cities include: **Düsseldorf** (the regional capital) **Dortmund**, **Essen**, **Cologne**. The steel produced in **Solingen** is said to be the *nec plus ultra* in steel quality. Another German basis of heavy industry is the **Saarland** Region in the west.

The centres of engineering can be found in **Stuttgart** (Baden Württemberg Region) with the **Porsche** and the **Daimler-Chrysler** Co. manufacturing Mercedes Benz. The **Bosch** electrotechnical Co. is also situated here. **Fankfurt** (Rhineland and Pfalz Region) is the centre of German **banking** services and European **finance**, with the busiest **airport** of the continental Europe and with the **Opel** Co. A huge chemical plant (BASF Co.) is situated in Ludwigshafen.

The centre of Bavaria (the largest German region) is **Munnich** with such well known companies like the **BMW**, **Siemens** and **Messerschmitt**. Munnich is also the **beer** capital of Germany with the famous Beer festival. Besides **malting barley** and **hop** needed for beer brewery, they grow sugar beet and wheat in Bavaria.

The German agriculture is characterized by rowing wine along the River Rhine and especially in the Mosel River Valley (**Burgundy** red wine). Animal breeding is best known by cattle and dairy industries and farming. In general the north and eastern part of Germany is less developed than the rest. There are, however large centres of production and services in the north, like **Hamburg** (a port) and **Bremen** making up independent regions with their gravity zones and high number of inhabitants.



Hannover in Lower Saxony is another automobile manufacturing center with the neighbouring Wolfsburg (**Wolkswagen** Co.). In Eastern Germany car manufacturing that used to produce the very popular, cheap Wartburg and Trabant cars for all socialist countries was closed down in Thuringia. **Jena** is famous for its quality glass production (**Zeiss** Co.). In Saxony, **Dresden** and **Leipzig** are the

line: 'A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!' there was a new saying created for the East Germans happening to stay in Hungary at that time: 'A bicycle, a bicycle! My Trabant for a bicycle!' :-)

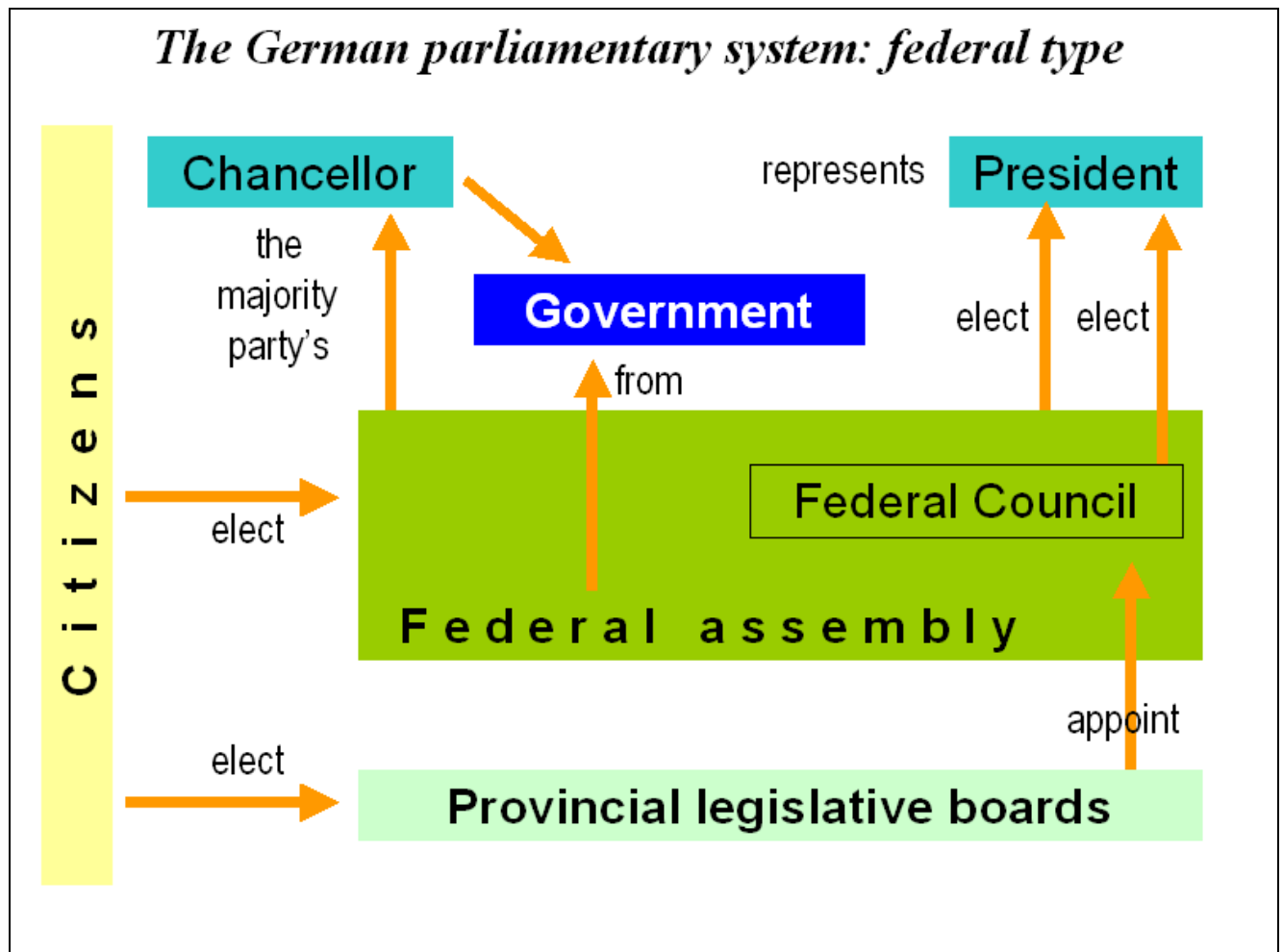
economic centres; the latter is the home to the largest international fair. **Chemnitz** and **Halle** are chemical centres based on local brown coal. **Berlin** is the largest metropolis in Central Europe.

Germany is the third largest manufacturer of automobiles (following the USA and Japan). Its chemical industry is also among the first ones in global sense, and as for its **chemical exports**, it is the first, including the export of **pharmaceuticals** (**Bayer Co.** in Cologne). As for **automobile export**, it is preceded only by Japan.

The structure of German economy is changing from heavy industry to information communication and precision engineering requiring fewer raw materials and more knowledge than previously.

Administration

Germany is a federal republic. It is divided into 15 regions + Berlin, with their own local parliamentary systems looking back on long history. The regions have a relatively great legislative and financial independence from the central (federal) government seated in Berlin.



The German one is a typical federal system with two legislative levels: one on the regional (provincial) level, the other on the federal one. Both parliaments are elected directly. The chancellor heads the government formed by the winning party in the federal assembly. The provincial (regional) assemblies delegate appointed members to the federal council who, together with the federal assembly elect the president.

Society

Germany in history used to be the stronghold of **Protestantism** as opposed to Roman Catholicism. This resulted in long lasting religious wars, the cause of which was the economic interest of the German 'regions' and states to avoid the formation of a strong (Catholic) central power in the hands of the German–Roman emperors. Today some 40 % of the population are Protestants.

Aging is a social problem in Germany. According to estimations the old age population (above 60 years) is going to be 40 % of the total population. The replacement fertility rate⁴ is 208 children from 100 women of maternity age. This value is around 140 in Germany which results in a decreasing population. Even today the German economy relies on a large number of **guest employees** coming from the south east of Europe (Turkey, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, and Romania in the first place). Their ever increasing number and the housing places, the different cultures and traditions of the immigrants are causing social tensions in German residential areas. There is a domestic migration from the former East Germany to the western regions in search of jobs and a higher living standard. Some 3 million people have moved westward since the German reunion.

Landmarks



- *Donau Quelle* = the spring of the second largest European River, the Danube is situated in the Black Forest.
- *Berlin, Golden Bear Festival* = a movie film festival.
- *Münchener Bier Fest* = the beer festival in Munnich.
- *Berlin, Potsdamer Platz; Reichstag; Tiergarten* = the centre of Berlin; the House of the Parliament, symbol of the city; the Berlin Zoo.
- *Würstchen mit Kartoffeln* = sausage with potato, a typical German meal.
- *River Rhine* = the third largest European river on the west part of the country.
- *Saxonian Switzerland* = the hilly region around Dresden with interesting rock formations.
- *Frankfurt Airport* = the 'revolving air disc' of Europe.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Germany:*
- *Aachen Cathedral* = frequently referred to as the 'Imperial Cathedral' (*Kaiserdome*), is a Roman Catholic church in Aachen. The church is the oldest cathedrel in northern Europe and was known as the 'Royal Church of St. Mary at Aachen'. For 600 years, from 936 to 1531, it was the church of coronation for 30 German kings and 12 queens.
- *Speyer Cathedral* = is a major monument of Romanesque art of the German Empire.
- *The Würzburg Residence* = a palace with the Court Gardens and Residence Square.

⁴ The limit of the reproduction value in demography is 208 children per 100 women to preserve and maintain the population number in a country or a region.

- *The Pilgrimage Church of Wies* (Wieskirche) = is an oval Rococo church, located in the foothills of the Alps in Steingaden, Bavaria.
- *The Augustusburg and Falkenlust palaces* = connected by the spacious gardens and trees of the Schlosspark in Brühl, Rhine-Westphalia.
- *St. Mary's Cathedral* (Dom St. Maria) and *The Church of St. Michael* (Michaeliskirche) = an important medieval Catholic cathedral and an early Romanesque church in Hildesheim.
- *Trier* = monuments include the Cathedral of Saint Peter (Trierer Dom) one of the most important early Gothic cathedrals, the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) the oldest cathedral in the country and some Roman monuments.
- *The Hanseatic City of Lübeck* = the Hansa was an economic alliance of trading cities and their guilds that established and maintained a trade monopoly along the coast of Northern Europe. Lübeck was for several centuries the capital of the Hanseatic League ('Queen of the Hansa') with a rich Brick Gothic architectural heritage.
- *Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin* = refers to a group of palace complexes and landscaped gardens in Potsdam (e.g. Sanssouci Palace, Neuer Garten, Marble Palace, Cjateau of Cecilienhof, Babelsberg Palace and Park, Heilandskirche, Sacrow Palace and Park) and Berlin (e.g. Glienicke Palace and Park, Volkspark, Nikolskoe log house, Pfaueninsel, Böttcherberg, Jagdschloss Glienicke).
- *The Abbey of Lorsch* (Reichsabtei Lorsch) = is a former Imperial Abbey near Worms, one of the most renowned monasteries of the Carolingian Empire.
- *The Mines of Rammelsberg* are the site of continuous mineral extraction, near the *Old Town of Goslar*, together with the *Upper Harz Water Regale* (Oberharzer Wasserregal) which is a system of dams, reservoirs, ditches and other structures, much of which was built from the 16th to 19th centuries to divert and store the water that drove the water wheels of the mines.
- *The Old Town of Bamberg* = with its authentic medieval appearance.
- *Maulbronn Abbey* (Kloster Maulbronn) = is the best preserved medieval Cistercian monastery complex in Europe.
- *Quedlinburg* = a medieval old town, castle and collegiate church in the Harz Mts in Saxony-Anhalt.
- *The Völklingen Ironworks* (Völklinger Hütte) = part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage.
- *The Messel Pit* (Grube Messel) = is a disused quarry near Messel, Hesse. Bituminous shale was mined there. Because of its plethora of fossils, it has significant geological and scientific importance.
- *Bauhaus* = the buildings of the famous German house building school that combined crafts and the fine arts. It operated from 1919 to 1933. The most famous buildings are in *Weimar* and *Dessau*.

- *Cologne Cathedral* (Kölner Dom) = one of the best-known architectural monuments in Germany, and Cologne's most famous landmark, an exceptional work of human creative genius. It is visited by 30 thousand people every day.
- *Luther Memorials in Wittenberg and Eisleben* = the importance of Wittenberg historically was partly due to its close connection with Martin Luther and the dawn of the Protestant Reformation; several of its buildings are associated with the events of this time. E.g. the Augustinian monastery in which Luther dwelt in Wittenberg and his birthplace in Eisleben.
- *Classical Weimar* = a city, famous for its cultural heritage in Thuringia.
- *Museum Island* (Museumsinsel) = an island in the Spree river in the centre of Berlin. It received its name for a complex of five internationally renowned museums (Altes, Neues - Egyptian, Alte Nationalgalerie, Bode, Pergamon).
- *Wartburg Castle* = is situated at Eisenach, Thuringia and is an outstanding monument of the Feudal Period in Central Europe.
- *The Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz* = is one of the first and largest English parks in Germany and continental Europe.
- *Reichenau Monastic Island* = the monastery is the Benedictine Abbey of Reichenau.
- *The Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex* (Zeche Zollverein) = is a large former industrial site in the city of Essen, North Rhine-Westphalia.
- *Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar* = with Brick Gothic buildings and brick churches.
- *The Rhine Gorge* = the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, a 65 km section of the River. It has a unique combination of geological, historical, cultural and old industrial values.
- *Bremen* = the Bremen Roland is a statue of the city's protector, erected in 1404; the market place and the Town Hall.
- *The Muskau Park* (Muskauer Park) = is the largest and one of the most famous English gardens of Germany and Poland on both sides of the River Neisse. Transboundary property with Poland.
- *Rhaetian Limes* = part of the Limes Germanicus, the frontier (limes) fortifications that bounded the ancient Roman provinces of Germania Inferior, Superior and Raetia.
- *Old Town of Regensburg* = the medieval centre of the city.
- *Berlin Modernism Housing Estates* = consists of 6 subsidized housing estates (Siedlungen) that testify to innovative housing policies from 1910 to 1933, during the Weimar Republic, when the city of Berlin was particularly progressive socially, politically and culturally.
- *The Wadden Sea* (Wattensee) = is an intertidal zone in the SE part of the North Sea, lying between the coast of NW continental Europe and the Frisian Islands, forming a shallow body of water with tidal flats and wetlands. It is rich in biological diversity. Transboundary property.

Greece (Ellada)

National flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Hellenic Republic Native name(s): Ελληνική Δημοκρατία (Ellīnikī Dīmokratía)		
Capital city and population (million): Athens 3	Language(s): Greek		
Country's population (million): 10.7	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 131 957	
Administrative division			
Region: <i>periféreia</i>	Seat	Region: <i>periféreia</i>	Seat
Anatolikís Makedonías kai Trákīs (Thrace)	Komotīnī	Ióniōn nīsion (Ionia)	Kérkyra (Corfu)
Attikís (Attica)	Atīna (Athens)	Kentrikís Makedonías (Middle Macedonia)	Tessaloníkī
Voreíoy Aigaíoy (North Aegean Islands)	Mytilīnī	Krītīs (Crete)	Írákleio
Dytikís Elládas (West Greece)	Pátra	Notíoy Aigaíoy (South Aegean Islands)	Ermoýpolī
Dytikís Makedonías (West Macedonia)	Kozánī	Peloponnīsoy (Peloponnesus)	Trípolī
Ípeíroy (Epirus)	Iōánnina	Stereás Elládas (East Greece)	Lamía
Tessalías (Thessaly)	Lárisa	Aytónomī Monastikī Politeía Agíoy Óroy	Karyés

Geography

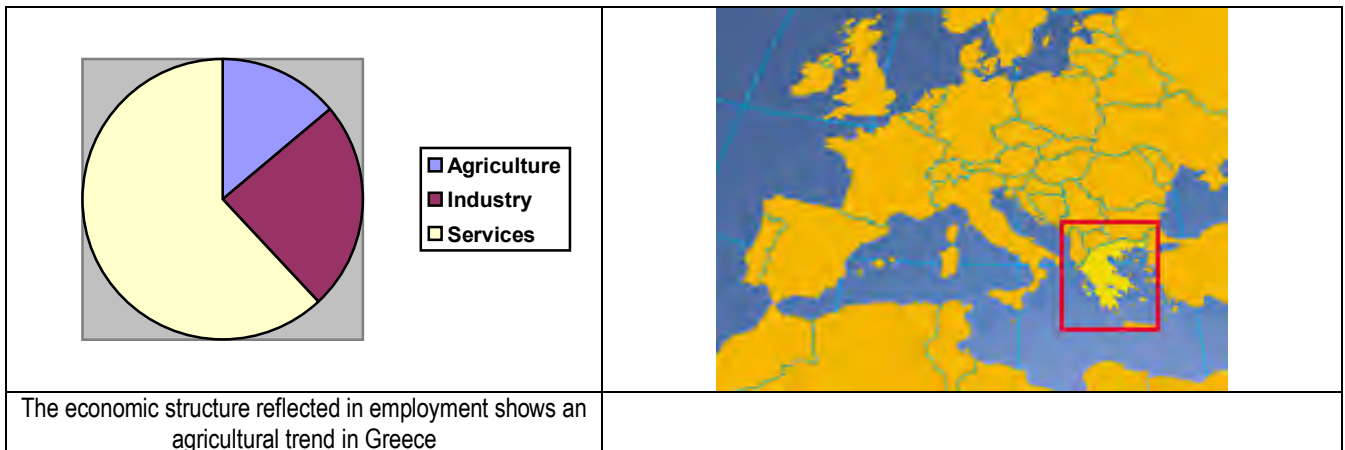
Greece is the southernmost state in the Balkan Peninsula. It consists of many small peninsulas and lots of islands, too. The largest island is Crete in the south, the largest peninsula is Peloponnesos (meaning 'almost island'). Much of the territory of Greece is mountainous and hilly, with the exception of Thessaly and some coastline. The Greek islands lie in the Aegean Sea between Europe and Asia Minor. The Mediterranean climate is very pleasant in Greece.

Economy

Greece has a relatively weak economy, until 2004 it was the weakest within the EU. There are rich **aluminium ore** mines in Greece. A part of it is exported (to Germany) and another part is processed by the local aluminium metallurgy industry. Half of the industrial and business activity is concentrated in the capital city, **Athens**. The **commercial fleet** is the largest in Europe and the 4th largest in the world after Liberia, Panama and Japan. There are **marble** mines in Greece.

Greek agriculture grows **grapes, olives, tobacco, vegetables** and **fruits**. The grapes are used to make sweet Greek **wines**, and **raisins (currant, sultana)**. Greece is the first in the world for the latter product. Corn growing and crop cultivation is only possible in **Thessaly**. Greece is one of the world's largest **olive oil** producers. In animal husbandry they breed **goats** and **sheep**. In light industry the **food** and **textile** industries have to be mentioned as the most important branches.

Tourism is another important source of income, though it is a relatively far destination by road from the big tourist-emitting countries (Germany, England, France), therefore 'only' 11 million visitors a year go there, usually for summer holidays.



Administration

Greece joined the EU in 1981. It has 10 regions, 51 boroughs and 1 autonomous monastery republic (Athos). Because Greece and especially its underdeveloped north-eastern regions (Ionia, Macedonia, Epirus, Thrace) profited a lot on EU Structural Funds, due to the low rate of GDP per capita that permitted the relatively easy winning of EU competitions.

Society



95 % of the population are Greek; the rest are Gypsy, Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish, Romanian national minorities. 98 % (!) of the population follow the orthodox Christian Church. The financial crisis striking Europe in 2009 exercised one of the the strongest effects on Greek economy in 2010 resulting in social uneasiness.

Landmarks

- *Olympus Mts* = the highest peak (2911 m) in the north of Greece; according to mythology, it is the home of the Greek gods and goddesses.
- *Olympic Games* = the first games were held in 776 BC at Olympia. In modern times they were restarted in 1896, in Athens. (According to Mythology, however, it was Heracles and Iasion who organized the very first sport games at Olympia, when the Argonauts were about to leave Greece in search of the Golden Fleece.)
- *Atlantis (Cradle of European Civilization)* = the Island of Crete, where the Knossos civilization was identified as Atlantis, described by Platon. This is the place where the Iron Age first began in Europe. Also this is the place where the father of the gods (Zeus) of ancient mythology was raised up, hence the place where the cradle of Zeus was rocked.
- *Santorin* = the only active volcanic island in the Aegean Sea.
- *Naxos* = an island in the middle of the Aegean Sea; according to mythology this is the birthplace of Dionysos, the god of wine and joy, and indeed, this is the gene centre of grapes; grape has spread all through the world from this island.
- *Parnassos Mt; Delphi; Helicon Mt.* = a limestone mountain above Delphi, the sacred place of Apollo, the oracle. It is the place where Orpheus was taught to play and sing, so the mount's name is associated with arts. It is the case with the Mount Helicon, too, where the Muses (the goddesses of arts) and Pegasus, the symbol of arts used to stay according to mythology.

- *Mythology* = Greek mythology (religious tales and legends) had exercised a very strong effect of European culture, because the Romans wrote down the Greek legends and they survived in Latin during the middle Ages in the monasteries. Later Latin was taught with the legends of Greek mythology, thus this fabulous world became an essential part of European culture and civilization.
- *Tzatsiki; Greek salad; souvlaki* = traditional meals: yogurt and cucumber sauce; pheta cheese with pieces of onion, tomato, pepper, cucumber and olives; pita bread filled with seasoned minced meat.
- *Rhodes* = the easternmost Greek island, with rich history and beautiful landscape; it is the land of the rising sun for the Greek (like Japan in Asia); and indeed, according to mythology it was the homeland of Helios, the god of the Sun. The Rhodes Colossus, one of the 7 wonders of the world used to be a tall statue of Helios himself.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Greece:*
 - *Temple of Apollo at Bassae* = is at an archaeological site. It is one of the most studied ancient Greek temples because of its multitude of unusual features. Its construction is placed between 450 BC and 400 BC.
 - *The Acropolis of Athens* = or the Citadel of Athens is known all over the world. It is proclaimed as the pre-eminent monument of the European Culture.
 - *Delphi* = archaeological site that was the most important oracle in the classical Greek world.
 - *Epidaurus* = archaeological site, where the Asclepieion (healing temple) of Epidaurus was the most celebrated healing center of the Classical Greek world.
 - *Medieval City of Rhodes* = is one of the best preserved medieval towns in Europe.
 - *Meteoras* = old monasteries (the name means: 'suspended in the skies') of the orthodox Christianity built upon high cliffs; they are a touristic attraction north of Thessaly.
 - *Mount Athos* = is a mountain in Macedonia. Politically it is known in Greece as the Autonomous Monastic State of the Holy Mountain. This is home to 20 Eastern Orthodox monasteries and forms a self-governed monastic state within Greece.
 - *Thessaloniki* = is home to numerous notable *Byzantine* and *Paleochristian monuments*.
 - *Olympia* = archaeological site, a sanctuary of ancient Greek, and is known for having been the site of the Olympic Games in classical times.
 - *Byzantine City of Mystras* = ruins, including the fortress, a palace, churches, and monasteries.
 - *The Island of Delos* = an exceptionally extensive and rich archaeological site which conveys the image of a great cosmopolitan Mediterranean port.
 - *Monasteries* = of *Daphni* (Athens), *Hosios Loukas* (Beotia), *Mea Moni* (Chios). Important monuments of Middle Byzantine architecture and art.
 - *Pythagoreion* = the remains of an ancient fortified port with Greek and Roman monuments and a spectacular tunnel (Eupalinian aqueduct); the *Heraion of Samos* was a great sanctuary, a temple's ruins, with its sole standing column.
 - *Vergina* = archaeological site and the burial place of the kings of Macedon, including the tomb of Philip II. Father of Alexander the Great.
 - *Mycenae and Tiryns* = archaeological sites from the Bronze Age.
 - *Pátmos* = island, historic centre with the *Monastery of Saint John* of the Theologian and the *Cave of the Apocalypse*.
 - *Corfu (Kérkyra)* = old town.

Hungary (Magyarország)

National flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Republic of Hungary Native name(s): Magyar Köztársaság		
Capital city and population (million): Budapest 1,6	Language(s): Hungarian		
Country's population (million): 9.9	Currency: Forint	Territory (sq kms): 93 000	
Administrative division			
Region: megye	Seat	Region: megye	Seat
Bács-Kiskun	Kecskemét	Komárom-Esztergom	Tatabánya
Baranya	Pécs	Nógrád	Salgótarján
Békés	Békéscsaba	Pest	Budapest
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	Miskolc	Somogy	Kaposvár
Csongrád	Szeged	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	Nyíregyháza
Fejér	Székesfehérvár	Tolna	Szekszárd
Győr-Moson-Sopron	Győr	Vas	Szombathely
Hajdú-Bihar	Debrecen	Veszprém	Veszprém
Heves	Eger	Zala	Zalaegerszeg
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	Szolnok	--	--

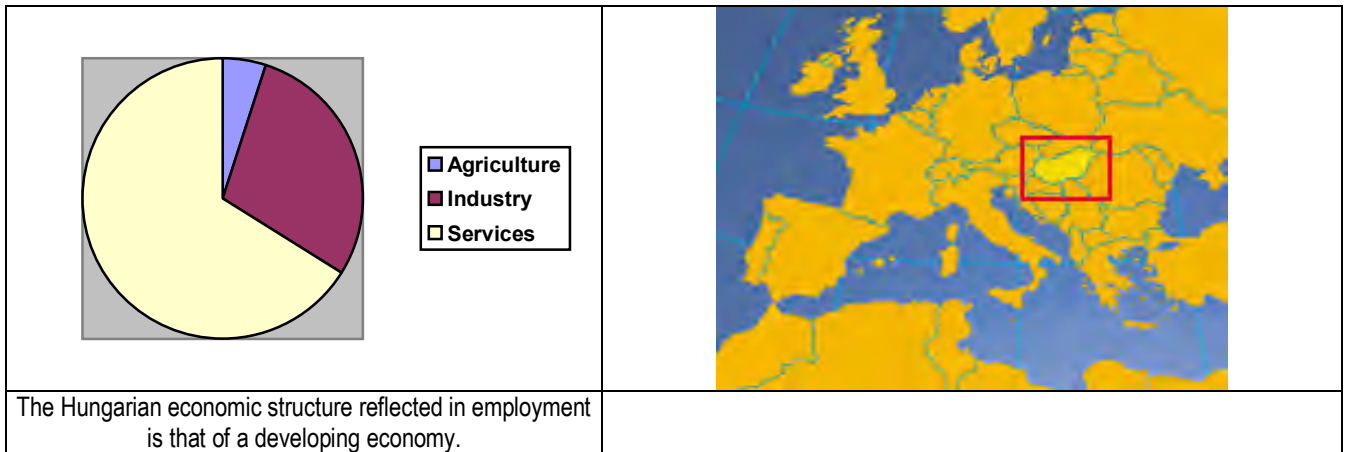
Geography

Hungary is situated in the middle of the Carpathian Basin. This is a place protected from climatic extremities, because it is surrounded by high mountains on every side: the Carpathians (N, E), the Alps (W) and the Dinarides (S). There are two big rivers crossing the central plain: the Danube and the Tisza. The soils are fertile, favourable for crop cultivation. The western and the northern parts of Hungary are hilly, while the central and eastern parts are completely flat. The earth's crust is rather thin below the Carpathian Basin and the geothermal gradient is high, therefore the area is extremely rich in geothermal waters. Indeed, they represent the main natural resource of Hungary.

Economy

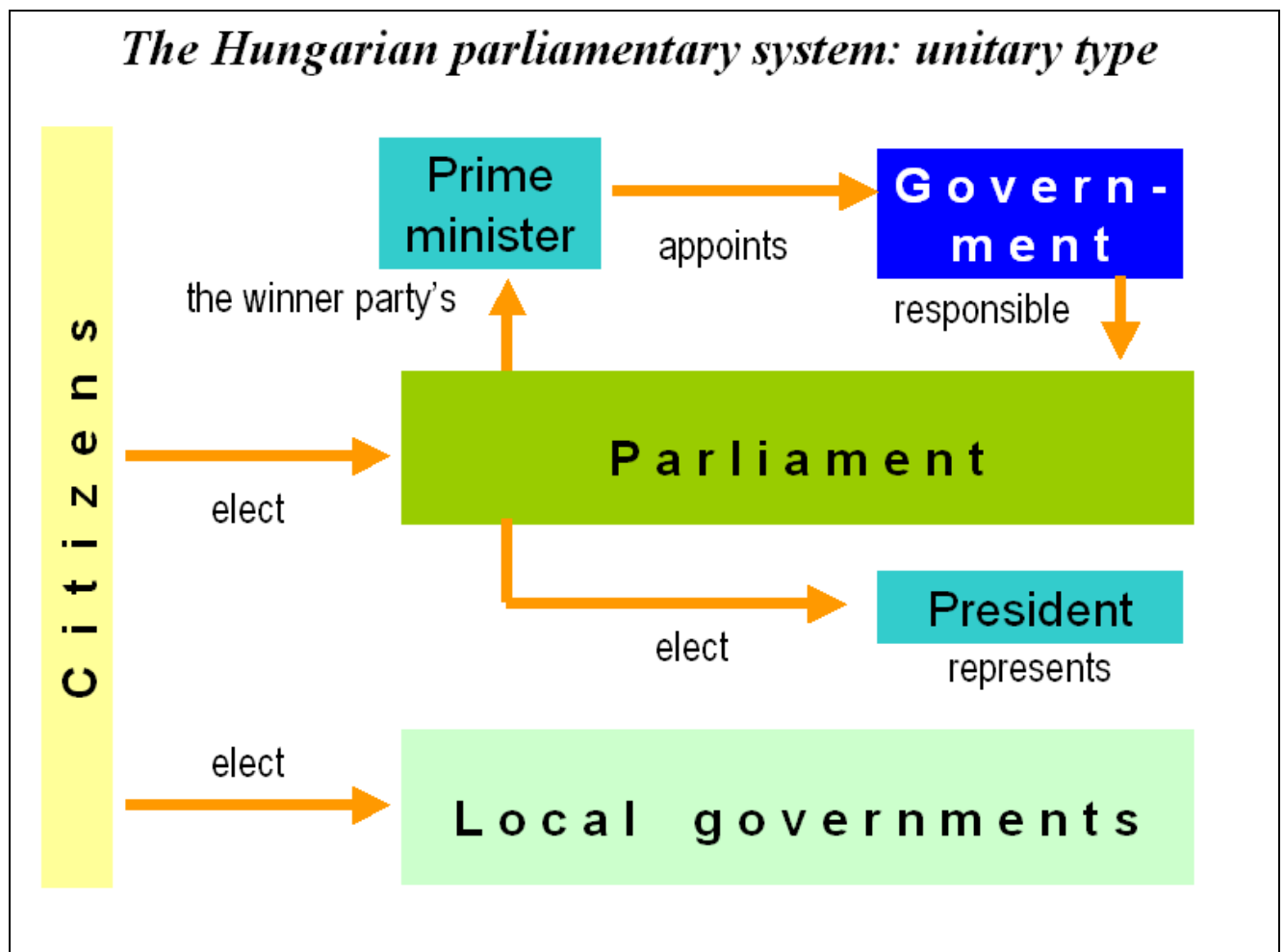
The country is very poor in minerals and raw materials, therefore heavy industry which was developed during the Soviet period collapsed, causing unemployment when the market economy was introduced after 1990. Engineering of multinational companies is present (e.g. **car manufacturing**). Though agriculture has the most favourable natural conditions in Hungary, the large scale cooperatives were privatized and sold, so food industry and much of the previously well developed agricultural production was put to an end, too.

Agriculture grows **wheat, maize, sunflower**, but the most outstanding product is **wine** of very fine qualities. **Hot mineral medicinal waters** are present everywhere and they make the country a health and wellness world power. There are lots of hotels and medicinal baths.



Administration

The country as a former communist country is still a unitary type of state, starting to change into a decentralized type. There are 7 NUTS-2 regions, but the regional councils do not have any legislative power, nor are they elected. The only administrative function they have is to redistribute development funds given by the EU. There are 19 counties as well, with little administrative functions. The local governments have most of the administration. Hungary joined the EU in 2004.



Society

90 % of the population is Hungarian, and the largest ethnic minority is Gypsy (8 %). The rest is mainly composed of Germans and Slovaks. The greatest social problem and tension is caused by the inability of the Gypsies to integrate. While during the communist regime this social problem was resolved by oppression, in the democratic country the governments cannot handle it. Most of the uneducated and unemployed come from the rising number of Gypsy minority. Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania are facing the same problem among the new EU members. As for religion 64 % are Roman Catholic and 21 % of the population are Protestant Christians.

After World War I most of the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom⁵ was given to the Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Yugoslavian states, leaving a huge number of Hungarians as national minorities in these countries. They have become the subjects of forceful assimilation. This political act, carried out by the French and the English was meant to prevent the reintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the Carpathian Basin, lest the Germans could use it once again as a 'spring board' towards the east.



Landmarks

- *House of Parliament; Chain Bridge; Gellért Hill; Royal Castle; Margaret Island; Heroes' Square* = places of interest in Budapest. The house of the parliament is considered to be the most beautiful building in Europe. The Chain Bridge was the first over the Danube in the Carpathian Basin. Gellért Hill in the middle of the city offers a nice view from its top. The Royal Castle is a district and palace on the hilly Buda side of the Danube. Margaret Island is also situated in the heart of Budapest; the Heroes' Square is a central one with monuments and the first subway train of continental Europe, still operating.
- *Hévíz* = the most famous hot mineral medicinal water spa, being the world's largest hot water spring at the same time.
- *Danube Bend* = a nice landscape where the River Danube breaks its way through the hills.
- *Balaton* = the largest lake in Central Europe, ideal for summer holidaying because of its shallow waters.
- *Cave Bath of Tapolca* = the world's unique natural cave with geothermal water spring in it at Miskolc.
- *Tshikosh* = traditional Hungarian horse-herder or cowboy.
- *Goulash* = traditional Hungarian stew soup with red pepper.

⁵ Hungary has a handicap in its name associated with the Huns. Hungarians are relatives of the Turkish, Finnish and Estonian in Europe belonging to the Ural-Altai language family, not to the long before extinct Huns. The relationship with the Huns, stressed in the manuscripts of the chronicle writers, used to be encouraged by Hungarian kings in the Middle Ages. They wished to legitimize the Hungarian conquest, i.e. they as the legal descendents, came for the heritage of the Huns who once (600 years before the Hungarians came) dwelled in the Carpathian Basin for a while. By the way, Hungarians never call themselves Huns, but Magyars.

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Hungary:
- *Budapest* = the palaces on the Pest bank of the Danube and the Buda Castle medieval district. The *Andrássy Avenue* lined with spectacular Neo-renaissance mansions; and the *Millennium Underground* (the 2nd oldest underground railways in the world and the 1st one on the continental Europe).
- *Hollókő* = an ethnographic village museum.
- *Caves of Aggtelek Karst* = a transboundary property with Slovakia with 712 caves, the most famous of which the Baradla (Hungarian) and Domica (Slovakia) dripstone cave complex is the largest. The Slovakian caves include Gombasek, Silica, Dobšiná, Ochtina and Jasov.
- *Pannonhalma* = it is the Millenary Benedictine Monastery with its natural environments. This is the second largest territorial abbey in the world, after the one in Monte Casino.
- *Hortobágy* = national park, a large alkali grassland named 'pusta' with traditional breed of sheep and grey cattle, and horses. It is the largest natural grassland in Europe.
- *Necropolis of Pécs (Sopiana)* = early Christian tombs.
- *Fertő (Lake Neusiedl)* = cultural landscape around a large alkali grassland lake shared between Austria and Hungary. It also enjoy protection through the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- *Tokaj – Hegyalja* = cultural landscape, the growing area of the world's best quality sweet white wine, named in Latin: '*Vinum Regum, Rex Vinorum*' (wine of the kings and king of the wines).

Ireland (Éire)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms			
		Republic of Ireland Native name(s): Éire					
Capital city and population (million): Dublin 0.9		Language(s): English, Irish (Gaelic)					
Country's population (million): 4.8		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 70 000			
Administrative division							
Region: County / Contae		Seat		Region: County / Contae		Seat	
Átha Cliath Theas / South Dublin Chabháin / Cavan Cheatharlach / Carlow Chiarraí / Kerry Chill Chainnigh / Kilkenny Chill Dara / Kildare Chill Mhantáin / Wicklow Chláir / Clare Chorcaí / Cork Dhún na nGall / Donegal Dhún Laoghaire-Ráth Dúin / Rathdown Fhine Gall / Fingal Gaillimhe / Galway hIarmhí / Westmeath Laoise / Laois		Tamhlacht / Tallaght An Cabhán / Cavan Ceatharlach / Carlow Trá Lí / Tralee Cill Chainnigh / Kilkenny An Nás / Naas Cill Mhantáin / Wicklow Inis / Ennis Corcaigh / Cork Leifear / Lifford Dún Laoghaire / Dun ~ Sord Cholmhcille / Swords Gaillimh / Galway Muileann Cearr / Mullingar Port Laoise / Port Laoise		Liatroma / Leitrim Loch Garman / Wexford Longfoirt / Longford Lú / Louth Luimnigh / Limerick Mhaigh Eo / Mayo Mí / Meath Mhuineacháin / Monaghan Phort Láirge / Waterford Ros Comáin / Roscommon Shligigh / Sligo Thiobraid Árann Theas / South Tipperary Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh / North Tipperary Uíbh Fhailí / Offaly		Cora Droma Rúisc / Carrick-on-Shannon Loch Garman / Wexford Longfort / Longford Dún Dealgan / Dundalk Luimneach / Limerick Caisleán an Bharraigh / Castlebar Uaimh / Navan Muineachán / Monaghan Port Láirge / Waterford Ros Comáin / Roscommon Sligeach / Sligo Cluain Meala / Clonmel Aonach / Nenagh Tulach Mhór / Tullamore	

Geography

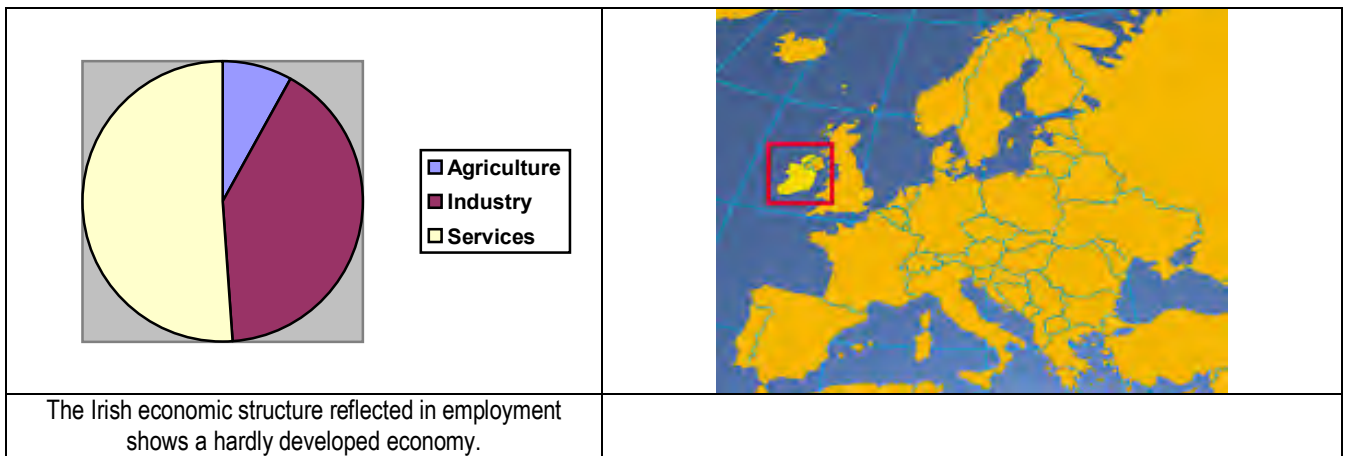
Ireland is mainly flat with low hills. The climate is Oceanic with much rain and mild winters. The country is very poor in forests and wood. Because of the frequent precipitation the grass is evergreen and Ireland is named 'Emerald Island'. The longest river is the Shannon, which is the longest one in the British Isles, too.

Economy

There are **mercury, copper, lead, zinc** deposits and mines. Traditionally industry has always been underdeveloped with the exception of **textile** mills. Lately the American Intel moved to Ireland with the manufacturing of **computer chips**. This job demanded a qualified labour force of which there were plenty in the island, so Irish economy has started a boom in the past 10 years. Ireland became the largest exporter computer chips.

Traditionally agriculture included **sheep** and **cattle** breeding, **potato, oats, fodder plants** and **barley** growing. Irish **beer** brewery is famous with such drinks as **Guinness**. They mine **peat** (a very young type of coal) almost everywhere in the island. This is used partly for heating, partly for **whisky** distillation. Irish whisky is also high quality. **Fishery** is also important: **cod, herring, and sardine**.

Besides Dublin, there are some other minor economic centres: Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Galway.



Administration

There are 4 provinces and 26 counties in Ireland. The Irish have always fought against the British for their independence ever since Oliver Cromwell occupied the country. After about 337 years of oppression (1600-1937) most of the Irish island regained its independence and became an independent republic.

Society

There is a kind of historical hatred for the English on the one hand, but the two peoples have been associated for such a long time that the Irish gave a lot of excellent artists⁶ to the British culture, and they use the English language as well. Irish national leaders try to keep up the Irish language as the official one, but it is shrinking especially among young people who prefer speaking English to Irish. After all English is a world language. The Irish are almost totally Roman Catholic (95 %). There is a very little national minority if any, because 99 % of the country's population are Irish. Because of their stormy history against the English the Irish say they are 'the Hungarians of the West' referring to the opposition between Hungarians and Austrians in history.

Many of the Irish population left the country between 1840 - 1852 due to the great famines when their main foodstuff, the potato crop was ravaged (by potato blight). One million Irish died of starvation, and some 2 millions emigrated, mostly to the USA.

Landmarks

- *Cliffs of Moher* = steep rock walls of 200 metres on the western coast of Ireland.
- *Galway Bay (Loch Lurgan)* = the famous Irish landscape, with the traditional Galway 'hooker', a special sailboat designed for the stormy waters of the Atlantic Ocean.
- *Connemara pony* = a famous horse breed originating in Ireland.
- *Trinity College* = an old university in Dublin with one of the world's oldest books (the Book of Kells from 800 AD).
- *Viking Museum* = an interactive museum in Dublin.
- *Harp and fiddle* = harp is the national instrument and also, the symbol of Ireland (see it in the coat of arms); fiddle is the most widely used instruments for pub-dance music (e.g. in the Lords of the Dance).
- *Irish stew; Guinness* = traditional meals: meat with potato and onion; beer.
- *Brú na Bóinne* = archaeological ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne. It is the largest and one of the most important prehistoric megalithic sites in Europe. It is a complex of Neolithic chamber tombs, standing stones, henges and enclosures some dating from as early as 35th century BC.
- *Skellig Michael* = is a steep rocky island in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland. It was a centre of monastic life for Irish monks for 600 years. There is a Gaelic monastery situated at the summit of the 230 metre high rock.

⁶ Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett.

Italy (Italia)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms			
		Italian Republic Native name(s): Repubblica Italiana					
Capital city and population (million): Rome 3		Language(s): Italian + French (Aosta valley), German (Trentino Alto-Adige), Sardinian (Sardinia) and Slovenian (Friuli Venezia-Giulia)					
Country's population (million): 61		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 301 263			
Administrative division							
Region: Regione		Seat		Region: Regione		Seat	
Abruzzo		L'Aquila		Lombardia (Lombardy)		Milano (Milan)	
Basilicata		Potenza		Marche		Ancona	
Calabria		Catanzaro		Molise		Campobasso	
Campania		Napoli (Naples)		Piemonte		Torino	
Emilia-Romagna		Bologna		Puglia		Bari	
Lazio		Roma (Rome)		Toscana		Firenze (Florence)	
Liguria		Genova (Geneve)		Umbria		Perugia	
--		--		Veneto		Venezia (Venice)	
autonomous regions / regioni autonome:						seat:	
Friuli-Venezia Giulia / Friaul-Julisch Venetien / Furlanija-Julijska krajina						Trieste / Triest / Triest / Trst	
Sardegna / Sardinia (Sardinia)						Cagliari / Casteddu	
Sicilia (Sicily)						Palermo	
Trentino-Alto Adige / Trentino-Südtirol / Trentin-Sudtirol						Trento / Trient / Trent	
Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste (Aosta Valley)						Aosta /Aoste	

Geography

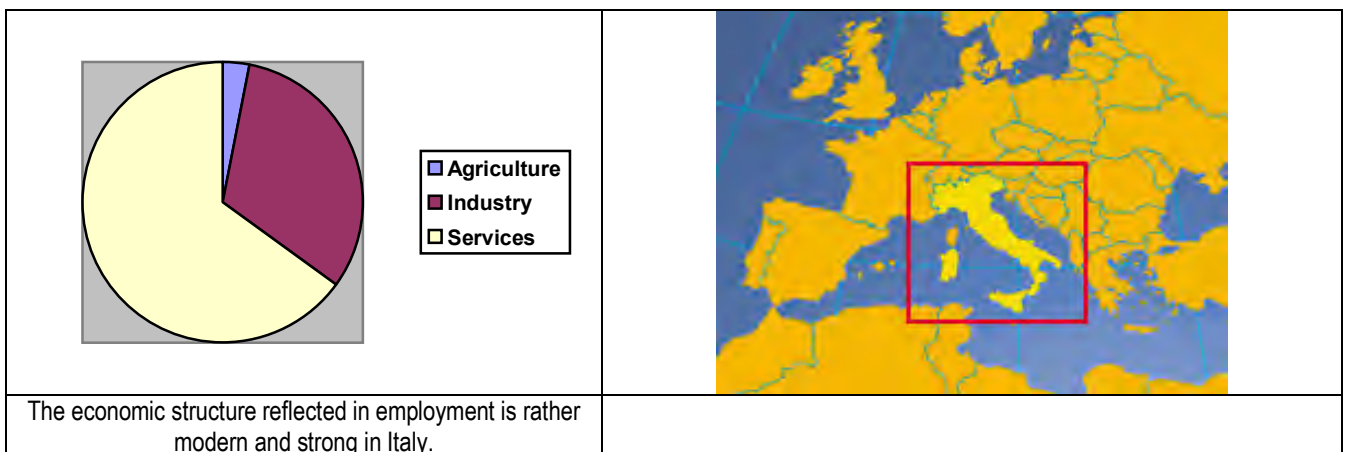
Italy occupies the Apennine Peninsula in south Europe in the Mediterranean region. There are two big islands belonging to the country: Sicily and Sardinia. In the north of Italy there are the mountain ranges of the Alps. The peninsula itself is a hilly region with the Apennine Mts of volcanic origin. Plains can only be found near the seashores. Between the Apennines and the Alps there is a fertile lowland, the water catchment area of the river Po. The climate of Italy is very favourable, with hot summers and mild winters (Mediterranean). Italy used to be Europe's first world power in ancient times, when it was the homeland of the Roman Empire. Therefore Italy is very rich in historic monuments: more than half of the UNESCO's Cultural World Heritage sites can be found there.

Economy

Traditional branches of economy include **mining**, since the volcanic Apennines are rich in minerals like **mercury**, **lead** and **sulphur**. For stoneworks the Italian **marble** is very famous (**Carrara**). Another traditional branch is **textile** industry. Heavy industry, engineering, electronics are mainly located in the north. The largest centres are **Milan**, **Torino**, **Genoa**, **Bologna**, **Venice**, **Triest**, **Modena**. Italian automobile manufacturing is well known all over the world: **Fiat**, **Lancia** (Torino), **Pirelli**, **Alfa Romeo** (Milan). In Italy, industry has few resources; the economy is based on a skilled labour force, knowledge and traditions.

The most important income is produced by **tourism**, however. **Rome, Naples, Venice, Florence, Pisa, Bologna, Ravenna** are visited for their numerous historical monuments and museums. The **Italian Alps** offer resorts for both summer hiking and winter sports. All the coastlands of the **Adriatic**, the **Thyrrhenian** and **Ionian seas** offer the best places for **summer holidaying** like **Rimini**. The south is visited for its beautiful Mediterranean landscapes. There are some **50 million (!) tourists** visiting Italy each year.

In the south half of Italy living standard is lower than in the north one. It is agriculture that can find favourable conditions in both north and south. They grow **wheat, maize, sugarbeet, rice, grapes, vegetables, fruits**. The Italian **wine, olive oil, lemon** and **orange** production is among the firsts in the world. They breed **sheep** and **goats**, too.



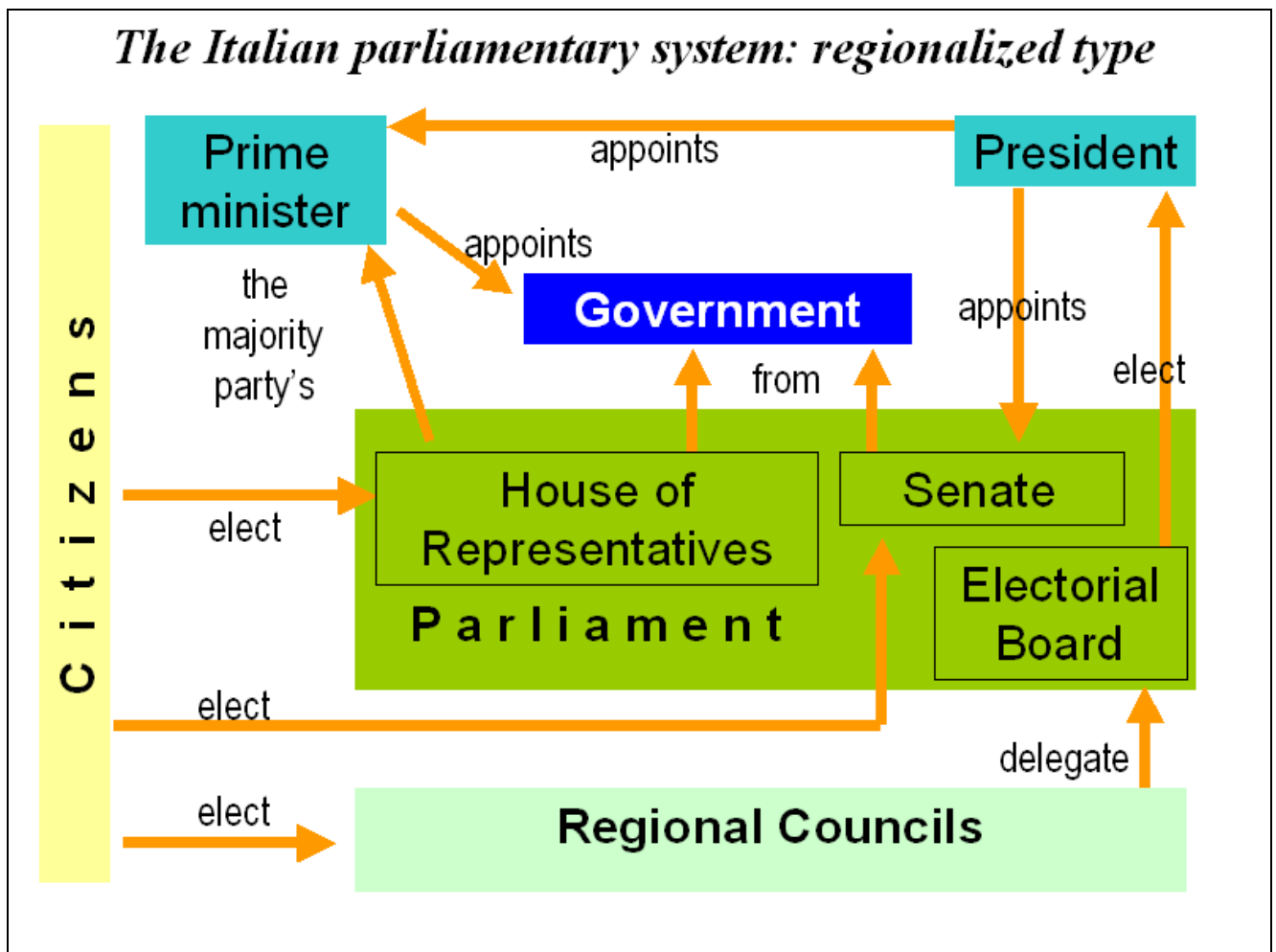
Administration

Italy is a regionalized state with 20 regions with their legislation derived from the constitution and having fairly large budget on their own. The state of Italy is but one step from the federal type. Regionalism can be observed in one of the north regions: the Aosta Valley where they try to become independent from Italy. Italy is a founding member of the EU.

The parliamentary system is that of a regionalized state. The members of the regional councils, the house of the representatives and the senate are elected directly. It is the president's responsibility to appoint the members of the senate as well. The president is elected by the electoral board. The prime minister of the winning party appoints the government from the house of the representatives.

Society

94 % of the population are Italians, some 3 % Sardinian, and the rest are Germans (Austrians) in the north, French in the North West and Gypsies. As for religion 83 % of the population are Roman Catholic. There is a strong contradiction between the northern and the southern regions, the south being much poorer than the north. Consequently the labour force of the south often commute to the north to work; it resulting in an internal migration. There is an illegal immigration trend from time to time in the south from Albania across the Adriatic Sea.



Landmarks

- *Rome* = the 'Eternal City', the most outstanding city of Europe regarding historic importance.
- *The gondolas of Venice* = traditional, flat-bottomed Venetian rowing boats, well suited to the conditions of the Venetian Lagoon.
- *Venetian Film Festival* = is the oldest film festival in the world and one of the most prestigious.
- *Carneval of Venice* = it started as a time for celebration and expression throughout the classes, as wearing *masks* hid any form of identity between social classes. The Carnival starts around two weeks before Ash Wednesday and ends on Shrove Tuesday.
- *Murano glass* = is a famous product of the Venetian island of Murano for centuries and still now.
- *Volcanoes* = there are three active volcanoes in Italy: *Vesuvius* (1149 m high, near Naples), *Etna* (3328 m high near Messina in the island of Sicily) and *Stromboli* (926 m and has been continuously active in the last 20 thousand years) off the north coast of Sicily.
- *Jeans* = few people recognize the origin of the fashionable pieces of clothing. It has something to do with an Italian town by the Thyrrhenian Sea, Genoa. The strong, cotton textile is stained blue with the indigo plant. Indigo was imported into the port of Genoa in the greatest quantity, therefore the colouring material, the indigo used to be often referred to as something from Genoa, i.e. Genoese. The pronunciation of this word got simpler in the form of 'jeans'.
- *UNESCO World heritage Sites in Italy:*
- *Rock carvings of Valcamonica* = constitute one of the largest collections of prehistoric petroglyphs in the world. There are more than 140 000 figures and symbols.

- *Santa Maria delle Grazie* (Holy Mary of Grace) = is a church and Dominican convent in Milan. It is famous for the mural of the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci, which is in the refectory of the convent.
- *Historic Centre of Rome* = its history spans over 2.5 thousand years. Rome's is the city, richest in architectural and archaeological sites, and artistic, historical heritage. One of the symbols of Rome is the *Colosseum* (the largest amphitheatre ever built in the Roman Empire, the symbol of the City). The list of important monuments and sites of ancient Rome includes the *Forum Romanum*, the *Domus Aurea*, the *Pantheon*, *Trajan's Column*, *Trajan's Market*, the *Catacombs*, the *Circus Maximus*, the *Baths of Caracalla*, *Castel Sant'Angelo*, the *Mausoleum of Augustus*, the *Ara Pacis*, the *Arch of Constantine*, the *Pyramid of Cestius*, and the *Bocca della Verita*. Basilicas dating from the Paleochristian age include *Santa Maria Maggiore* and *San Paolo Fuori la Mura*, *Santa Maria in Trastevere*, *Santi Quattro Coronati*, *Santa Prassede* and *Santa Maria in Ara Coeli*. Masterpieces of Renaissance architecture include the *Piazza del Campidoglio*, the *Palazzo del Quirinale*, (presidential seat of the Italian Republic), the *Palazzo Venezia*, the *Palazzo Farnese*, the *Palazzo Barberini*, the *Palazzo Chigi* (seat of the Prime Minister), the *Palazzo Spada*, the *Palazzo della Cancelleria*, and the *Villa Farnesina*. The most famous city squares include *Piazza Navona*, *Piazza di Spagna*, *Campo de' Fiori*, *Piazza Venezia*, *Piazza Farnese*, *Piazza della Rotonda* and *Piazza della Minerva*. The most emblematic examples of Baroque art in Rome is the *Fontana di Trevi* and the *Palazzo Madama* (seat of the Senate) and the *Palazzo Montecitorio*. Neoclassical art is best represented by the *Piazza del Popolo* and the *Monument of Vittorio Emanuele*. There are landscaped gardens around famous villas like the *Villa Borghese*, *Villa Ada* and *Villa Doria Pamphili*. There are also many fountains, aqueducts, bridges, statues, obelisks, columns and catacombs of historic and artistic value.
- *The Historic Centre of Florence* = is often known as the 'Jewel of the Renaissance'. The city has also been nominated as the most desirable destination for tourists in the world. It was long under the rule of the Medici family and it is also known as the 'cradle of the Renaissance' (la culla del Rinascimento) for its monuments, churches and buildings. The best-known site and crowning architectural jewel of Florence is the domed cathedral of the city, *Santa Maria del Fiore*, known as *The Duomo*. The nearby *Campanille* and the *Baptistry* buildings are also highlights. The dome, 600 years after its completion, is still the largest dome built in brick and mortar in the world. The most remarkable sights include: the *Fountain of Neptune* in *Piazza della Signoria*, which is a masterpiece of marble sculpture at the terminus of a still-functioning *Roman aqueduct*. The church of *San Lorenzo* contains the *Medici Chapel*. Nearby is the *Uffizi Gallery*, one of the finest art museums in the world together with the *Palazzo Pitti*.
- *Leaning Tower of Pisa* (*Torre pendente di Pisa*) = the bell tower of a cathedral of Pisa; its construction began in 1173 and its height is 56 m. It is the symbol of Italy. It is part of the *Piazza del Duomo* ('Cathedral Square') at the heart of the city of Pisa, Tuscany. The square is recognized as one of the main centers for medieval art in the world. It is dominated by four great religious edifices: the *Duomo*, the *Leaning Tower*, the *Baptistry* and the *Camposanto*. The square is otherwise known as *Piazza dei Miracoli* ('Square of Miracles').
- *Venice and its lagoon* = Venice is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world, due to the city being one of the world's greatest and most beautiful cities of art. The city has an average of 50,000 tourists a day (!) It is built on 117 small islands on the sea lagoons, on the shoreline between the mouths of the rivers Piave and Po; also, it used to be an independent republic with great influence on European policy in history. The main sights include: *St Mark's Basilica* and the *Doge's Palace* on the *Piazza San Marco*, the *Ca'd'Oro*, the *Ca'Rezzonico*, the *Ca'Pesaro*, and the *Grand Canal* with the most famous bridge over it, the *Rialto Bridge*, just to name a few attractions. The *Lido di Venezia* is a popular international luxury destination, too.
- *Historic Centre of San Gimignano* = is a small, walled medieval hill town in the province of Siena, Tuscany.

- *The Sassi di Matera* ('stones of Matera') = abandoned cave dwellings (suspected to be some of the first human settlements in Italy) in Matera, Basilicata. Many of these houses are really only caverns, and the streets in some parts of the Sassi often are located on the rooftops of other houses. The ancient town grew in height on one slope of the ravine created by a river. In the 1950s, the government forcefully relocated most of the population of the slums of Sassi to areas of the developing modern city. The deserted old town was turned into a major domestic touristic attraction as an open air museum town.
- *Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto* = a site protecting a cluster of works by the architect Andrea Palladio. Vicenza is a thriving city, with many Renaissance palazzi, museums, art galleries, piazzas, villas and churches.
- *Crespi d'Adda* = is a historical settlement in Capriate San Gervasio, Lombardy. It is an outstanding example of the 19th century 'company towns' built by enlightened industrialists to meet the workers' needs.
- *Ferrara, City of the Renaissance, and its Po Delta* = is a city of architectural beauty and cultural importance in Emilia-Romagna region. The mouth of the River Po its a protected wetlands region.
- *Historic Centre of Naples* = is a microcosm of the European history because it saw several civilizations come and go, each leaving traces also in its art and architecture. The Gulf of naples offers a beautiful landscape.
- *Historic Centre of Siena* = is a city in Tuscany, famous for its cuisine, art, museums, medieval cityscape and the Palio di Siena (a horse race held twice each year on July 2nd and August 16th, in which ten horses and riders, bareback represent ten of the seventeen contrades or districts of Siena).
- *Castel del Monte* = is a 13th century castle in Andria (Bari), Apulia Region.
- *Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna* = a city in Emilia-Romagne Region, once based on lagoons, but now connected to the Adriatic Sea by a canal only. Its main sights include: the *Neonian Baptistery*, the *Mausoleum of Galla Placidia*, the *Arian Baptistery*, the *Archiepiscopal Chapel*, the *Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo*, the *Mausoleum of Theodoric*, the *Basilica of Sant'Vitale* and the *Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe*.
- *Historic Centre of the City of Pienza* = in the Province of Siena, in Tuscany, is the 'touchstone of Renaissance urbanism'. The nearby valley, the *Val d'Orcia* is a cultural landscape.
- *The Trulli of Alberobello* = a trullo is a traditional Apulian stone dwelling with a conical roof. They may be found in the town of Alberobello. Traditionally they were built without any cement or mortar, thus avoiding taxation.
- *San Leucio* = is a district (comune) of Caserta, Campania. It is most notable for a resort developed around an old silk factory. The *Aqueduct of Vanvitelli* or *Caroline Aqueduct* is the perfectly-preserved 529m long bridge-like section in tufa with particular architectural value. The *Royal Palace of Caserta* (Reggia di Caserta) is a former royal residence.
- *Archeological Area of Agrigento* (Girgenti) = is a city on the S coast of Sicily, renowned as the site of an ancient Greek city.
- *Archeological Areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Torra Annunziata* = *Pompeii* was destroyed and completely buried during a long catastrophic eruption of the volcano Mount vesuvius spanning two days in 79 AD. The eruption buried the city under 4 to 6 meters of ash and pumice, and it was lost for nearly 1,600 years before its accidental rediscovery around 1592. Since then, its excavation has provided an extraordinarily detailed insight into the life of a city at the height of the Roman Empire. *Herculaneum* (Ercolano) was also an ancient Roman town destroyed by volcanic pyroclastic flows in 79 AD, in Campania in the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius. *Oplontis* commonly covers the group of nearby villas in the middle of the modern town of *Torre Annunziata*.
- *The Orto Botanico di Padova* = is the world's oldest academic botanical garden that is still in its original location. (Officially, the oldest university botanical garden is the Orto botanico di Pisa, which was founded in 1544; however, that garden was relocated twice and has only



occupied its current, and now-permanent, location since 1591.) It is located in Padua and was founded in 1545. The garden is affiliated with the University of Padua.

- *Torre Civica Cathedral and Piazza Grande* = The Torre della Ghirlandina is the bell tower of the Cathedral of Modena. Being consecrated in 1184, it is one of the most important Romanesque buildings in Europe.
- *The Amalfi Coast* (Costiera Amalfitana) = is a stretch of coastline on the southern side of the Sorrento Peninsula), extending from Positano in the west to Vietri sul Mare in the east. The coast is on the Tyrrhenian Sea, which includes the famous town of Amalfi and the beautiful Gulf of Solerno) and is mostly known for its Schola Medica Salernitana (the first University of Medicine in the world).
- *The Cinque Terre* (The Five Lands) = is a rugged coastline and islands with five villages, and the surrounding hillsides are all part of the Cinque Terre National Park on the Italian Riviera in the Liguria region. comprises five villages: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore. *Portovenere* is a town located on the Ligurian coast comprising the three villages of Fezzano, Le Grazie and Portovenere, and the three islands of *Palmaria*, *Tino* and *Tinetto*.
- *The Residences of the Royal House of Savoy* = is a group of structures in Turin (Torino), Piedmont region.
- *Su Nuraxi* = is anuragic (ancient megalithic edifice) archaeological site in *Barumini*, Sardinia. The complex is centered around a three-story tower built around the 16th century BC.
- *Villa Romana del Casale* = (Villa Rumana dŭ Casali) = is a Roman villa built in the first quarter of the 4th century and located at the town of *Piazza Armerina* in Sicily. It contains the richest, largest and most complex collection of Roman mosaics in the world.
- *Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia* = is one of the main archeological sites of Northern Italy. The Cathedral of Aquileia is one of the most important edifices of Christianity. It is a flat-roofed basilica erected by Patriarch Poppo in 1031 on the site of an earlier church.
- *Friuli–Venezia Giulia* = cultural landscape with the vicinity of the Trieste, encompassing the historical-geographical region of Friuli and the geographical region of Venezia Giulia (Julian March), each with its own distinct history, traditions and identity.
- *Cilento and the Vallo di Diano* (Valdiano) *National Park* = is a geographical landscape of Campania in the Province of Salerno, situated between the Alburni mountains and the borders of Campania with Basilicata. It is the greatest forestal park, with the Archaeological sites of *Paestum* (a major Graeco-Roman city), *Velia* and *Padula Charterhouse* (Certosa di Padula, a large Carthusian monastery).
- *Historic Centre of Urbino* = with the main sights: the Palazzo Ducale, Palazzo Albani, Palazzo Odasi and Palazzo Passionei, the Albornoz Fortress (La Fortezza) and Raphael's house.
- *The Hadrian's Villa* (Villa Adriana) = is a large Roman archeological complex at Tivoli.
- *The Papal Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi* (Basilica Papale di San Francesco d'Assisi) = is the mother church of the Roman Catholic Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan Order) in Assisi, the birth and burial place of St Francis. It is one of the most important places of Christian pilgrimage in Italy.
- *City of Verona* = is one of the main tourist destinations in northern Italy, thanks to its artistic heritage, several annual fairs, shows, and operas, the ancient amphitheatre built by the Romans.
- *The Aeolian Islands* (Lipari Islands or Isole Eolie) = are a volcanic archipelago in the Tyrrhenian Sea north of Sicily, named after the demigod of the winds Aelous. The largest island is Lipari, the others include Vulcano, Salina, Stromboli (with an active volcano), Filicudi, Alicudi, Panarea and Basiluzzo.
- *The Villa d'Este* = is a villa situated at Tivoli, near Rome It is a fine example of Renaissance architecture and garden.
- *Val di Noto* = late Baroque Towns in Sicily, there are 8 towns representing the result of the reconstruction which underwent after the year 1693, when the entire area was decimated by an

enormous earthquake. The towns also represent the culmination and final flowering of Baroque art in Europe (Caltagirone, Militello in Val do Catania, Catania, Modica, Noto, Palazzolo Acreide, Ragusa, and Scicli).

- *The Sacri Monti* (Sacred Mountains) of *Piedmont and Lombardy* = are a series of chapels from the 17th and 16th centuries. They have been integrated into the surrounding natural landscape of hills, forests and lakes. They also house much important artistic material in the form of wall paintings and statuary.
- *Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia* = in Lazio, the province of Rome. They include some of the best Etruscan tombs with some 6,000 tombs, 200 of which include wall paintings.
- *Val d'Orcia* = a region in Tuscany, which is an exceptional reflection of the way the landscape was re-written in Renaissance times to reflect the ideals of good governance and to create an aesthetically pleasing pictures.
- *The Necropolis of Pantalica* = is a large necropolis in Sicily with over 5000 tombs dating from the 13th to the 7th centuries BC. The 2,700 year-old city of Syracuse is rich in Greek history, culture, amphitheatres, architecture, and it is the birthplace of Archimedes.
- *The Palazzi dei Rolli* = is a group of palaces in Genoa, representing a set or unicum of the most prestigious palaces of Genoa, especially along the oldest roads of the *Nuove Strade* (Via Garibaldi).
- *Mantua* (Mantova) = a city in Lombardy, one of the main artistic, cultural and musical hubs of Northern Italy. Mantua is noted for its significant role in the history of opera and the city is known for its several architectural treasures and artifacts, elegant palaces or palazzi, and its medieval and Renaissance cityscape. Sabbioneta in Lombardy is a perfect example of practical application of Renaissance urban planning theories.
- *The Dolomites* = are a section of the Alps in NE Italy, Trento Region. (The name 'Dolomites' is derived from the famous French mineralogist Déodat Gratet de Dolomieu who was the first to describe the rock, dolomite, a type of carbonate rock which is responsible for the characteristic shapes and colour of these mountains.)
- *Monte San Giorgio* = is a wooded mountain (1,096 m) located partly in Italy and mainly in the south of Canton Ticino in Switzerland. It is the single best known record of marine life in the Triassic period, and records important remains of life on land as well.

Latvia (Latvija)

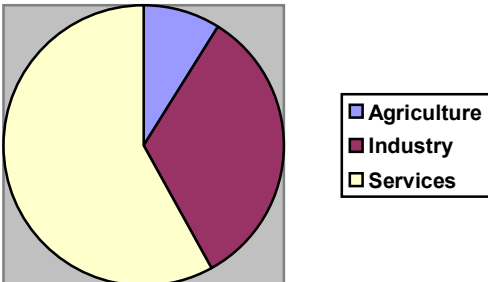

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Latvia Native name(s): Latvijas Republika	
Capital city and population (million): Riga 0.9	Language(s): Latvian	
Country's population (million): 2.1	Currency: 1 Lat = 100 santime	Territory (sq kms): 64 500
Administrative division		
Regions: 109 districts / novadi		

Geography

Latvia is situated by the Baltic Sea, on the Riga Bay. It is completely plains, part of the vast Eastern-European Plain. Its main river is the Dvina flowing to the Baltic Sea. The capital city, Riga was built at its mouth. The east and west part of the country is marshland. The climate is continental with cold winters and cool summers. In history, Latvia used to be under Lithunian, Polish and mainly Russian occupation. It gained independence from Russia only in 1918. This lasted only 22 years, when it was again occupied by the Soviet Union. Latvia remained a Soviet republic until 1991 when, with the collapse of the socialist system it again could be an independent country. It joined the EU in 2004.

Economy

The country lacks all kinds of mineral resources, traditionally only the **textile industry** could develop, based on **flax**. Agriculture grows **rye** and **sugarbeet** as well. During the Soviet period, however, some engineering was developed in Latvia, especially **ship building**. The Latvian economy has to **import** raw materials and minerals. Because of the Dvina river's reservoirs, **hydroelectric power** plants supply some 70 % of the Latvian energy demand. The rest is imported from Russia. Since much of the country's territory is covered by woods, the **paper industry** is also well developed. Latvian sea **fishing** is also important. In animal husbandry they breed **cattle** and **pigs**.

	
The economic structure reflected in employment shows a medium developed state in Latvia	


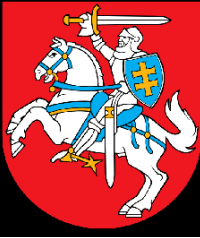
Society

Only 52 % of the country's population is Lettish. The largest national minority is Belorussian with 34 %. The rest is composed of some Ukrainian and Polish minorities. As first religion, the majority of the Lettish are evangelist (44 %), 33 % of them is orthodox Christian, and 20 % Roman Catholic.

Landmarks

- *Wittenstein Castle* = in Riga with palaces and houses from the mediaeval times.
- *Amber jewellery* = amber is the fossilized pine resin of ancient trees and it has always been a valuable material for making jewellery.
- *Riga Balsam* = a thick, black national drink with high (45 %) alcohol content, brewed from 1775.
- *Vecrīga (Old Riga)* = the historical center of Riga, located on the east side of Daugava River. Vecrīga is famous for its old churches and cathedrals, such as Riga Cathedral and St. Peter's church. World Heritage Site.

Lithuania (Lietuva)

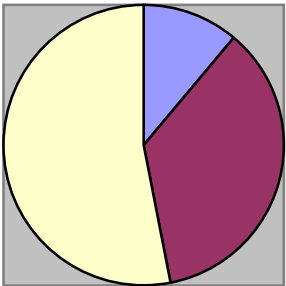

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Lithuania Native name(s): Lietuvos Respublika			
Capital city and population (million): Vilnius 0.6		Language(s): Lithuanian + Russian			
Country's population (million): 3.5		Currency: 1 Litas = 100 centu		Territory (sq kms): 65 200	
Administrative division					
Region: counties / apskritys	Seat	apskritys	Seat	apskritys	Seat
Alytaus	Alytus	Panevėžio	Panevėžys	Telšių	Telšiai
Kauno	Kaunas	Šiaulių	Šiauliai	Utenos	Utena
Klaipėdos	Klaipėda	Tauragės	Tauragė	Vilniaus	Vilnius
Marijampolės	Marijampolė	--	--	--	--

Geography

Lithuania is situated by the Baltic Sea. It is completely plainland, part of the vast Eastern-European Plain. Its main river is the Nemunas flowing to the Baltic Sea. The middle part of the country is marshland. The climate is continental with cold winters and cool summers. In history, Lithuania used to be a powerful nation and together with Poland they dominated the territory of Ukraine, down to the Black Sea. Later it was occupied by Russia. It gained independence from Russia only in 1918. This lasted only 22 years, when it was again occupied by the Soviet Union. Lithuania remained a Soviet republic until 1991 when, with the collapse of the socialist system it again could be an independent country. It joined the EU in 2004.

Economy

Since the country is poor in minerals and raw materials, much of these have to be imported from Russia. Recently, however **oils reserves** were discovered at sea **off the coast** of Lithuania at sea. A **chemical industry** was developed based on imported Russian oil. In the Soviet times an **engineering** industry and **ship building** were created. Its traditional industrial branches are in connection with agriculture and forestry: **paper** industry, **textile** industry (flax) and food (**dairy**) industry. They grow **flax, sugarbeet, tobacco**; they breed cattle and pigs.

 <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Industry Services </div>	
The economic structure reflected in employment shows a medium developed state in Lithuania	



Society

81 % of the population is Lithuanian. The national minorities are Russian (8%), Polish (7 %) and Belarussian (2 %). The majority of the population are Roman Catholic like in Poland (90 %) and 8 % of the population are Orthodox Christians.

Landmarks

- *Amber Museum* = in the town of Palanga there is the most valuable collection of different amber 'stones'. Amber is referred to as the gold of the Baltic Sea. It is mineralized pine resin having been formed some 60 million years ago.
- *Drum Museum* = the world's largest collection of drums in Vilnius.
- *Cepelinai* = national meal; a potato pastry filled with mushrooms and minced meat served with sour cream and fat sauce.
- *Vytautas Castle* = located on an island in Lake west of Vilnius.
- *Curonian Spit* = a 98 km long, thin, curved sand dune separating the Curonian Lagoon from the Baltic Sea. It is a moving, drifting formation, an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Transboundary property with the Russian Federation.
- *Vilnius Old Town* = the largest surviving medieval district in Europe. World Heritage Site.
- *Cultural Reserve of Kernavé* = an archeological site and tourist attraction, the former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A World heritage Site.

Luxembourg (Lëtzebuerg / Luxemburg) *mini state*

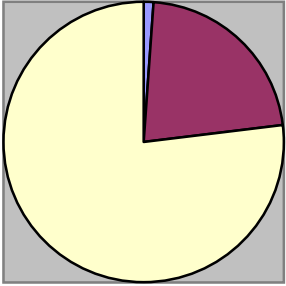
National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Native name(s): Grand-Duché de Luxembourg / Großherzogtum Luxemburg / Groussherzogtum Lëtzebuerg			
Capital city and population (million): Luxembourg 0.3		Language(s): German, French + Luxembourgish			
Country's population (million): 0.5		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 2586	
Administrative division					
Region: districts / Distrikte	Seat	districts / Distrikte	Seat:	districts / Distrikte	Seat
Diekirch	Diekirch	Grevenmacher	Grevenmacher	Luxembourg	Luxembourg

Geography

It is a very small country, one of the mini states of Europe. It lies at the meeting point of the Ardenns and the Eifel Mountains, so the terrain is hilly. Its main river is the Mosel, a tributary to the Rhine.

Economy

Since this little state used to be rich in coal and iron ore, metallurgy and steel industry began to develop here very early in history. Since the mines are exhausted and closed already, iron ore and coal have to be imported for today's steel industry producing high quality metal. In the Mosel River Valley the environment is rather favourable for wine growing. Tourism and financial services in Luxembourg City are also important.

 <div style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="width: 15px; background-color: blue;"></td> Agriculture</tr></table></div>	

Administration

Luxembourg is divided into 3 districts of some villages each, and the country gives home to many European Union institutions: the EU Court, Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the secretariat of the European Parliament. It is a founding member of the EU.

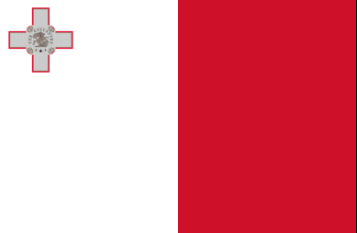

Society

The population speaks both French and German, though the local language also prevails. The dominant majority of the inhabitants are Roman Catholic (95 %). The living standard is the highest in Europe and worldwide, too.

Landmarks

- *Luxembourg Old Town* = part of the UNESCO World Heritage with the most beautiful urban view from the rocky hilltop, where the town is situated. There is a 23 km long underground corridor system beneath the old town and the old quarters with the fortifications.
- *Schueberfouer Festival* = an urban community street party with merry-go-rounds at the end of August.

Malta *mini state*

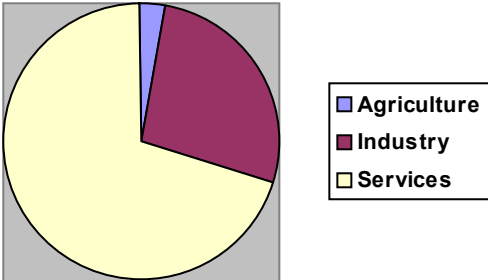

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p style="text-align: center;">Republic of Malta Native name(s): Repubblika ta' Malta</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (thousand): Valletta</p>	<p>Language(s): English, Maltese</p>	
<p>Country's population (million): 0.4</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 316</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Administrative division: regions: 68 local councils / kunsilli lokali:</p>		

Geography

A group of 3 small islands between Sicily and the African coast (Malta, Gozo, Comino). The islands are of limestone, and very poor in fresh water. Agriculture is confined to gardens that can be irrigated. The climate is Mediterranean, the landscape is beautiful, very favourable for summer holidaying.

Economy

Because the lack of the fresh water food has to be imported. Malta has a stormy history in fighting against the Turks and defending Europe from the South. It was the base of the Johannes Knights, today the Maltese Order. Up to 1800 Malta used to be an English colony, that is why English culture is strongly present, and the island are favourite summer destination of British holiday-makers. The Maltese economy relies on **tourism**. **Handicraftmanship** manufactures **bronze, silver and gold jewellery**, home made **lace** and **glass** pieces of art as souvenirs for the tourists. There is a small **ship building** and **textile** industry, however. Oil for energy production has to be imported.

	
<p>Though the employment structure shows a well developed configuration, the high rate of inhabitants employed in services comes from no other choice and the dominance of tourism.</p>	

Administration

There are 68 settlements, mostly villages. Malta joined the EU in 2004.



Society

Maltese population speaks English, and the the local language that is related to Arabic. The national composition is 2 % English, 2 % foreigners and 96 % Maltese. The dominating religion is Roman Catholicism (97 %). The Maltese sport of hunting down birds is very popular in local population so the local government's permit causes the constant dislike of the EU conservationists.

Landmarks

- *City of Vallette* = contains buildings from the 16th century onwards, built during the rule of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (the Hospitallers). The city is essentially Baroque in character, with elements of Mannerist, Neo-Classical and modern architecture. It is a World heritage Site. (The city is named for Jean Parisot de la Valette, who succeeded in defending the island from an Ottoman invasion in 1565.)
- *Hal Saflieni Hypogeum* ('underground') = in Paola is a subterranean structure dating to the Maltese prehistory. Thought to be originally a sanctuary, it became a necropolis. It is the only prehistoric underground temple in the world. A World Heritage Site. Only 80 people per day are allowed to entry and there can be a 2–3 weeks wait to get a ticket.
- *The Megalithic Temples of Malta* = are a series of prehistoric monuments in the Maltese archipelago from 3600-2500 BC. *Ġgantija* (Giants' Tower) is a Neolithic, megalithic temple complex on the island of Gozo. *Ħaġar Qim* is a megalithic temple complex of Malta, dating from 3600-3200 BC. *Mnajdra* is also a megalithic temple complex found on the southern coast of the island. It was built around the 4th millennium BC; and it is among the most ancient religious sites on Earth. The *Tarxien Temples* are an archaeological complex at Tarxien, dating back 2800 BC.

The Netherlands (Nederland)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Kingdom of the Netherlands Native name(s): Koninkrijk der Nederlanden Keninkryk fan de Nederlannen			
Capital city and population (million): The Hauge 0.7 / Amsterdam		Language(s): Dutch, English, Friesian			
Country's population (million): 16		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 41 864	
Administrative division					
Region: provinces /provincies		Seat		Region: provinces /provincies	
Drenthe		Assen		Noord-Brabant (North ~)	
Flevoland		Lelystad		Noord-Holland (North ~)	
Friesland / Fryslân		Leeuwarden / Ljouwert		Overijssel	
Gelderland		Arnhem		Utrecht	
Groningen		Groningen		Zeeland	
Limburg		Maastricht		Zuid-Holland (South ~)	
Hertogenbosch / Den Bosch		Haarlem		Zwolle	
Utrecht		Middelburg		Gravenhage / Haag (Hauge)	
countries: landen / païsnan					
landen	seat	landen / païsnan			seat
Aruba	Oranjestad	Nederlandse Antillen / Netherlands Antilles / Antias Hulandes			Willemstad

Geography

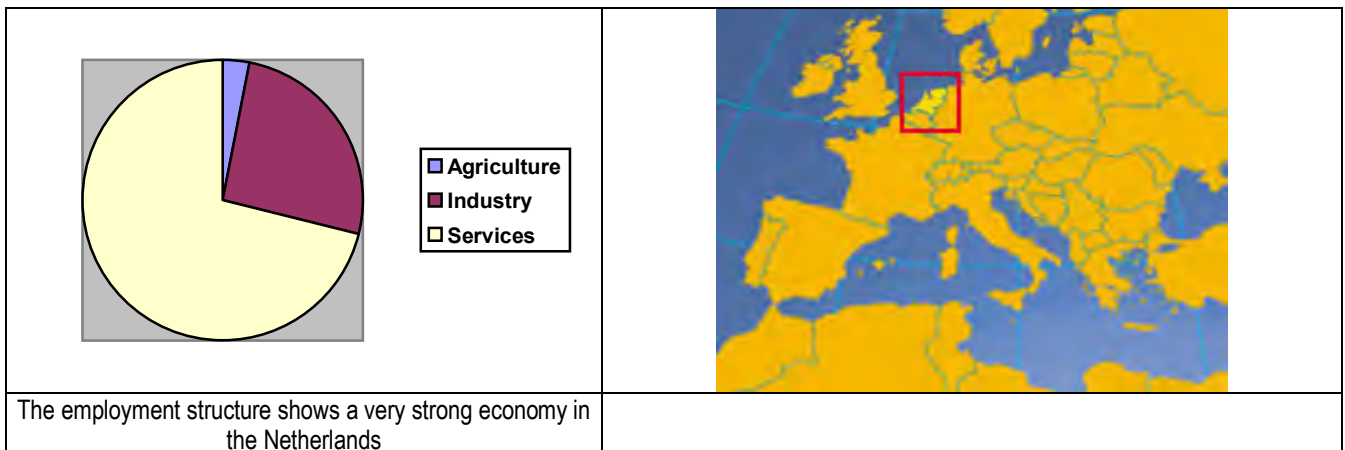
The country is situated on a complete flatland and it is the lowest lying country in the world. One quarter of the **lowland is below sea level**. These pieces of land are protected from flooding from the sea by huge dams along the Dutch coastline. The country is dissected by groundwater canals and waterways. The climate is oceanic, wet and the grassland is always green, good for animal husbandry. The Dutch towns were the first to develop in the medieval Europe. Trade, navigation and colonialization supported the development. Europe's largest urbanisation zone is the Dutch **Randstadt** which is the agglomeration of several huge cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Gravenhage (the latter being the capital city), Utrecht, Amersfoort, Haarlem, Leiden, Delft and Dordrecht. The River Rhine crosses the Netherlands.

Economy

The country is part of the Benelux formation the first European economic integration. Dutch agriculture always found market both in Germany and England. They specialize on growing **vegetables and horticultural plants**, the most famous of the latter are **tulips and hyacinths**. Cattle breeding and animal husbandry is very well developed. The country is the global top exporter of **butter, milk and cheese**, so **dairy industry** is very productive and modern.

Heavy industry relies on imported metal ores exclusively. In industry **electronic engineering** has the longest tradition in the Netherlands. The headquarters of the **Philips** works is in **Eindhoven**. Recently giant **gas reserves** have been discovered in the east part of the country, at Groningen. It made the energy production cheaper. Also, in Rotterdam there is a considerable **oil refinery industry** based on the imported raw material by sea. Europe's largest industrial firm, the Dutch-English owned **Shell**

Company is also seated in the Netherlands. **Rotterdam** is the busiest and **largest port** in the world. Its competitor is Singapore only.



Administration

The country is a constitutional monarchy of 12 provinces and 2 overseas dependencies (the Caribbean Aruba and 5 small islands in the Caribbean Sea: the Netherland Antilles among which Curacao is the best known for its blue coloured orange brandy.)

Society

Dutch society is very liberal minded on the average; it is regarded as the most open and inclusive society and nation in the world. Therefore it is a favourite destination for immigration. 4 % of the population are foreigners (emigrants, mainly from the former Dutch overseas colonies in East Asian and Caribbean islands: Philippines, Indonesia). The majority of society is Dutch (94 %). In the northern coastline and the small islands of the country, in Friesland there is the Friesian national minority (2 %). Besides the German and Dutch languages it is the Friesian language that is the closest relative to English.



The rate of urban population is very high (89 %). Also, the population density of the Netherlands is one of the highest in the world. Around one third of the population are Roman Catholics and 25 % are Protestants. The rate of the atheists is also very high (37 %). This must be connected to the liberal lifestyle of the Dutch. However the average Dutch live in a simple way the extraordinary richness is not manifested in expensive residential buildings or cars. As for **bicycles** the Dutch towns are full of this simple and cheap means of transportation: the Dutch have more bicycles than cars.

Landmarks

- *Windmills* = the territory of the country is very much exposed to wind energy, therefore windmills are inseparable landmarks in the Netherlands, especially by the sea in rural landscape.
- *Tulip* = the Dutch tulip is a symbol for the country.
- *Keukenhof Park* = a collection of all tulip species.
- *Aalsmeer* = the largest flower auction site in the world.
- *Elfstedentocht* = a popular mass ice-skate race on the frozen canals through 11 towns.

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Netherlands:
- *Schokland and Surroundings* (Noordoostpolder) = is a former island in the Cutch Zuiderzee (shallow bay). Schokland lost its status as an island when the Noordoostpolder was reclaimed from the sea in 1942. Today Schokland is a popular archeological site.
- *Defence Line of Amsterdam* (Stelling van Amsterdam) = is a 135 km long ring of fortifications around Amsterdam, consisting of 42 forts located between 10 to 15 kilometers from the centre, and lowlands that could easily be flooded in time of war.
- *Historic Area of Willemstad* = The city center of Willemstad boasts an array of colonial architecture. It has a peculiar architecture and beautiful harbour entry.
- *Mill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout* = the windmills of Kinderdijk are one of the best known Dutch tourist sites.
- *D.F. Woudagemaal* (D.F. Wouda Steam Pumping Station) = is the biggest currently running steam-powered pumping station in the world. It was opened in 1920 and is used to pump out redundant water from Friesland. In 1967, after 47 years running on coal, the boilers were rebuilt to run on oil.
- *Beemster Polder* = is the first polder (low-lying piece of land reclaimed from the sea) in the Netherlands. The original water was extracted out of the sea-lake by windmills. The Beemster Polder was dried during the period 1609-1612. It has preserved intact its well-ordered landscape of fields, roads, canals, dykes and settlements, laid out in accordance with classical and Renaissance planning principles. It has considerable historical relevance, and original structure of the area.
- *The Rietveld Schröder House* (Rietveld Schröderhuis) = situated in Utrecht, it was built in 1924 by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld for Mrs. Schröder. She commissioned the house to be designed preferably without walls. The house is one of the best known examples of De Stijl-architecture (Neoplasticism) and arguably the only true De Stijl building. It is now a museum.
- *The Wadden Sea* (Waddenzee) = is an intertidal zone in the SE part of the North Sea. It lies between the coast of NW continental Europe and the range of Frisian Islands, forming a shallow body of water with tidal flats and wetlands. It is rich in biological diversity.
- *Canals of Amsterdam* = the city has been called 'Venice of the North' for its more than 1 hundred kilometres of canals, 90 islands and 1,500 bridges. The three main canals (Herengracht, Prinsengracht, Keizersgracht) form concentric belts around the city, known as the Grachtengordel. Alongside the main canals are 1550 monumental buildings.

Poland (Polska)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Poland Native name(s): Rzeczpospolita Polska			
Capital city and population (million): Warsaw 1,6		Language(s): Polish			
Country's population (million): 38		Currency: 1 Złoty = 100 groszy		Territory (sq kms): 312 683	
Administrative division					
Region: provinces / województwa:		Seat	provinces / województwa:		Seat
Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia)		Wrocław	Podkarpackie (Subcarpathian)		Rzeszów
Kujawsko-Pomorskie		Bydgoszcz	Podlaskie		Białystok
Lubelskie		Lublin	Pomorskie (Sea coastland)		Gdańsk
Lubuskie		Gorzów Wielkopolski	Śląskie (Silesia)		Katowice
Łódzkie		Łódź	Świętokrzyskie		Kielce
Małopolskie (Little Poland)		Kraków (Cracow)	Warmińsko-Mazurskie (Mazur)		Olsztyn
Mazowieckie		Warszawa (Warsaw)	Wielkopolskie		Poznań
Opolskie		Opole	Zachodniopomorskie		Szczecin

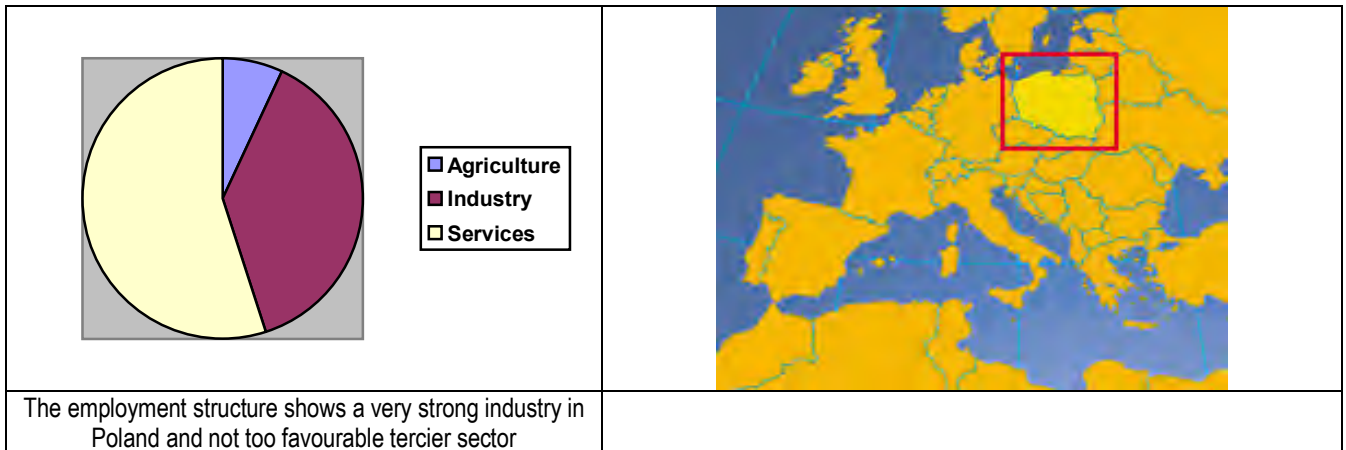
Geography

Most of Poland lies on the Polish Plain. The central part of the country is covered by low hills, and on the south it is bordered by the ranges of the Carpathian, the Beskidy and the Sudety mountains. The climate is continental with cold winters and cool summers. The soils are poor not providing good conditions for agriculture. However, the Sudety Mts are very rich in black coal and copper ore which was favourable for industrial development. The largest Polish river is the Vistula, crossing the capital city. Poland has a long history of constant wars between two world powers: Germany and Russia. After World War II it became a socialist country. In the 1980s there was a strong political movement of the Solidarity Trade Union to undermine the Soviet rule. Finally Poland could join the EU in 2004.

Economy

Heavy industry, **metallurgy** was based on abundant deposits of local **black coal** mainly situated in Upper **Silesia** (at the foothills of the Beskidy Mts) and Upper Silesia (at the foothills of the Sudety Mts). Silesia, the workshop of Central-Europe always used to be a '*casus belli*' in the eyes of German, Austrian, Czech and Russian political powers. The Silesian **steel industry** is concentrated in and around **Katowice, Wrocław** and **Nova Huta** (at Cracow) in the south of Poland. Energy production relies on coal heated **power plants**, too, and it induces **air pollution** damaging the forests and public health. **Engineering** is also well developed. **Textile** industry is a traditional branch of economy. The towns on the Baltic Sea in the north specialize in **ship building**, with **Gdansk**, being the largest.

Agriculture grows **potato**, wheat, sugarbeet, malting barley and hops (for beer brewery) and **rye** as a cereal. Food production is insufficient, Poland has to **import food**. **Salt** used to be an important mineral, too, though today salt mines are closed down due to the cheap marine salt produced everywhere by the seas. The largest salt mine is a touristic attraction in South Poland today. **Tourism** is important in the **Polish Tatry** in the north part of the Carpathians (in the vicinity of Cracow). A domestic touristic destination is the **Mazur Lakeland** in the north east of the country.



Administration

The 16 Polish NUTS-2 regions correspond to the boundaries of the historical voivodeships, the voivods being the governors of these regions. The historic capital of the country used to be Cracow, the most beautiful Polish town in the Subcarpathian land. Warsaw was unfortunately destroyed completely during World War II by the German troops. Because of the historic and traditional roots, the voivodeships have more administrative functions than regions do in a unitary type of state. Poland can therefore be considered as a decentralized state tending to change into a regionalized one, unlike most former socialist countries that are unitary and changing towards a decentralized type of state.

Society



National minorities are rather insignificant in Poland (German, Ukrainian, Belarussian make up 2 % together). This is due to the postwar forceful migrations of both German and 'Russian' ethnic groups. Poland suffered most during World War II. The 98 % Polish population are in a social union as far as religion is concerned: 94 % are Roman Catholic believers. Poland is the East European stronghold of Catholicism. Polish people are fond of travelling and migrating abroad. There are many guest employees in West European countries and the USA. There is also a strong international fellow feeling towards Hungarians, for historical reasons.

Landmarks

- *Masurian Lakeland* = north east part of Poland with nature conservation parks, lots of lakes, marshland and woods.
- *Makowiec, bigos, barszcz* = national traditional meals: crescent filled with poppyseed; stew with cabbage; redbeet soup.
- *Wawel* = the former royal castle in Cracow.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Poland:*
- *Kraków Old Town* = is the most prominent example of an old town in Poland, because for many centuries, Kraków was the royal capital of Poland.
- *The Wieliczka Salt Mine* = is located in the town of Wieliczka within the Kraków metropolitan area. The mine continuously produced table salt from the 13th century until 2007 as one of the world's oldest operating salt mines (the oldest is Bochnia Salt Mine in Poland, closed down after World War I and turned into a museum in 1981). Wieliczka is also a gigantic museum now.

- *Auschwitz - Birkenau Camp* (at Oświęcim and Brzezinka) = is shocking museum in memory of the former German (Nazi) concentration camp during World War II. The camp of Auschwitz was restored and turned into a museum honouring the victims of Nazism.
- *Białowieża Forest* (Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park in Belarus) = is one of the last and largest remaining parts of the immense primeval forest which once spread across the Eastern European Plain. This transboundary property shared with Belarus is a wildlife reservation area, for the last specimens of the European buffalo, as well.
- *Warsaw's Old Town* (Stare Miasto, or: Starówka) = is the oldest historic district of the Polish capital city. It is bounded by Wybrzeże Gdańskie, along the bank of the Vistula River, and by Grodzka, Mostowa and Podwale Streets. It is one of Warsaw's most prominent tourist attractions. The heart of the area is the Old Town Market Place, with its restaurants, cafés and shops. Surrounding streets feature medieval architecture such as the city walls, the Barbican and St. John's Cathedral.
- *Old City of Zamość* = is a perfect example of a Renaissance town of the late 16th century, which retains its original layout and fortifications, and a large number of buildings blending Italian and central European architectural traditions.
- *Malbork Castle of the Teutonic Order* = was founded in the 13th century by the Teutonic Knights and is noted for its Gothic Marienburg Castle, one of the most striking one in Europe.
- *Medieval Town of Toruń* = on the Vistula River is one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Poland. The medieval old town of Toruń is the birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus. The old town market and the gothic town hall are said to be one of the 30 most beautiful places in the world.
- *Kalwaria Zebrzydowska* = is an Architectural and Park Landscape Complex and Pilgrimage Park.
- *The Churches of Peace* (Kościoły Pokoju) = in Jawor (Jauer) and Świdnica (Schweidnitz) in Silesia. They were erected after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 which permitted the Lutherans in the Roman Catholic parts of Silesia to build 3 Evangelical churches from wood, loam and straw outside the city walls, without steeples and church bells.
- *Wooden Churches of Southern Lesser Poland (Małopolskie) and Subcarpathia* = the wooden churches of southern Lesser Poland and Subcarpathia represent outstanding examples of the different aspects of medieval church-building traditions in Roman Catholic culture. Built using the horizontal log technique, common in eastern and northern Europe since the Middle Ages.
- *The Muskau Park* (Muskauer Park, or Park Mużakowski) = is the largest and one of the most famous English Gardens of Germany and Poland, covering 3,5 km² of land in Poland and 2,1 km² in Germany. The park extends on both sides of the Neisse River, which constitutes the border between the countries. Muskau Castle is situated west of the river, the heart of the park are the partially wooded raised areas on the east bank called The Park on Terraces. In 2003 a pedestrian bridge spanning the Neisse was rebuilt to connect both parts.
- *The Centennial Hall in Wrocław* = (Jahrhunderthalle, or Hala Stulecia) is an early landmark of reinforced concrete architecture, constructed in 1911-1913, when the city was part of the German Empire.

Portugal

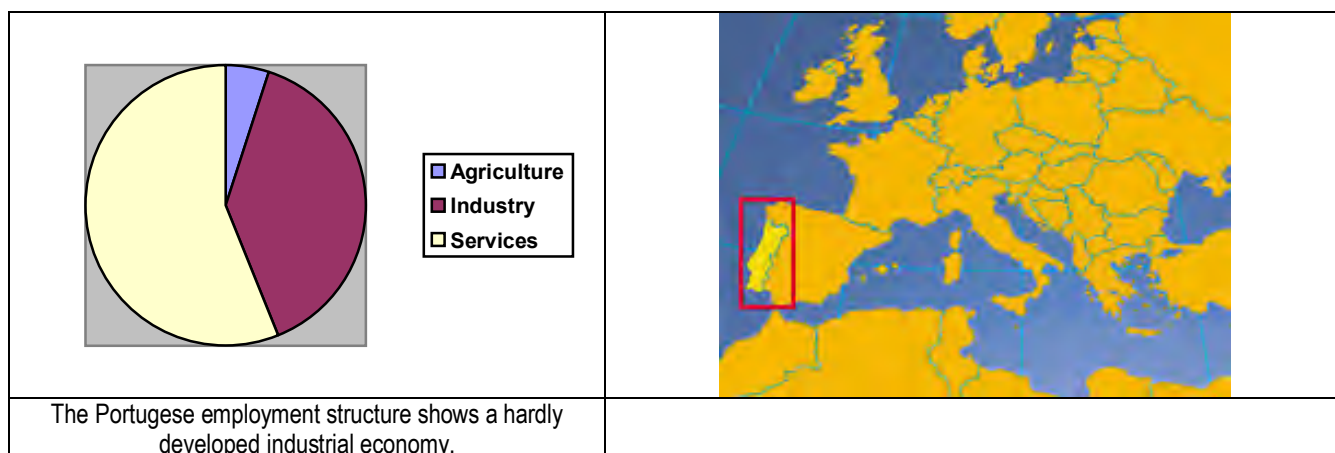
National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Portugese Republic Native name(s): República Portuguesa			
Capital city and population (million): Lisbon 0.6		Language(s): Portugese			
Country's population (million): 10.8		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents		Territory (sq kms): 92 389	
Administrative division					
Region: districts / distritos	Seat	districts / distritos	Seat	districts / distritos	Seat
Aveiro	Aveiro	Évora	Évora	Porto	Porto
Beja	Beja	Faro	Faro	Santarém	Santarém
Braga	Braga	Guarda	Guarda	Setúbal	Setúbal
Bragança	Bragança	Leiria	Leiria	Viana do Castelo	Viana do Castelo
Castelo Branco	Castelo Branco	Lisboa (Lisbon)	Lisboa (Lisbon)	Vila Real	Vila Real
Coimbra	Coimbra	Portalegre	Portalegre	Viseu	Viseu

Geography

The country is situated on the Atlantic coast of the Pyrenean Peninsula. The north part is hilly and mountainous, the south part is rather plain, dissected by low ranges of hills only. The climate is Mediterranean, mild. Though the Atlantic coast offers a beautiful scenery, there are cold ocean streams meeting the continent, so the water is not the best for bathing or summer holidaying.

Economy

Though many people are employed by industry, Portugal has first of all an **agricultural** economy, producing half of the world's **cork** (a soft wood; the cork tree bark) output. Its sea **fishing** is important, and they grow Mediterranean plants like **olives, grapes**. Consequently the **wine** production of the country is also important (the **Porto** red wine and the **Madeira** wines are well known all over the world). In light industry only the **textile** industry has traditions. The Portugese land is poor in minerals and energy resources alike, therefore heavy industry could not develop. There is another source of income embodied by **tourism**; visitors are attracted by the Atlantic coastland and the traditional settlements in the first place. Tourism is the main source of income of Portugal actually. Before 2004 the southern regions of Portugal (Algavre and Alentejo) used to have the weakest economy within the EU.



Administration

There are 7 regions and 18 districts in Portugal. Outside the Portuguese mainland, there are two autonomous districts: the Azores and Madeira (islands in the Atlantic Ocean). Portugal used to be a world power at the age of the great geographical discoveries, when it profited from its situation open for the Atlantic. It used to possess Brasil as a huge colony, and Angola, Mozambique (in Africa). All overseas territories were lost by 1970, with the exception of Macau that rejoined China in 1999 only with this fact the island of Macau was both the very first and very last European colony in Chinese territory. Portugal joined the EU in 1986.

Society



There are almost no ethnic minorities except for 1 % of Gypsies. Portugal is a strong Roman Catholic country with 95 % of the population. The inhabitants of Portugal feel a distinction between the north and the south part of the country, like in Italy. In the north the living standard is slightly higher than in the southern half of the country. As for unemployment it is the opposite. And for life expectancy at birth, it is again the opposite! (An ill-deduction from it: labour is unhealthy :-)

Landmarks

- *Portugese bull fight* = the animals are not killed, it is the mild version of the more cruel Spanish bull fights; and the bulls wear 'emboladas' (a leather protective sheath) and the torreadors use wooden swords :-)
- *Azulejos ceramics* = gold, white and blue tiles covering the walls of old buildings, characteristic of Portugal.
- *Carneval of Sao Jao* = a religious street festival, dedicated to the leek, in Porto, 6 weeks before Easter.
- *Portugese wines* = famous Portuguese wines include a red one named after Porto, and the other is the 'green wine' made from unripe grapes with low alcohol content and bubbles.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Portugal:*
- *Angra do Heroísmo* = is the historical capital of the Azores on Terceira island; it is also the archipelago's oldest city, dating back to 1450.
- *The Convent of Christ* (Convento de Cristo)= in Tomar is one of Portugal's most important historical and artistic monuments. It is a Roman Catholic building, originally a Templar stronghold built in the 12th century.
- *Batalha Monastery* (Mosteiro Santa Maria da Vitória) = is a Dominican convent in Batalha. It is one of the best and original examples of Late Gothic Portuguese architecture, known as the Manueline style. It has become a symbol of national pride.
- *The Hieronymites Monastery* (Mosteiro dos Jerónimos) and the *Belém Tower* = they are located in the Belém district of Lisbon. The magnificent monastery can be considered one of the most prominent monuments in Lisbon and is one of the most successful achievements of the Manueline style (Portuguese late-Gothic). Belém Tower (Torre de Belém) or the Tower of St Vincent is a fortified tower.

- *Historic Centre of Évora* = it has well-preserved old town centre, still partially enclosed by medieval walls, and a large number of monuments dating from various historical periods, including a Roman temple.
- *The Alcobaça Monastery* (Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça) = is a Mediaeval Roman Catholic monastery in Alcobaça. The church and monastery were the first Gothic buildings in Portugal. It has artistic and historical importance.
- *Cultural Landscape of Sintra* = has become a major tourist attraction nearby Lisbon. Attractions include the fabulous Pena Palace (19th century Romantic style) and the Castelo dos Mouros with a breath-taking view of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, and the summer residence of the kings of Portugal: Palácio Nacional de Sintra. The Sintra Mountain Range (Serra de Sintra) is also a major tourist attraction.
- *Historic Centre of Porto* = located along the Douro River estuary in northern Portugal, Porto is one of the oldest European cities.
- *The Côa Valley Paleolithic Art site* = is one of the largest known open air sites of Paleolithic art.
- *Laurisilva* ('laurel forest') = is an endemic type of humid subtropical laurel forest found on the islands of the North Atlantic (Madeira, the Azores and the Canary). This is a precious relic of the Pliocene subtropical forest on Madeira.
- *Alto Douro Wine Region* = is centered around the Douro river not far from Porto. It is sheltered by mountain ranges from coastal influence. The region has Portugal's highest wine associated primarily with Port wine production. The style of wines produced in the Douro range from light Bordeaux style claret (Portugese red wine) to rich Burgundian style wines aged in new oak barrels.
- *Historic Centre of Guimarães* = the city is often referred to as the 'birthplace of the Portuguese nationality'.
- *The Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture* = is a vineyard region on the Azores, divided into plots (currais) protected by walls (paredes, murinhos). The walls are build with basalt blocks that have been weathered and broken up and stacked without mortar. Viticulture dates back to the 15th century.

Romania (România)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Romania Native name(s): România			
Capital city and population (million): Bucharest 2		Language(s): Romanian + Hungarian			
Country's population (million): 21		Currency: 1 Leu = 100 bani		Territory (sq kms): 237 500	
Administrative division					
Region: counties / județe:	Seat	counties / județe:	Seat	counties / județe:	Seat
Alba (Fehér)	Alba Iulia	Covasna (Kovácszna)	Sfântu Gheorghe (Sepsiszentgyörgy)	Neamț	Piatra Neamț
Arad (~)	Arad	Dâmbovița	Târgoviște	Olt	Slatina
Argeș	Pitești	Dolj	Craiova	Prahova	Ploiești
Bacău	Bacău	Galați	Galați	Satu Mare	Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti)
Bihar (Bihar)	Oradea (Nagyvárad)	Giurgiu	Giurgiu	Sălaj	Zalău
Bistrița-Năsăud (Beszterce-Naszód)	Bistrița (Beszterce)	Gorj	Târgu Jiu	Sibiu (Szeben)	Sibiu (Nagyszeben)
Botoșani	Botoșani	Harghita (Hargita)	Miercurea-Ciuc (Csíkszereda)	Suceava	Suceava
Brașov (Brassó)	Brașov	Hunedoara (Hunyad)	Deva (Déva)	Teleorman	Alexandria
Brăila	Brăila	Ialomița	Slobozia	Timiș (Temes)	Timișoara (Temesvár)
Buzău	Buzău	Iași	Iași	Tulcea	Tulcea
Caraș-Severin (Krassó-Szörény)	Reșița (Resicabánya)	Ilfov	Buftea	Vaslui	Vaslui
Călărași	Călărași	Maramureș (Máramaros)	Baia Mare (Nagybánya)	Vâlcea	Râmnicu Vâlcea
Cluj (Kolozs)	Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár)	Mehedinți	Drobeta-Turnu Severin	Vrancea	Focșani
Constanța	Constanța	Mureș (Maros)	Târgu Mureș (Marosvásárhely)	Municipiul București	București

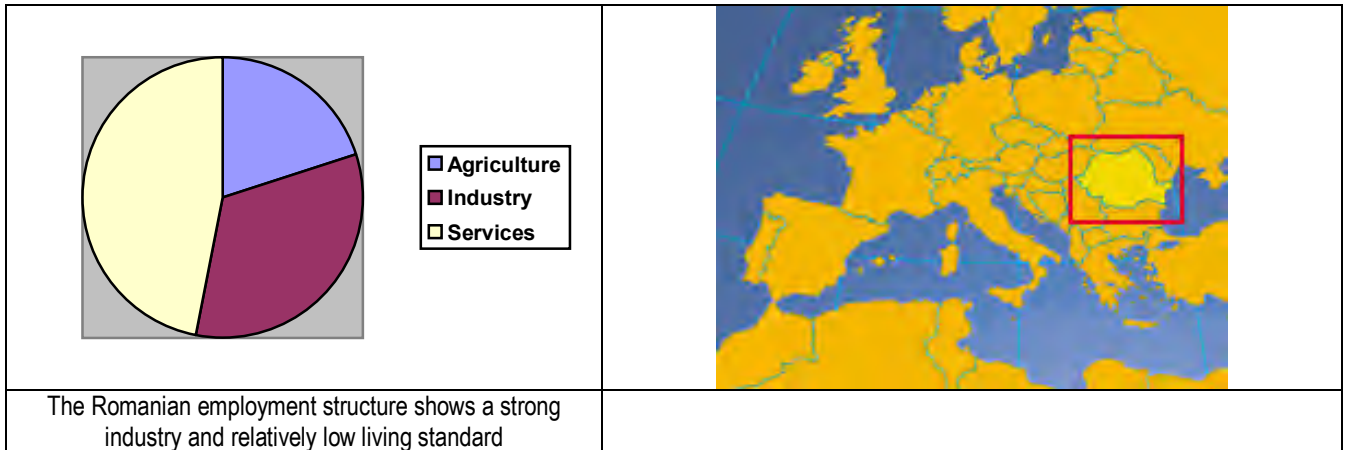
Geography

The middle and west part of the country is occupied by the Carpathian Mts. This encircled area is **Transylvania** that used to be part of the Hungarian kingdom and an independent state in history up to the end of World War I, when together with **Wallachia** (Snowy Plain) and **Moldovia** a new Romanian state was enlarged and formed. In the south Wallachia is a plain, in the east Moldovia is a hilly region, while in the west and in the middle Transylvania is a mountainous region. The climate is continental with cold winters and hot summers. Romania is rich in minerals: iron ore, silver, gold, salt. Its energy production is based on rich hydrocarbon (oil and gas) deposits in the plains. The main river is the Danube, reaching the Black Sea within the country.

Economy

Based on local resources, there is heavy industry (steel production and oil refinery). In agriculture they grow **wheat, sunflower, sugarbeet, hemp** and **maize** (Indian corn), the last being the second in European production, preceded only by France.

In **engineering Bucharest** and **Brasov** take the lead in manufacturing vehicles, oil industry equipments and agricultural machines. **Steel** production is seated in **Resica** in the south west and in Galati in the south east. The center of the **oil industry** is in **Ploiesti**. Chemistry is based on local salt and natural gas. Energy is produced in power plants heated with **brown coal**. **Paper industry** uses wood (in Transylvania) and reeds (from the vast marshland by the Black Sea at the mouth of the Duna). On the Black Sea there is **ship building** (Constanta) and a summer **holiday** resort (Mamaia). Tourism is also important in Transylvania in the mountains of the Carpathians.



Administration

There are 42 counties. They were organized into 7 NUTS-2 regions of statistical importance plus Bucharest, the capital city. Romania joined the EU in 2007.

Society



There are two big groups of national minorities in Romania: Hungarians (7 %) living in the Northern and eastern parts of Transylvania, and Gypsies (15 %). 75 % of the population belongs to the orthodox Christian church, 5 % Protestant and 5 % Catholic. Some 10 % are atheist which is a heritage from the socialist period of the country. In the south part of Transylvania there used to live a German minority called Saxons from the early Middle Ages. They formed the 7 Saxon cities, the economic engine of Transylvania. However, the German nationality was forced to leave the country during the communist dictatorship of Ceaușescu in the 1980s.

Landmarks

- *Carpathian Mountain* ranges = encircling Transylvania.
- *Iron Gate* = the canyon of the river Danube breaking through the mountain ranges of the South Carpathians.
- *Salt lakes and salt mines* = resort places and mine museums in Transylvania.
- *Mamaia* = the best known resort on the Romanian Black Sea beach.
- *Dracula's castles* = Bran Castle and Poenari Castle, the favourite habitations of Vlad Tepes, the Impaler from whom the figure of Dracula, the vampire, was invented.

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Romania:
- *The Danube Delta* (Delta Dunării) = is the second largest river delta in Europe, after the Volga Delta, and is the best preserved on the continent, with an enormous wild life sanctuary and marshland.
- *The painted churches of northern Moldavia* = are 7 Romanian Orthodox churches in Suceava Romania and in northern Moldavia, built approximately between 1487 and 1532. They represent the survival of Byzantine arts under rural circumstances.
- *The Monastery of Horezu*, Wallachia = is considered to be a masterpiece of architectural purity and balance, the richness of sculpted detail, the treatment of religious compositions, and painted decorative works.
- *Transylvanian villages* = were organised around a fortified church. Currently, a group of six former Saxon (German) and one Székely (Hungarian) villages: 1. Biertan (Birtälme – Berethalom), 2. Câlnic (Kelling – Kelnek), 3. Prejmer (Tartlau – Prázsmár), 4. Saschiz (Keisd – Szászkezd), 5. Vale (Wurmloch – Nagybaromlak), 6. Viscri (Weißkirch – Szászfehéregyháza) +1. Dârjiu (Székelyderzs)
- *Dacian Fortresses* of the Orăştie Mountains = there are 6 Fortresses created in the 1st century BC and AD as protection against Roman conquest. Sarmizegetusa, Blidaru, Piatra Roşie, Costeşti, Căpâlna and Băniţa formed the defensive system of King Decebalus.
- *Historic Centre of Sighişoara* (Segesvár) = around Sighisoara Citadel there is an old town (Segesvár, Schäßburg), built in the 12th century by Saxon colonists under the Latin name Castrum Sex. It represents an 850-year-old testament to the history and culture of the Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians.
- *The Maramureş* (Máramaros) *wooden churches* in Northern Transylvania = are a selection of eight examples of different rural architectural solutions. They are Orthodox churches. They are high timber constructions with characteristic tall, slim bell towers. They are a vernacular expression of the cultural landscape of a mountainous area.

Slovakia (Slovensko)

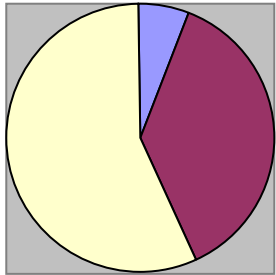
National Flag		Official name	Coat of arms	
		Slovak Republic Native name(s): Slovenská republika		
Capital city and population (million): Bratislava 0.4		Language(s): Slovak + Hungarian		
Country's population (million): 5.4		Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 49 036	
Administrative division				
Region: kraj:	Seat	Region: kraj:	Seat	
Banskobystrický	Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya)	Prešovský	Prešov (Eperjes)	
Bratislavský	Bratislava (Pozsony)	Trenčiansky	Trenčín (Trencsény)	
Košický	Košice (Kassa)	Trnavský	Trnava (Nagyszombat)	
Nitriansky	Nitra (Nyitra)	Žilinský	Žilina (Zsolna)	

Geography

Slovakia is situated in Central Europe, in the region of the Carpathian Mountain range, and on the highland of the Carpathian Basin. The highest part of the Carpathians (Tatry) is situated mainly in Slovakia, partly in Poland. The hilly country has but a little plainland on the south-west by the River Danube, and in the easternmost part, in the lower catchment area of the River Bodrog. The climate is continental. In history the land of Slovakia used to belong to the Hungarian Kingdom up to the end of World War I (1920), then it was a union with the Czech (Czechoslovakia) up to 1993, when it became an independent country.

Economy

In recent history, in the Czechoslovakian times, it was the Czech part of the country that could develop economy. **heavy industry** was developed only in the east (**Kosice**) based on some local iron ore (previously on Russain import). The country is poor in natural reserves, especially energy, and food has to be imported. There is some traditional **textile** and **engineering** industry in the west part of the country (**Zilina, Bratislava**). The building of large scale hydropower plant on the Danube in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in political tension with Hungary because of the diversion of the waters of the Danube. There is some **precious metal ore** deposits that have been mined since the Middle Ages on. Because of the abundancy of forests, **wood processing** and the **paper** industry has long traditions. Both summer and winter **tourism** is an important branch of economy, relying on the beautiful landscapes of the High and Low Tatries and the other mountain ranges.

 <div style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: blue;"></td> Agriculture</tr></table></div>	

Administration

The country is divided into 8 districts (**krajs**) named after their main cities. They are further divided into 79 boroughs (**okres**) standing for the economic gravity zones of minor towns. Slovakia joined the EU in 2004.

Society

Some 78 % of the population are Slovakian. The largest national minority is represented by Hungarians (11 %), then Gypsies (9 %) and some 1 % Czech and 1 % Ukrainian respectively. Because of debates rooted in history (the integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Hungarian invasion during World War II and in 1968 together with the Russians), the Slovakian Government and the Hungarian one cannot agree on the issues of national minority policy in Slovakia, like using mother tongues, and national symbols in offices and schools.

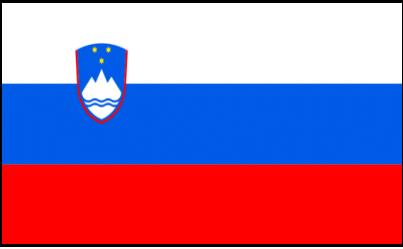

60 % of the country's population are Roman Catholic, the rest, some 10 % is Protestant and the rest is atheist, due to the long decade reign of socialism. The long centuries when Slovaks were being subordinated in the political and economic senses to either Hungary then to the Czech state, resulted in a lack of regional identity. It is now being built causing **political tension between with Hungary and Slovakia**, despite the common EU membership. Also, the rising number of the **Gypsy population** being unable to integrate in both economic and social aspects is an unsolved social problem.

Landmarks

- *High Tatras* = the highest range of the Carpathians, with peaks well over 2000 metres.
- *Banská Bystrica* = old town with gold and silver mines.
- *Bojnice Ghost Festival* = organized in the first week of May, in a medieval castle.
- *Bryndzové halušky* = traditional meal: potato pastry with ewe's cheese and bacon.
- *Dobsina Ice Cave* = a unique cave of ice formations.
- *Lomnic Peak* = the second highest peak of the High Tatras that can be visited by cable cabin.
- *Stretské Pleso* = a tourist centre around a lake (pleso) at the foothill of the High Tatras.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Slovakia:*
- *Banská Štiavnica* (Selmecebánya) = is a completely preserved medieval town with historical value.
- *Levoča (Lőcse), Spišský Hrad (Szepesvár) and the Associated Cultural Monuments* = the ruins of Spišský Castle is one of the largest castle sites in Central Europe. The castle is situated above the town of Spišské and the village of Žehra (Zsigra) that with adjacent ecclesiastical town Spišská Kapitula, (Szepesi Káptalan) (both meaning the Spiš Chapterhouse) is an exceptionally well-preserved ecclesiastical town. The historic centre of Levoča has many well preserved Renaissance buildings.

- *Vlkolínec* = is a picturesque village of rural architecture under the administration of the town of Ružomberok (Rózsahegy). Vlkolínec is one of ten Slovak villages that have been given the status of a folk architecture reservation in the region of the Northern Carpathians.
- *Caves of Aggtelek and the Slovak Karst* = a transboundary property with Hungary including 7 components: the Aggtelek Karst, the Szendrő-Rudabánya Hill, the Esztramos Hill in Hungary, and the Dobšinská Ice Cave, the Koniar plateau, the Plešivec plateau, and the Silica and Jasov plateau in Slovakia with many dripstone caves.
- *Bardejov (Bártfa)* = is a town exhibiting numerous cultural monuments in its completely intact medieval town centre.
- *The Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathian* = is an outstanding example of undisturbed, complex temperate forests, constitute a transnational serial property of ten separate components (6 in Ukraine and 4 in Slovakia) along a 185 km axis from the Rakhiv Mountains and the Chornohirskiy Range in Ukraine, west along the Polonynian Ridge, to the Bukovské vrchy and Vihorlat Mts in Slovakia. They contain an invaluable genetic reservoir of beech and many species associated with it.
- *Carpathian Wooden Churches* = consists of 9 wooden religious buildings constructed between the 16th and 18th centuries in eight different locations. They include two Roman Catholic (Hervartov, Tvrdošín), three Protestant (Hronsek - Garamszeg, Leštiny, Kežmarok - Késmárk) and three Greek Catholic churches (Bodružal, Ruská Bystrá, Ladomirová - Ladomérvágása) plus one belfry in Hronsek. In addition to these churches there are about 50 more wooden churches in the territory of present-day Slovakia mainly in the northern and eastern part of the Prešov (Eperjes) region.

Slovenia (Slovenija)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Republic of Slovenia Native name(s): Republika Slovenija Szlovén Köztársaság Repubblica Slovenia		
Capital city and population (million): Ljubljana 0,3	Language(s): Slovenian + Hungarian (Pomurska), Italian (Obalno-kraška)		
Country's population (million): 1.9	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 20 253	
Administrative division			
Region: regija:	Seat	Region: regije:	Seat
Gorenjska	Kranj	Osrednjeslovenska	Ljubljana
Goriška	Nova Gorica	Podravska	Maribor
Jugovzhodna	Novo mesto	Pomurska / Muravidék	MurskaSobota/Muraszombat
Koroška	Slovenj Gradec	Savinjska	Celje
Notranjsko-kraška	Postojna	Spodnjeposavska	Krško
Obalno-kraška / Carsico-litoranea	Koper / Capodistria	Zasavska	Trbovlje

Geography

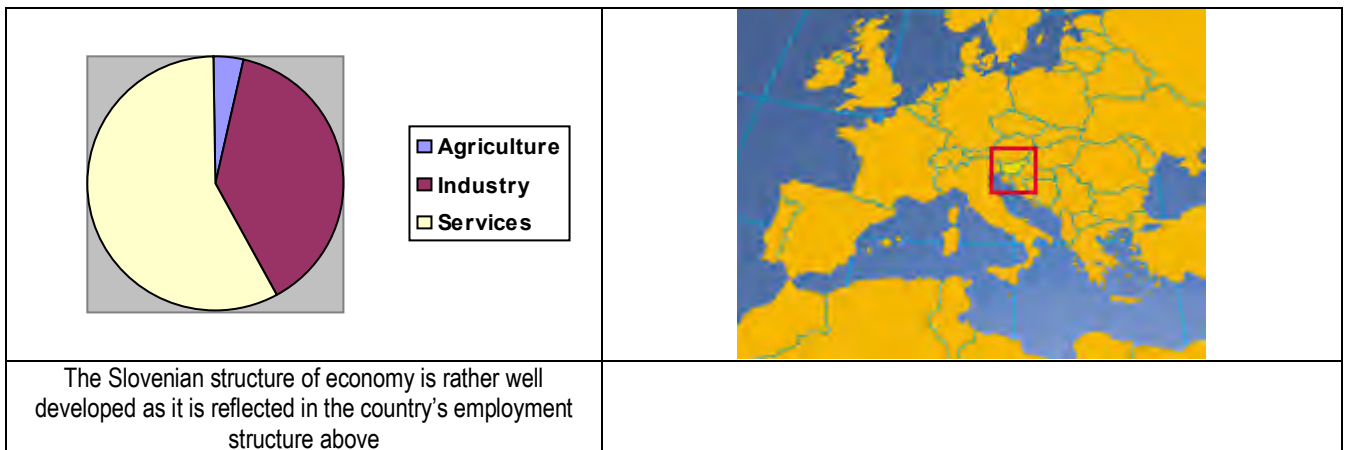
This little country, a former Yugoslavian republic, lies in the Eastern Alps in its western region named the **Julian Alps**, the Dinarian Mountains in the south which is a limestone region named **the Karst**; and a part of the plains of **Slavonia** between the rivers Sava and Drava in the north.

From a **historical geographic** point of view much of Slovenia used to be an Austrian province. After World War I it became part of the Yugoslavian state, and remained one of its republics until 1991, when Slovenia was the lucky first to be an independent country. At the time of World War I the French imperial policy encouraged the Balkan slavic nations to form a state named Yugoslavia in order to prevent the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from re-uniting and supporting the German Empire again. Before and during World War II, however, Serbians and Croats dominating Yugoslavia fought against each other and against German and Hungarian troops invading the country. After the war, the president (Tito) was such a strong personality who could hold together Yugoslavia of many nations (Serbians, Croats, Slovenians, Bosnians, Crna Gorans, Hungarians, Macedonians, Albanians). After his death that just followed the collapse of the soviet political system in Central-Europe (1989), Yugoslavia began to split into pieces and this was accompanied by a long lasting civil war between the Croats, Serbians and Bosnians, concentrating mainly on Bosnian and Croatian territories. Slovenia escaped the Yugoslavian political conflict and began a rapid economic development in 1991.

Economy

Agriculture with **crop cultivation** is important only in the northern part of the country that used to belong to Hungary and Croatia. In the hilly and mountainous parts **cattle breeding** are characteristic. Slovenian landscape and cultural heritage in the west region is very similar to Austria. Engineering has a long tradition and is seated in **Ljubljana** and **Maribor**. They produce **kitchen** and **household equipment, electric machines** and **furniture**. **Tourism** is also very important in the country's economy. Besides the Alpine region that attracts tourist in summer and winter alike, the Karst region is famous for its many dripstone caves. There is a small seaside region of Slovenia by the Adriatic

Sea, on the west coast of the Istria Peninsula. The important **sea port** is **Koper**. Slovenia is sometimes referred to as the Switzerland of South Europe.





Society

91 % of the population are Slovenian, and there are only 3 % Croatian, 2 % Serbian and 1 % Hungarian national minorities. The religion is Roman Catholic due to the region's historic links to the Austrian Habsburg Empire. 90 % of the population are Roman Catholics, 2 % Orthodox and 2 % Muslim. The rest are atheist due to the country's recent Communist past. The living standard is rather high, actually it is the highest of all the Central European countries joining the EU in 2004.

Landmarks

- *Triglav* = a three-headed mountain peak (2864 m) – also present in Slovenia's coat of arms –, rising on the border between Slovenia, Italy and Austria.
- *Lipica* = a historic village in the Slovenian Karst, very famous for its ancient breed of horses – the Lipica horses. They are the traditional horses trained for the Spanish Riding School in the Imperial Burg /Castle/ of Vienna, Austria, Europe's oldest riding school. The Lipica horses are born brown and later their colour turns white.
- *Postojna* = one of Europe's most famous dripstone caves that has been open for visitors for more than 100 years. It can be found in the limestone (Karst) area of the country.
- *Škocjanske jama* = is a giant cave in the Karst Region of Slovenia. Its corridor is 110 metres high and the River Reka flowing in it disappears in an undiscovered cave for a 40 km long journey to the sea. The Škocjan Caves represent the most significant underground phenomena in the Karst region. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Kamni Most* = the 'Stone Bridge' National Park in the Karst Region, famous for its many caves, the ceilings of which have fallen, thus forming numerous stone bridges over the underground rivers.
- *Isonzo* = the River Sothsa in Italian. It is known in Central Europe because of the long lasting fierce battles in this area between Italians and the troops of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the time of World War I.
- *Predjamski Grad* = the Castle before the Cave. A unique castle built in front of and in the entrance of a huge cave system.
- *Man Fish* = the largest European white blind crab species living only in Postojna Cave.

Spain (España)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Kingdom of Spain Native name(s): Reino de España Reinu d'España Regne d'Espanya Espainiako Erresuma		
Capital city and population (million): Madrid 3	Language(s): Spanish + Catalan (Catalonia), Asturian (Asturia), Basque (Baskland), Galician (Galicia), Valencian (Valencia), Aranese (Aran)		
Country's population (million): 47	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 504 782	
Administrative division: autonomous communities / comunidades autónomas:			
Region: Comunidad	Seat	Region: Bundesland	Seat
Andalucía (Andalusia)	Sevilla	Extremadura	Mérida
Aragón (Aragonia)	Zaragoza	Galicia	Santiago de Compostela
Asturias / Asturias	Oviedo / Uviéu	La Rioja	Logroño
Islas Baleares / Illes Balears	Palma de Mallorca	Madrid	Madrid
Canarias (Canary Islands)	Las Palmas / Tenerife	Murcia	Murcia
Cantabria	Santander	Navarra	Pamplona / Iruñea
Castilla-La Mancha (Castile ~)	Toledo	Valenciana (Valencia)	Valencia / València
Castilla y León (Castile ~)	Valladolid	País Vasco / Euzkidegoa	Vitoria / Gasteiz
Cataluña / Catalunya / Catalonha (Catalonia)	Barcelona	--	--

Geography

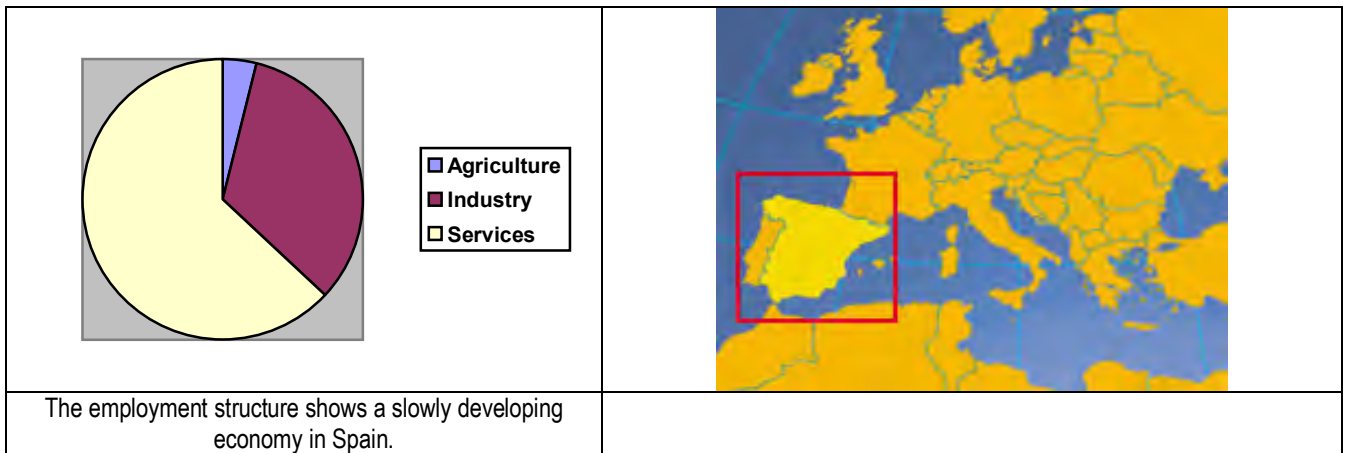
Spain occupies much of the Pyrenean, or Iberian Peninsula in South Europe. It is divided from France by the Pyrenees Mountain range, 2-3000 metre high. There are three other, similarly high mountains within Spain: Cantabrian, Castilian and the Sierra Nevada. The rest is hilly region, dry uplands. Plains can be found only in the south, in Andalusia, around Sevilla. The climate of Spain is arid and hot most of the year, with mild winters. Along the coasts, the climate is Mediterranean. Spain used to be a world power in the age of colonization. The Spanish conquered the Americas (Central and South America with the exception of Brazil); and Mexico on the North American continent. South or Latin America is often referred to as Spanish America.

Economy

The hills in Spain are rich in different ores: **precious metals, iron, uranium, lead, zinc**. Heavy industry with steel production could be formed in the north part of Spain, based on local **black coal** in the Cantabrian Mts. **Bilbao** is the largest industrial centre. Recently engineering and electronics have developed as well. In the north **Cantabria, Asturia, Basqueland** represent the industrial region of Spain.

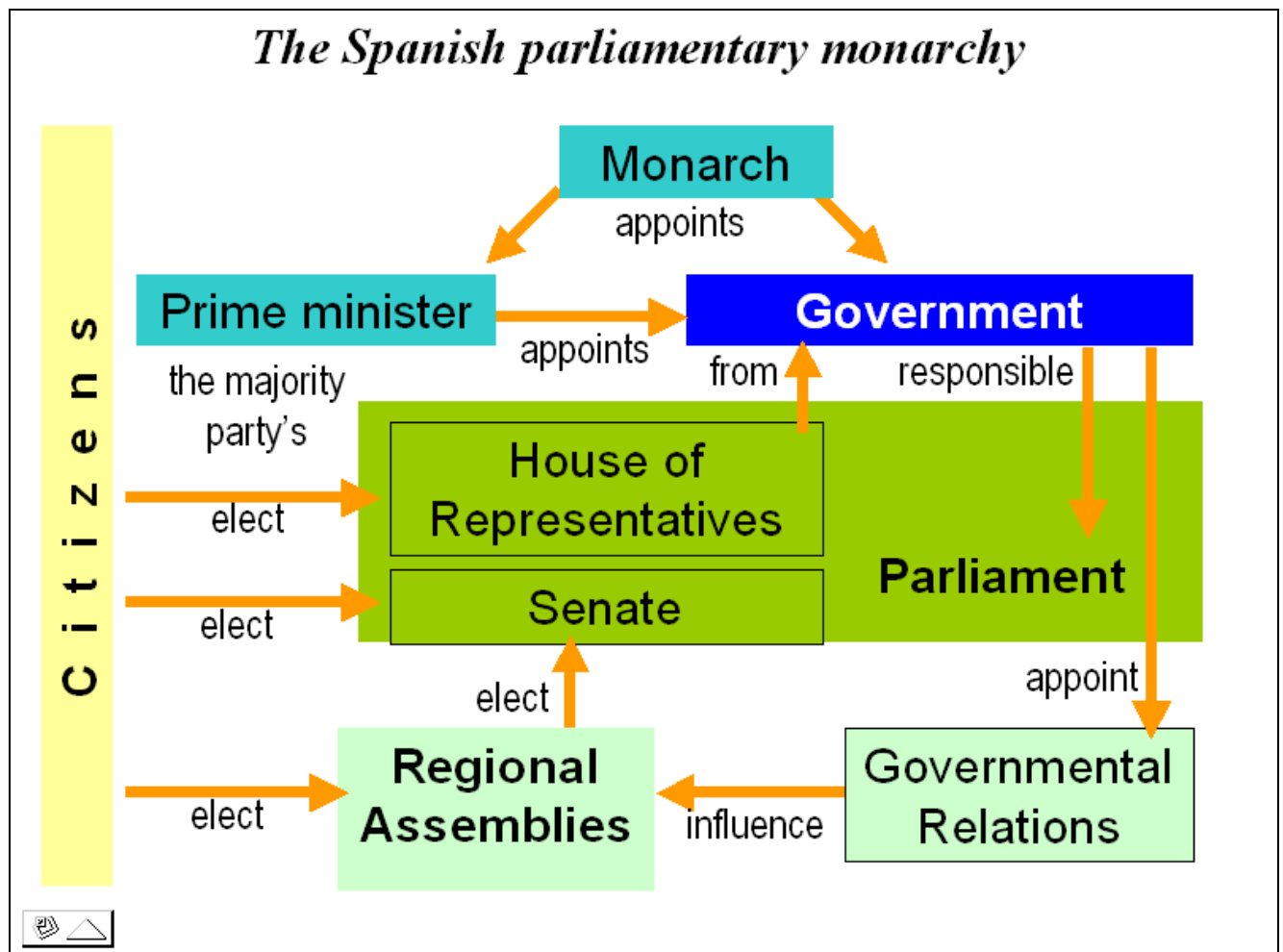
Tourists visiting Spain especially stay in **Valencia** by the Mediterranean Sea (Costa Brava) from Barcelona to Málaga in the south. This coastland region is the main site of agricultural production, too. The main product is **olive** and **wine** (in the growing of both Spain is the first in the world). They breed **cattle, goats** and **sheep** all over the inner regions. In sheep breeding only England precedes Spain in Europe. The world famous **Merino wool** is produced in Spain. **Wheat** and **maize** is grown in the north west (Galicia) mainly. **Vegetables** and **fruits** (lemon, orange, and tangerine) are also grown.

Other **touristic** destinations are represented by the capital city, **Madrid**, and the Moorish towns of **Granada**, **Córdoba** and **Sevilla**. **Barcelona** is also a touristic destination and a **textile** industrial centre. Barcelona represents the southernmost member of the European 'blue banana' formation of highly urbanized centres: via Marseille, Torino, Milan, Stuttgart, Cologne, Amsterdam, London, to Liverpool, the northernmost member. There are two groups of islands belonging to Spain. They are mainly **touristic** destinations: the **Balear Islands** (with **Mallorca**) in the Mediterranean Sea, and the **Canary Islands** in the Atlantic Ocean.



Administration

The country is a constitutional monarchy. There are 17 districts (autonomous communities) and 50 provinces. Only two small dependencies remained as Spanish colonies in North Africa. Spain entered the EU in 1986.



The parliamentary system of the constitutional monarchies is very similar to that of the regionalized states only the role of the president is carried out by the king or queen. E.g. the ruler appoints the prime minister and the members of the government; though in Europe it is merely a formal act.

Society

Unemployment is high. The largest national minorities include the Catalanian (17 %), Galician (6 %), Basque (2 %) and Gypsy (3 %). Because industry made the dwellers of the north relatively well-to-do (especially the Basque people), there has been a very strong and forceful regionalism trying to achieve independence for Basqueland by the ETA terrorism. Almost the whole population are Roman Catholic. (97 %).

Landmarks

- *Don Quijote de la Mancha* = the figure of the old fashioned knight invented by Cervantes, having established with it the basis of the European novel.
- *Gibraltar* = the straight between Africa and Europe, with steep and characteristic rocks on the Spanish side at Gibraltar (still being a British dependency).
- *Toledo steel* = a very good quality of steel – like that of Solingen.
- *Bull fights* = a cruel, traditional national sport and festivity all over Spain.
- *Pamplona Bull Run* = on 6th July a traditional street festival in Pamplona where bulls are let run free through the streets with people running with them.
- *La Tomatina Valencia* = Tomato Festival, tomato fight in Buñol with 30-50 thousand of tourists on the last Wednesday of August.
- *Prado* = national museum in Madrid.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Spain:*
 - *Alhambra* = is a Moorish palace built for the Muslim Emirs in Granada. It is now one of Spain's major tourist attractions, exhibiting the country's most significant and well known Islamic architecture together with 16th-century and later Christian building and garden interventions. *Generalife* was the summer palace and country estate of the Emirs (Kings) of Granada. *El Albayzín* is a district of present day Granada in Andalusia that retains the narrow winding streets of its medieval Moorish past.
 - *The Burgos Cathedral* (Catedral de Burgos) = is a Gothic-style Roman Catholic cathedral, dedicated to Virgin Mary and is famous for its vast size and unique architecture. Its construction began in 1221.
 - *Historic Centre of Córdoba* = including the following sights: a restored Islamic water wheel that once would have raised water to the Caliph's palace; a Roman mausoleum in the Victoria parade, the Patio de los Naranjos and Alminar; the Calahorra Tower; the Santa Marina de Aguas Santas Church, the Calleja de las flores, the Gardens of the Alcázar royal residence and the Entrance of the Córdoba Fair.

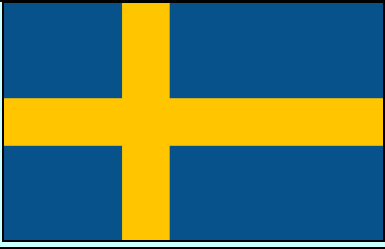

- *El Escorial* = is a historical residence of the kings of Spain, in the town of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, about 45 kilometres NW of Madrid. It functions as a monastery, royal palace, museum, and school.
- *Works of Antoni Gaudí* = a Catalan architect's works in Barcelona. 1. *Casa Vicens*, a family residence. 2. *Palau Güell*, a town mansion. 3. *Church of Colònia Güell*, for the people of the suburbs in Santa Coloma de Cervelló, near Barcelona. 4. *Casa Calvet*, a building for a textile manufacturer. 5. *Casa Batlló*. 6. *Casa Milà*. 7. *Park Güell*, a garden complex with architectural elements. 8. The *Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família*, simply called the Sagrada Família.
- *Cave of Altamira* = representing Paleolithic cave art at Santillana del Mar, Cantabria, featuring drawings and polychrome rock paintings of wild mammals and human hands.
- *Monuments of Oviedo* = churches and museums in Oviedo, Asturia, with the most famous: *Holy chamber of Oviedo* (Cámara Santa de Oviedo, also known as the chapel of St. Michael) which is a Roman Catholic pre-Romanesque church, built next to pre-romanesque Tower of San Miguel of the city's cathedral.
- *Old Town of Ávila* = is most known for the following sights: 1. Medieval city walls constructed of brown granite in 1090 with 88 towers. 2. The Gothic cathedral built between the 12th and 14th centuries, and has the appearance of a fortress, with embattled walls and towers. 3. The churches of San Vicente, San Pedro and San Segundo are, in their main features, Romanesque of the 12th century. 4. The Don Diego del Águila date to the 16th century. 5. The Gothic Monastery of Santo Tomás, erected in 1482.
- *Old Town of Segovia* and its *Aqueduct* = includes the Cathedral of Segovia, the Compañía de Jesús Church, the Cloister of Colegio del Seminario, the churches of San Milán, San Martín, San Estaban, and the ancient aqueduct (a water supply conduit constructed to convey water).
- *Santiago de Compostella* = its Old Town and especially its Cathedral is the chief destination, as it has been throughout history, the important 9th century medieval pilgrimage route, the Way of Saint James (Camino de Santiago).
- *Garajonay National Park (Parque nacional de Garajonay)* = is located in the center and north of the island of La Gomera, one of the canary Islands. The park provides the best example of laurisilvia, a humid subtropical forest that in the tertiary Age covered almost all of Europe.
- *Historic City of Toledo* = in Castile-La Mancha, with its extensive cultural and monumental heritage as one of the former capitals of the Spanish Empire and place of coexistence of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim cultures.
- *Mudéjar Architecture of Aragon* = Mudéjar is the name given to individual Moors or Muslims of Andalusia who remained in Christian territory after the Reconquista, but were not converted to Christianity. It also denotes a style of Iberian architecture and decoration, particularly of Aragon and Castile, of the 12th to 16th centuries. They are the Cathedral of Santa María de Mediavilla and the Churches of San Pedro, San Martín and of the Saviour.
- *Old Town of Cáceres* = the city has a blend of Roman, Islamic, Northern Gothic and Italian Renaissance architecture. Thirty towers from the Muslim period still stand in Cáceres, of which the Torre del Bujaco is the most famous.
- *Cathedral, Alcázar, Archivo de Indias in Seville* = The Cathedral of Seville is amongst the largest of all medieval and Gothic cathedrals, in terms of both area and volume. The interior is the longest nave in Spain, and is lavishly decorated. Christopher Columbus is buried here. The *Alcázar* facing the cathedral has developed from the city's old Moorish Palace in Mudéjar style, but also in Renaissance. The *Archivo General de Indias*, housed in Seville, in the ancient merchants' exchange, the Casa Lonja de Mercaderes, is the document repository of extremely valuable archival documents illustrating the history of the Spanish Empire in the Americas and the Philippines.
- *The Old City of Salamanca* = is known both for its monumental sights (Monterrey Palace, Plaza Mayor, Cathedral) and its University, which was founded in 1218 and is the oldest university in Spain and the 5th oldest western university. Thanks to its Renaissance sandstone buildings, Salamanca received the nickname La Ciudad Dorada (The golden city). This golden

glow is unique in Spain and is due to the Villamayor Stone, a type of sandstone coming from a quarry situated in Villamayor, a village close to Salamanca.

- *Poblet Monastery* = the Monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet is a Cistercian monastery, founded in 1151, located at Conca de Barberà, Catalonia.
- *Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida* = contains a notable group of ancient Roman monuments: remains of bridges, walls, a forum, circus, aqueducts, dams, temples, villas, amphitheatres in Mérida, Extremadura.
- *Route of Santiago de Compostela* = (the Way of St. James or St. James' Way: *El Camino de Santiago*) is the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, where tradition has it that the remains of the apostle Saint James are buried. The Way of St James has existed for over a thousand years from France. It was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times, together with Rome and Jerusalem.
- *The Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe* (Real Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe) = is a Roman Catholic monastic establishment in Guadalupe, Extremadura. It was the most important monastery in Spain for more than four centuries.
- *Doñana National Park* (Parque Nacional de Doñana) = also called *Coto de Doñana*, is a wildlife refuge in SW Spain. It has been recognised as a biosphere reserve and a wetland of international importance on the list of the Ramsar Convention as well.
- *Historic Walled Town of Cuenca* = includes the following sights: Our Lady of Grace Cathedral, the Churches of Saint Peter and Saint Michael, the Savior Church (Iglesia del Salvador), Saint Paul Bridge and Convent, the Seminary, the Bishop's palace, the Castle (El Castillo), Mangana Tower, Town Hall, Hanging Houses.
- *La Lonja de la Seda de Valencia* (Silk Exchange) = is a late Valencian Gothic style civil building, built between 1482 and 1548, and one of the principal tourist attractions in the city. The site is of outstanding universal value as it is a wholly exceptional example of a secular building in late Gothic style, which dramatically illustrates the power and wealth of one of the great Mediterranean mercantile cities.
- *Las Médulas* = is a historical site near the town of Ponferrada in Castile and León, which used to be the most important gold mine in the Roman Empire.
- *Palau de la Música Catalana* and *Hospital de Sant Pau* in Barcelona = the former (Palace of Catalan Music) is a concert hall in Barcelona; the latter (Hospital of the Holy Cross and Saint Paul) is a complex built between 1901 and 1930.
- *Monte Perdido* (Mont Perdu) = is the third highest mount in the Pyrenees. The summit of Monte Perdido (3355 m), is located in Spain. The mountain forms part of the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, in the west of the Pyrenees, in the community of Aragon. It is a transboundary property with France.
- *San Millán de la Cogolla* = is famous for its twin monasteries, *Yuso* and *Suso*. The two monasteries are called Suso ('upper') and Yuso (the lower). They are believed to be built on the site of a hermitage where Saint Emilian (San Millán) lived. Suso's major claim to fame is as the place where phrases in the Spanish and Basque languages were written for the first time.
- *Rock art of the Iberian Mediterranean Basin* = is a series of archaeological sites. Currently there are over seven hundred sites in the communities of Andalusia, Aragon, Castilla-La Mancha, Catalonia, Murcia and Valencia.
- *Alcalá de Henares* = is a university, a historic precinct and one of the first bishoprics founded in Spain, located in the vicinity of Madrid.
- *Ibiza* = is an island in the Mediterranean Sea 79km off the coast of the city of Valencia. It belongs to the the Balearic Islands, and is famous for its cultural landscape and biodiversity.
- *San Cristóbal de La Laguna* = is a city of notable historical centre on the island of Tenerife on the Canary Islands.
- *Tarraco in Tarragona* = is a Catalan archaeological ensemble of ancient Roman remains like Cyclopean walls, an amphitheatre, a circus, the Plaça de la Font, the Tower of the Scipios and an aqueduct.

- *Atapuerca* = is an archaeological site in Castile and León, where scientific excavation has found human remains from a wide range of ages ranging from early humans to the Bronze Age and modern man.
- *The Vall de Boí* (Valle de Bohí) = is best known for its 9 Early Romanesque churches, making it the site of the densest concentration of Romanesque architecture in Europe. The Catalan valley also includes the highest ski resort in the Pyrenees.
- *The Palmeral of Elche* (Palm Tree Forest) = is a plantation of palm trees in Alicante Province. It is the largest palm grove in Europe and one of the largest in the world.
- *Roman Walls of Lugo* = it is the only city in Europe to be surrounded by completely intact Roman walls, which reach a height of 10 to 15 metres along a 2117 m circuit ringed with 71 towers.
- *Aranjuez Cultural Landscape* = The Royal Palace of Aranjuez (Palacio Real de Aranjuez) is a residence of the Kings of Spain, located in Aranjuez, close to Madrid. The palace, the buildings and the parks are open to the public.
- *Úbeda* and *Baeza* = have ensembles of Renaissance monuments in Andalusia. They are known for having many of the best-preserved examples of Italian Renaissance architecture in Spain.
- *The Vizcaya Bridge* (Basque: Bizkaiko Zubia; Spanish: Puente de Vizcaya) = is the world's oldest transporter bridge that links the towns of Portugalete and Las Arenas in the Biscay Province, crossing the mouth of the Nervion River. It was built in 1893.
- *Teide National Park* (Parque Nacional del Teide) = is located in Tenerife on the Canary Islands. It is centered around Mount Teide (an active volcano 3718 m above sea level, and 7500 m above the floor of the Ocean).
- *The Tower of Hercules* (Torre de Hércules) = is an ancient Roman lighthouse on a peninsula about 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) from the centre of A Coruña, Galicia.

Sweden (Sverige)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Kingdom of Sweden Native name(s): Konungariket Sverige Ruotsin kuningaskunta Sveerjen gånkarijhke Ruota gonagasriika Svieriga gånågisriikka			
Capital city and population (million): Stockholm 0.7		Language(s): Swedish + Finnish and various Sami dialects			
Country's population (million): 9.1		Currency: 1 Crown = 100 ore		Territory (sq kms): 449 964	
Administrative division: regions = counties / län					
counties/län	Seat	counties / län	Seat	counties / län	Seat
Blekinge	Karlskrona	Kronobergs	Växjö	Värmlands	Karlstad
Dalarnas	Falun	Norrbottnens /	Luleå / Luulaja /	Västerbottens	Umeå
Gotlands	Visby	Norrbottnen / Norrbottena	Julevu / Luleju	Västernorrlands	Härnösand
Gävleborgs	Gävle	--	--	Västmanlands	Västerås
Hallands	Halmstad	Skåne	Malmö	Västra Götalands	Göteborg
Jämtlands	Östersund	Stockholms	Stockholm	Örebro	Örebro
Jönköpings	Jönköping	Södermanlands	Nyköping	Östergötlands	Linköping
Kalmar	Kalmar	Uppsala	Uppsala	--	--

Geography

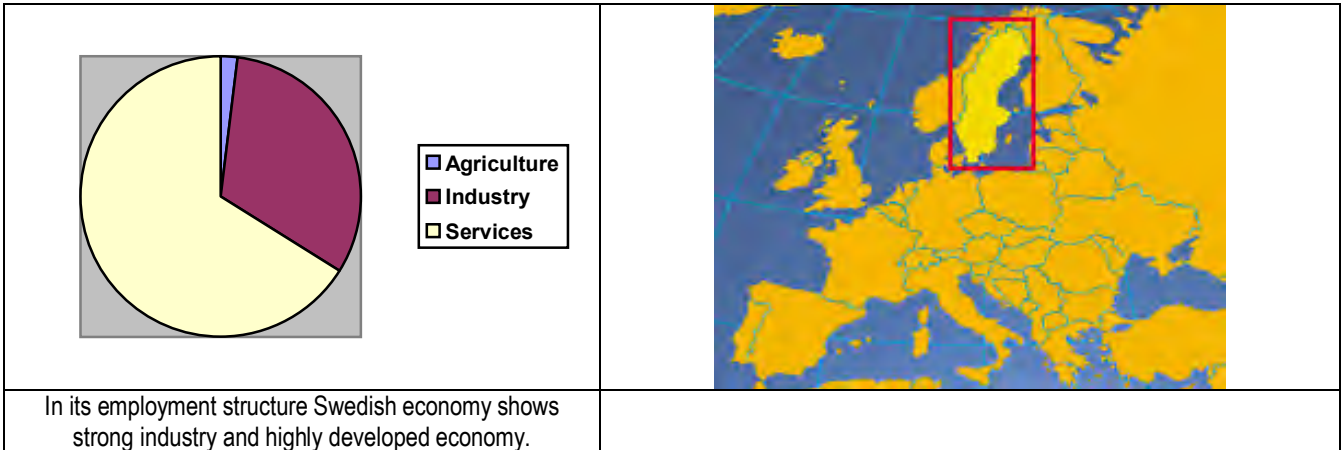
Sweden is situated in the Scandinavian Peninsula in North Europe. The Baltic Sea forms its eastern border. In the south it is a plain rich in lakes, the remnants of Ice Age erosion. The central and the northern parts of the country are hilly. The climate is subarctic with cold winters and cool summers. The northern part of the country is very rich in good quality iron ore.

Economy

The Swedish economy is traditionally strong, heavy industry (metallurgy, high **quality steel** production) could develop due to the iron ore resources. **Iron** is exported first of all to Germany. The iron mining of Sweden in Europe is preceded only by Russia and Ukraine. Engineering also has developed at an early stage of history. **Stockholm, Göteborg** and **Malmö** are the centres of **engineering** which specializes in **automobile** manufacturing (**Volvo, SAAB**), **electronics** (**Ericsson, Electrolux**), **roller bearings** (**SKF**), **weapons** and **military equipment**, fighter planes and **precious instruments**. The products of Swedish industry are world famous for their high quality.

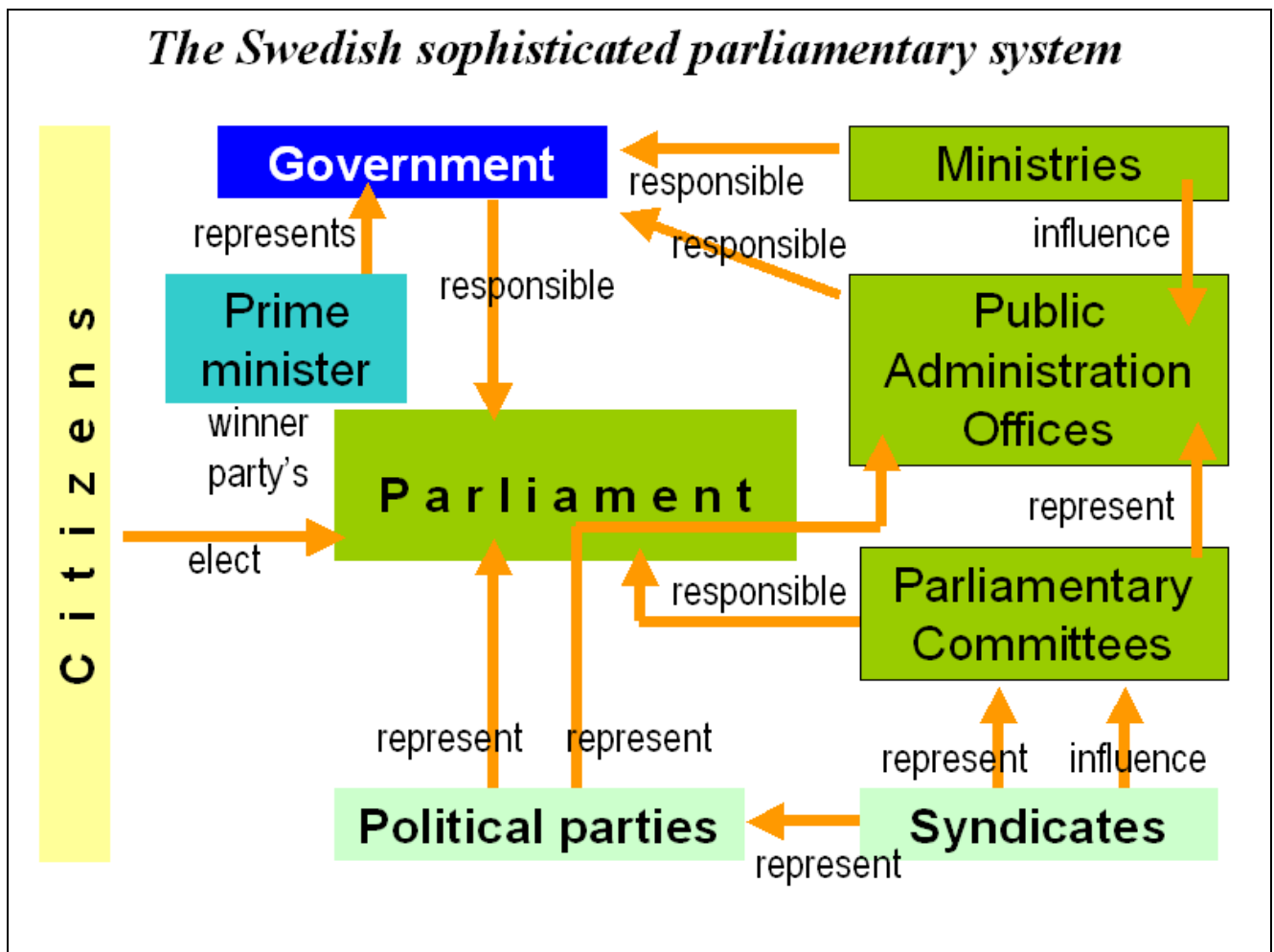
Energy production relies on **hydropower** (51 %) and **nuclear power** (43 %) thus environmental pollution is very low. Sweden is said to have the best **social care services**. Therefore the **living standard** is considered to be the highest in Sweden, if the mini states of Europe are not mentioned. Sweden is also known for the large amount of money put into **scientific research**, human capital investment. Because much of the country's territory is covered by forests, **wood** and **paper** industry is also important.

Swedish agriculture grows potato, sugarbeet, fodder plants and wheat in the south, though it has to import food.



Administration

There are 8 NUTS-2 regions, the North Central, the Central North and the Upper North (Lapland) are among the least developed regions of the EU, because of their very low number of population. The country joined the EU in 1995.



The most democratic parliamentary system full of controls is the Swedish. Though it is monarchy, the ruler does not play even a formal role in it. There is but one direct election when the members of the parliament are elected by citizens. The political parties and the representatives of trade chambers (syndicates) can have influence on policy having via their representatives delegated to the central level

(in the parliamentary committees and public administration offices responsible to the parliament and the government respectively).

Society


Sweden is the destination of emigrants seeking acceptable living conditions from all over the world. There are many guest employees as well. Immigration is becoming an ever increasing burden on the Swedish economy, however. Social welfare is the best in Europe. The national and ethnic composition of the population is 91 % Swedish, and the rest are the reindeer breeding, still nomadic Lappish, and Finnish in the Upper North. The religion in Sweden is Evangelist which is a variety of Protestant Christianity.

Landmarks

- *Aurora Borealis* (northern lights) = according to a survey of the National Geographic TV, it is the most magnificent natural phenomenon of the Earth, in the night skies, not only in Sweden, but in all the Nordic countries.
- *Stockholm* = the 'Venice of the North', since there are 24 thousand islands in and around the capital city.
- *Christmas tree* = the decorated pine trees taken into flats at Christmas, originate from Sweden, from 1605.
- *Pytt-i-pann; spettekaka* = traditional Swedish meals: meat, bacon and onion; huge apple pie cake, baked on open fire.
- *Swedish steel* = considered as the best of steel makes.
- *Nobelpriset* = Nobel Prize, the world's highest reputation scientific prize given by the Swedish Royal Academy. It was founded in 1895 by Alfred Nobel, a Swedish chemist, inventor of the dynamite.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Sweden:*
- *The Drottningholm Palace* (Drottningholms slott) = is the private residence of the Swedish royal family in Drottningholm. It is built on the island Lovön. Drottningholm Palace Theatre (Drottningholms slottsteater) is an opera house, which has been described as 'the Swedish jewel in our European cultural heritage crown of centuries-old theatres'.
- *Birka and Hovgården* = make up an archaeological complex (on the islands of Björkö, Adelsö, Mälaren near Stockholm) which illustrates the elaborate trading networks of Viking Scandinavia and their influence on the subsequent history of Europe. Birka is regarded as Sweden's oldest town.
- *Engelsberg Ironworks* (Engelsbergs bruk) = was built in 1681 and developed into one of the world's most modern ironworks in the period 1700-1800.
- *Rock Carvings in Tanumshede* = the area has a high concentration of petroglyphs. The largest flat rock of Nordic Bronze Age petroglyphs in Scandinavia, the Vitlyckehäll, is located in Tanumshede.

- *Skogskyrkogården* (The Woodland Cemetery) = is situated in Stockholm and its design reflects the development of architecture from national Romantic style to mature Functionalism. It is a major tourist attraction: at the Tallum Pavilion, visitors can see an exhibition about the cemetery and the story of its origins.
- *Hanseatic Town of Visby* = is on the island of Gotland and it is arguably the best-preserved medieval city in Scandinavia. Among the most notable historical remains are the 3,4 km long stone wall called Ringmuren (the Ring Wall), that encircles the city and the old church ruins.
- *Gammelstad Church Town* (Gammelstads kyrkstad) = near Luleå at the Gulf of Bothnia, is the best preserved example of a type of town that was once widespread throughout northern Scandinavia.
- *The Laponian area* = is a large mountainous wildlife area in the Lapland province in northern Sweden.
- *Naval port of Karlskrona* = is known as Sweden's only Baroque city and is host to Sweden's only remaining naval base and the headquarters of the Swedish Coast Guard. The city has kept its street structure since its foundation. Since the streets all follow a grid pattern the winds can blow freely from the ocean right into the heart of the city.
- *Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland* (Stora Alvaret) = is a limestone barren plain on the island of Öland. Because of the thin soil mantle and high pH levels, a great assortment of vegetation is found including numerous rare species. It has extraordinary biodiversity.
- *Kvarken Archipelago and High Coast* = it is continuously rising from the sea in a process of rapid glacio-isostatic uplift, whereby the land, previously weighed down under the weight of a glacier, lifts at rates that are among the highest in the world. As a consequence of the advancing shoreline, islands appear and unite, peninsulas expand, and lakes evolve from bays and develop into marshes and peat fens. This property is essentially a 'type area' for research on isostasy; the phenomenon having been first recognized and studied here. Most of the World Heritage Site is situated in the Korsholm municipality.
- *Great Copper Mountain* (Stora Kopparberget) = was a mining area at Falun that operated for a millennium from the 10th century to 1992. It produced as much as two thirds of Europe's copper needs. Technological developments at the mine had a profound influence on mining globally for two centuries. It is now a museum site.
- *Varberg Radio Station* = is the Grimeton VLF transmission facility at Grimeton close to Varberg. It has the only workable machine transmitter in the world.

The United Kingdom

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Native name(s): Ríocht Aontaithe na Breataine Móire agus Thuaisceart Éireann Unitit Kinrick o Great Breetain an Northren Ireland		
Capital city and population (million): London 9.6	Language(s): English + Irish (North Ireland), Scottish (Scotland), Welsh (Wales), Cornish (Cornwall), Manx (Isle of Man), French (Channel Islands)		
Country's population (million): 63	Currency: 1 Pound Sterling = 100 pence	Territory (sq kms): 242 500	
Administrative division			
Region: constituent parts		Seat	
England Northern Ireland / Tuaisceart Éireann Scotland / Alba Wales / Cymru		London Belfast / Béal Feirste / Béal Feirste Edinburgh / Dùn Èideann / Edinburrie Cardiff / Caerdydd	
crown dependencies			
Bailiwick of Guernsey / Bailliage de Guernesey / Bailliage dé Dgèrnésy Bailiwick of Jersey / Bailliage de Jersey / Bailliage dé Jèrri Isle of Man / Ellan Vannin		Saint Peter Port / Saint-Pierre-Port / Saint Pierre Port Saint Helier / Saint-Héliier / Saint Hélyi Douglas / Doolish	
overseas territory	seat	overseas territory	seat
Anguilla	The Valley	Gibraltar	Gibraltar
Ascension Island	--	Montserrat	Plymouth
Bermuda	Hamilton	Pitcairn Islands	Adamstown
British Indian Ocean Territory	Diego Garcia	Saint Helena	Jamestown
British Virgin Islands	Road Town	South Georgia Sandwich Islands	--
Cayman Islands	George Town	Tristan da Cunha	--
Eastern Sovereign Base Area	Dhekelia	Turks and Caicos Islands	Cockburn
Falkland Islands	Stanley	Town Western Sovereign Base Area	Akrotiri

Geography

The British Isles consist of 2 large islands (Great Britain and Ireland) and many small ones including the Isle of Man, Wight, the hebrides, the Orkney Islands and the Shetlands in the north. Great Britain is separated from the continental Europe by the English Channel (La Manche) and the Dover Strait at its narrowest point (34 km). The east, middle and southern parts of England are plains. In the north of England there is the Pennine Mts. Wales (Cambrian Mts) and Scotland (Cheviot Mts, Grampian Mts and Scottish Higlands) are quite mountainous areas. The climate of Britain is Oceanic, humid and rainy, but usually mild, the winters are not freezy. The main naturel resource used to be black coal in Wales and around Newcastle in northern England. But today it has been replaced by the North Sea oil that was discovered in the 1970s.

Economy

The British economy has got steel metallurgy, engineering, airplane munufacturing, chemistry, oil refinery, textile industry as traditional branches. Electronics and the production of precious instruments, space research is increasing. Agriculture is of secondary importance.

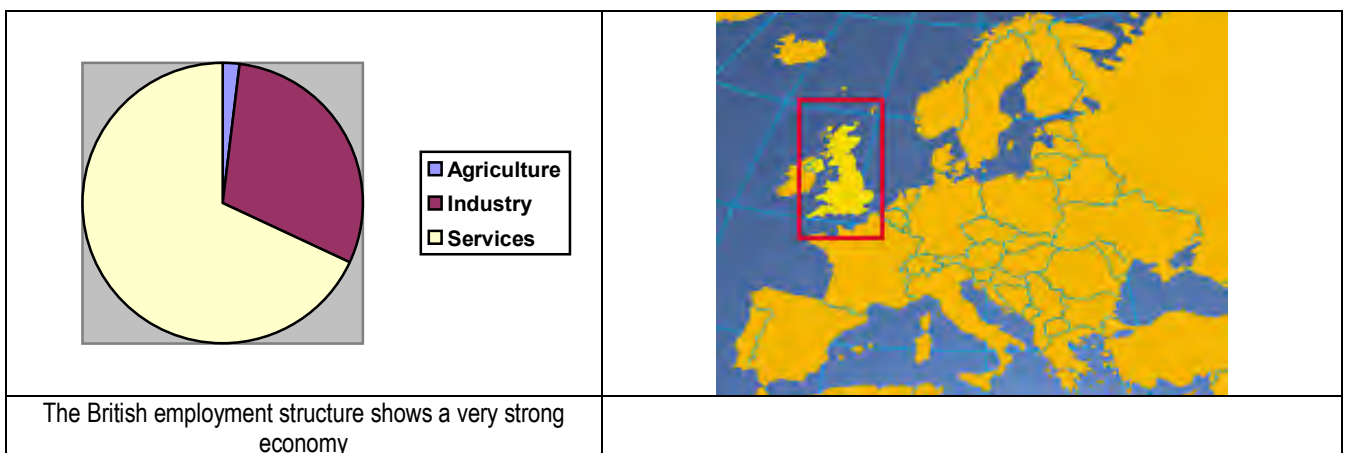
Agriculture grows **potato, barley and sugarbeet**. **Cattle and sheep** is bred. English and Scottish **wool** is excellent. Another raw material of textile industry is the **imported cotton**. **Fishing** has to be noted in the North and the Irish Seas. In food industry **beer** brewing and **whisky** distillation are world famous. The Scottish whisky brands stand for the best quality.

The industrial revolution began in England in the 1600s with the invention of steam engines. Based on local black coal, England became Europe's and the world's first workshop. Industry made England powerful and by the 18th century Britain obtained the world's largest ever empire (with colonies like Canada, Australia, India, South and East Africa), but after World War II it lost all the significant colonies.

Traditional economy consists of **steel industry, coal mining, ship building, and textile** industry all of them based on local resources. **North Sea oil** made Britain rich in energy production from the 1970s on. It gave way to the development of **chemistry**. In engineering **motor manufacturing and electronics** developed as well. The British had to renew their economy in order to be able to compete with the USA and Japan in the world market. They started to produce quality goods. **Manchester and Leeds** are the centres of the world's best quality **textile industry** using both wool and cotton.

London is a global **financial** centre. **Tourism** has become important in the last half century. The main tourist destinations include **London** first of all, the **Lake District** in North-West England and the **Scottish Highlands**.

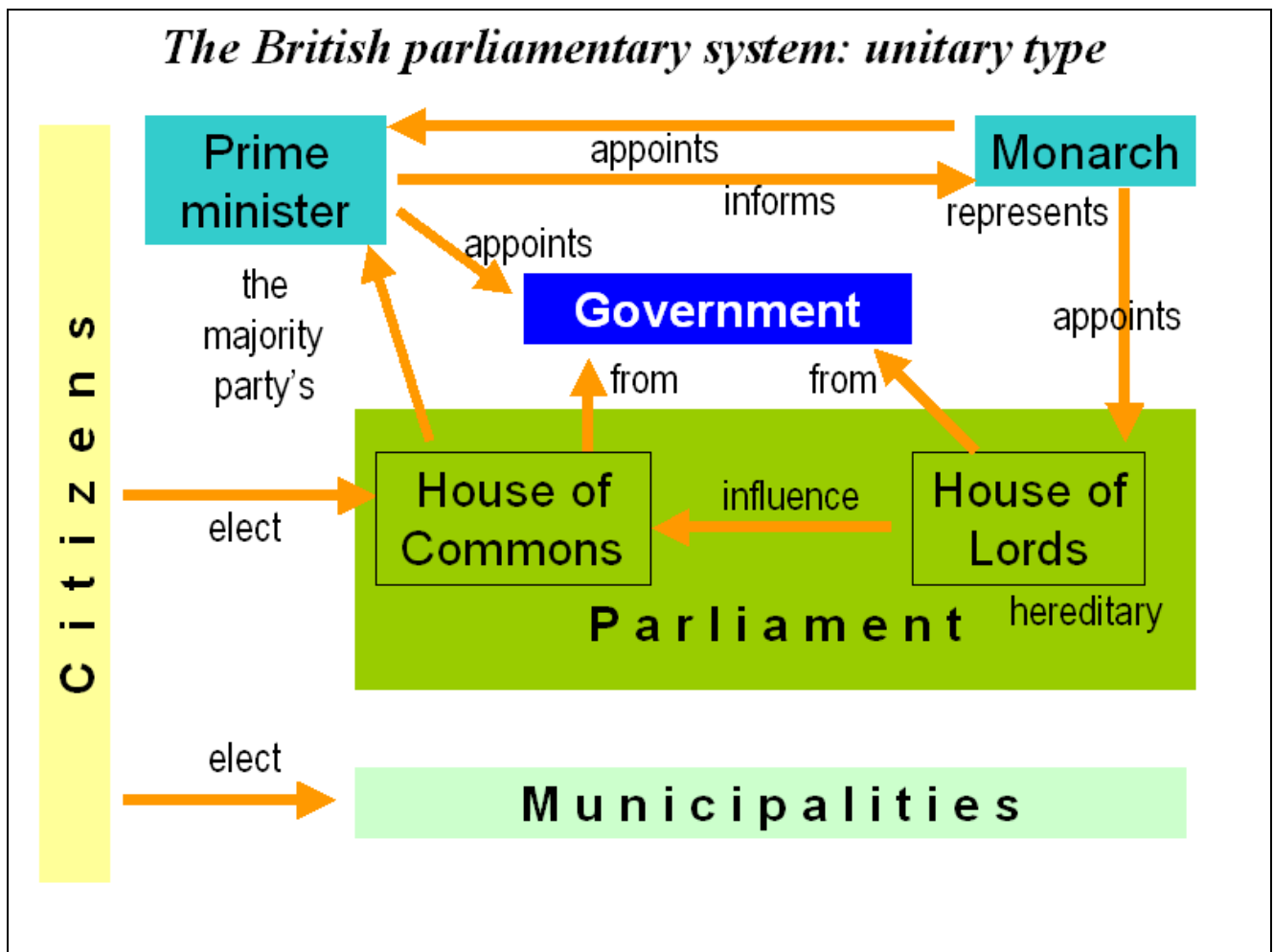
The main centres of economy are in England: **London, Bristol Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Newcastle**. In Wales: **Cardiff and Swansea**. In Scotland: **Glasgow**. In Northern Ireland: **Belfast**.



Administration

The UK is a parliamentary kingdom consisting of two parts: Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is divided into England, Scotland and Wales⁷. There are 39 counties in England, and 7 metropolitan counties. There are 9 regions in Scotland and 2 island areas. In Wales there are 8 counties, and in Northern Ireland there are 26 districts. Also, there are 11 overseas small territories including Gibraltar, St Helena, the Bermudas, the Falklands, and the Cayman Islands etc. The UK joined the EU in 1973.

⁷ Or as the joke goes: the proud English father says 'My family represents the whole United Kingdom. I am English. My wife is Scottish. The nurse is Irish and the baby wails.'



In a unitary state with constitutional monarchy there is but one direct election. Citizens elect the members of the parliament (in Britain it is the House of the Commons). The other chamber of parliament in the monarchies consists of the members of the aristocracy (House of the Lords in Britain). The members of the government are chosen by the prime minister from both the upper and the lower houses of the parliament. The prime minister is the leader of the winning party, but is formally appointed by the king or queen. The same applies to the members of the upper house (House of the Lords). In post socialist unitary republics there is but one chamber of the parliament and the role of the president is quite formal.

Society

Some 90 % of the population lives in urban environments, meaning that even small settlements are highly urbanized with public services and infrastructure. Living standard is relatively high, therefore the UK is a highly preferred destination for immigrants coming mainly from former British colonies. It leads to social tension and uneasiness among the immigrants of different cultures who gained citizenship and the native British population. The religion is the English variety of Christianity, named Anglicanism.

Some representatives of the native population of Scotland and Wales are trying to upkeep their Celtic languages and their ethnic separation is manifested in their own parliamentary systems subordinated to the Crown and the British Parliament. Regionalism is present in Northern Ireland where in the past decades the IRA (Irish Republican Army) has fought for political independence, though the local population has been also divided into Catholic Irish and Protestant Anglo-Irish. Terrorism occurred in these struggles in Northern Ireland. In spite of the political separation efforts, however, Welsh, Scottish and Irish languages cannot compete with the worldwide spoken English. Also, the Scottish,

Welsh and Irish youth are not likely to stick to the isolated ancient Celtic languages of the British Isles.

Landmarks



- *Buckingham Palace; Tower; Tower Bridge; Houses of Parliament; Westminster Abbey; London Eye; Madame Tussaud's; British Museum; Saint Paul's, Downing Street 10th* = places of interest in London: Buckingham Palace is the royal residence. Tower is the ancient castle of London, World Heritage Site. The Tower Bridge is the symbol of London across the Thames. The Houses of the Parliament are the seat of the government. Westminster Abbey is the largest cathedral in the West End, a World Heritage Site. London Eye is a huge Ferris wheel erected for the year 2000. Madame Tussaud's is a museum of waxworks of celebrities. The British Museum is the national museum and Saint Paul's is the large cathedral in the East End. The residence of the Prime Minister.
- *Changing of the guards* = a daily sight for the tourists in front of the Buckingham Palace.
- *Loch Ness* = a Scottish lake with the legend of 'Nessie' the monster.
- *Clochán an Aifir (Giant's Causeway)* = the greatest natural wonder of the UK in Northern Ireland; some 40 thousand basalt columns, the results of ancient volcanism, on the ocean coast. World Heritage Site.
- *Cliffs of Dover* = white rock walls of chalk (calcium carbonate) on the British coast at the Dover strait facing the continental Europe.
- *Highlands* = the region of the Grampian Mts in Scotland.
- *Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch* = the longest name (58 letters) for a European settlement in Wales; translating: 'the church of St. Mary in the hollow of white hazel trees near the rapid whirlpool by St. Tysilio's of the red cave'.
- *Land's End* = the westernmost point of the Cornwall Peninsula.
- *Lakeland* = a domestic tourist destination in NW England.
- *Windsor Forest* = a huge park and zoo around Windsor Castle, royal residence.
- *Yorkshire Moors* = a national park of heather moorland in North Yorkshire.
- *Ben Nevis* = the highest peak of the British Isles in Scotland (1343 m).
- *Fish 'n' chips; pudding* = traditional British meals: fish with fried potatoes; special cakes with fruits.
- *Union Jack* = the national flag with three crosses in it: white field with the red cross of Saint George of England; blue field with the red cross of Saint Andrews of Scotland; and blue field with the white cross of Saint Patrick of Ireland.
- *Tartan* = a skirt-like traditional wool clothing of the Scottish.
- *Stratford-Upon-Avon* = the world's greatest playwright's birthplace with museum houses.
- *Salisbury Cathedral* = with the highest church tower in Britain.
- *Winchester Cathedral* = one of the oldest cathedrals in Britain.
- *Windsor Castle and Park* = a royal residence and a famous safari park SW of London.
- *Hyde Park and Speakers' Corner* = London's best known public park.
- *The Garden of England* = Kent, with suburban housing areas of the well-to-do.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the United Kingdom:*
 - *Stonehenge* = a prehistoric stone ring monument of the Celts in the vicinity Salisbury and another site at Avebury.
 - *Blaenavon (Blaenafon) Industrial Landscape* = is in Wales, and its attractions include the Big Pit National Coal Museum, (part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage), the Blaenavon Ironworks, the Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway, the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, Blaenavon Male Voice Choir and many historical walks through Blaenavon's mountains.

- *Blenheim Palace* = is a large and monumental country house situated in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. It is the only non-Episcopal country house in England to hold the title of palace. The palace is one of England's largest houses.
- *Canterbury Cathedral* = in Kent is one of the oldest and most famous Christian structures in England. St. Augustine's Abbey was a Benedictine abbey in Canterbury. The *Church of St Martin*, situated slightly beyond the city centre, is England's oldest parish church in continuous use since 1668.
- *The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd* = four Welsh castles related to the reign of King Edward I. of England. They are outstanding examples of fortifications and military architecture built in the 13th century: Beaumaris Castle on Anglesey, Caernarfon Castle, Conwy Castle and Harlech Castle.
- *The City of Bath* = the city has a variety of theatres, museums, and other cultural and sporting venues, which have helped to make it a major centre for tourism, with over one million staying visitors and 3,8 million day visitors to the city each year.
- *The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape* = includes mining landscapes across Cornwall and West Devon.
- *Derwent Valley Mills* = the modern factory, or 'mill' system was born here in the 18th century to accommodate the new technology for spinning cotton. With advancements in technology, it became possible to produce cotton continuously. The system was adopted throughout Europe and the United States.
- *Durham Castle* = is a Norman castle in Durham, England, while The *Durham Cathedral* is regarded as one of the finest examples of Norman architecture.
- *Hadrian's Wall* = is a stone and timber fortification built by the Roman Empire across the width of what is now Northern England. Begun in AD 122, during the rule of emperor Hadrian, it was the first of two fortifications built across Great Britain, the second being the Antonine Wall in what is now Scotland.
- *Heart of Neolithic Orkney* = refers to a group of Neolithic monuments found in Scotland: 1. Maeshowe, a chambered cairn and passage grave. 2. Standing Stones of Stennes, megaliths of a henge. 3. Ring of Brodgar, a stone circle forming a henge monument. 4. Skara Brae, the best preserved Neolithic village.
- *The Ironbridge Gorge* = is a deep canyon formed by the River Severn in Shropshire, England. There is the 1st iron bridge of its kind in the world, and a monument to the industry that began there. The bridge was built in 1779 to link the industrial town of Broseley.
- *Dorset and East Devon Coast* (Jurassic Coast) = is of geological importance on the English Channel coast stretching from Orcombe Point near Exmouth in East Devon to Old Harry Rocks near Swanage in East Dorset, a distance of 153 kilometres.
- *The Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City* = comprises several locations in the city centre of Liverpool including the Pier Head, Albert Dock, William Brown Street. It is the supreme example of a commercial port at a time of Britain's greatest global influence.
- *Maritime Greenwich* = is best known for its maritime history and as giving its name to the Greenwich Meridian (0° longitude) and Greenwich Mean Time. There are the buildings of the Royal Naval College from 1873. The historic rooms within these buildings remain open to the public.
- *New Lanark* = is a village on the River Clyde in Scotland. It became a successful business and an epitome of utopian socialism. The mills operated until 1968.
- *The Old Town of Edinburgh* = has preserved its medieval plan and many buildings. The most significant buildings include the Tron Kirk, St. Giles Cathedral, the Supreme Court, the Scottish Parliament, the Palace of Holyrood house, the General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, the Royal Museum of Scotland, the Surgeons' Hall and the University of Edinburgh. *The New Town* is a central area of Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland. It is considered to be a masterpiece of city planning, built between 1765 and 1850, and retains much of the original Neo-Classical period architecture.

- *The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct* (Traphont Ddŵr Pontcysyllte) = is a navigable aqueduct between the villages of Trevor and Froncysyllte in Wales. Completed in 1805, it is the longest and highest aqueduct in Britain.
- *The Royal Botanic Gardens* (Kew Gardens) = a 250 year-old park with botanical glasshouses in SW London.
- *St Kilda* (Hiort) = is an isolated archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean. It contains the westernmost islands of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. The largest island is Hirta, whose sea cliffs are the highest in the UK.
- *Saltaire* = is a Victorian model village within the city of Bradford in West Yorkshire, England. It is part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage.
- *Studley Royal Park* = is a park containing, and developed around, the ruins of the Cistercian Fountains of Abbey in North Yorkshire, England. It is one of the largest and best preserved Cistercian houses in England.
- *Westminster Palace*, and *Saint Margaret's Church* = the Palace of Westminster is also known as the Houses of Parliament or Westminster Palace consisting of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. It lies on the north bank of the River Thames in the heart of London. The Westminster Abbey, the coronation church of the English rulers. The Royal College of St. Peter in Westminster is known as Westminster School, is one of Britain's leading independent schools with a history stretching back beyond the 12th century. The Anglican church of St. Margaret is situated in the grounds of Westminster Abbey.

Regional Summaries of the Non EU – European Countries

Abkhazia *non/partially recognized*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Abkhazia Native name(s): Аԥсны Аҳәынҭқарра აფხაზეთი Республика Абхазия	
Capital city and population (thousand): Sukhumi (სუხუმი, Аԥәа) 63	Language(s): Abkhaz, Georgian, Russian	
Country's population (million): 0.24	Currency: Russian Ruble = 100 kopeks	Territory (sq kms): 8 660
Administrative division: 7 raions.		

Geography

Abkhazia is situated in the Western part of Georgia along the Black Sea and the ranges of the Caucasus Mountains exceeding 4 thousand metres in height. The proximity to the Sea and the high mountain ranges shield the territory, the climate of which is mild. Because of the windward slopes of the Caucasus, Abkhazia receives much precipitation, as well. The coastland and the valleys are fertile therefore and good for agriculture. After the disintegration of the USSR (Soviet Union) and the Georgian declaration of independence (1990) the ethnic tensions grew between the Abkhaz and Georgians. It led to a civil war in 1992-93 when Abkhazia declared her own independence, though, because of the ethnic cleansing of the Georgians, Abkhazia was recognized by a very few countries in the UN (Russia, a few Latin American ones and other, formerly Soviet unrecognized ones). Abkhazia can obtain her *de facto* sovereignty with the (armed) help of Russia and the Caucasian Mountain Peoples' Confederation (= a militarized organization in the North Caucasian Russian republics). Uneasiness is still characterizing the Abkhaz – Georgian relations, since Georgia and the majority of the UN countries consider Abkhazia *de jure* part of Georgia.

Economy

The main economic partners of the country are Russia and Turkey, with some 60 and 20 % of the foreign trade turnover respectively. **Russia supports** Abkhazia (half of the state budget comes from Russian aid). Its industry is limited to **hydroelectric** power generation and food industry. They grow **tobacco, tea, wine, hazelnuts** and **tangerines**. Tourism is a key industry along the Black Sea coast, serving mainly Russians.

Society

Due to the stormy history of the region Abkhaz people were forced to leave their homes and settled down in great numbers abroad (in Turkey e.g. 1 million) and mostly in the republics and districts of the former Soviet Union. Georgians became the majority of the population up to the civil war in 1992-93, when some 200 thousand Georgians were made to flee to Georgia. The Abkhaz population is still very diverse ethnically: the largest groups are Abkhazians, Georgians, Armenians and Russians. Most of them (60 %) are Christians (belonging to the Eastern Orthodox and the Armenian Apostolic churches), and Muslims (16 %).



Landmarks

- *Krubera Cave* is the deepest known cave on Earth with a depth of 2197 metres.
- *Western Caucasus* it is a World Heritage Site of which a part is situated in Abkhazia. It is the only large mountain area in Europe that has not experienced significant human impact, containing extensive tracts of undisturbed mountain forests unique on the European scale.
- *The Great Wall of Abkhazia*. The grandiose monument of Byzantine period of the Abkhazian history is the Great Wall of Abkhazia. It was constructed in the 6th century during the reign of Justinian, a Byzantine emperor. The 60 km long wall includes more than 200 towers with 100 of them in good condition; the others are destroyed.
- *Abkhazian State Museum*. Its collections contain natural, archaeological historical and ethnographic objects of Abkhazia. Many of them are absolutely unique and valuable.



Abkhazia (shown in orange) situated along the Eastern shore of the Black Sea and the Western end of the Caucasus Mts. range (Georgia is shown in gray)

Albania (Shqipëria)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Albania Native name(s): Republika e Shqipërisë	
Capital city and population (million): Tirana 0.2	Language(s): Tosk Albanian + Gheg Albanian, Romanian, Serbian, Romani, Macedonian	
Country's population (million): 3	Currency: 1 Lek = 100 qindarka	Territory (sq kms): 28 748
Administrative division: 12 counties (qarqe)		
Region	Seat	Region

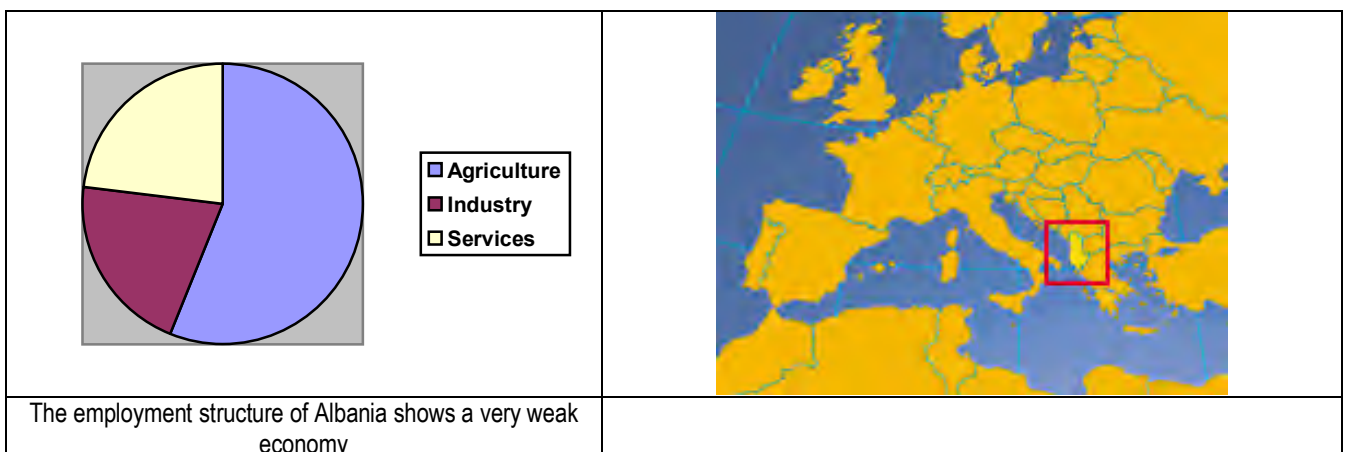
Geography

Albania is situated on the east side of the Balkan Peninsula. The topography is mainly hilly, plains can be found only by the seashore and valleys. In the northern part there are the ranges of the Albanian Alps reaching 2700 m. The climate is Mediterranean on the seashore and continental inland.

Economy

Albania has one of the weakest economies in Europe. Its backwardness is due to a very long isolation dating back to the Middle Ages. Albanians used to fight alone against the Turkish Empire for a long time. After World War II Albania became a communist country, but remained isolated from other communist countries, even from those bordering it (Yugoslavia and Bulgaria). Albanian dictators chose this isolation and kept connections to China alone. Industry is very weak. Many people try to earn living on agriculture: growing **fruit, vegetables, cotton, tobacco, olives, corn** and breeding **goats and sheep**.

Many Albanians go abroad to find job in Germany. The country is rich in water energy and 80 % of the energy supply comes from hydropower plants. Both the industry and the agriculture try to be self-supporting. Albanian mountains are rich in ore deposits (**chrome** is the most important, but they have **iron, copper, lead and nickel**). The major industrial branches are: **mining, metallurgy, chemistry, textile and food industry**.





Society

Albanians are known as scipetars 'rock dwellers'. 92 % of the population is Albanian, 4 % is Gypsy, the rest are Serbians, Macedonians, and Romanians. Islam is followed by 65 % of the population, orthodox Christianity by 20 % and Roman Catholicism by 13 %. Many Albanians try to escape abroad in seeking the refugee status in South Italy.

Landmarks

- *Butrint* = archeological site of ancient Greek and Roman cities. UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra* = the former is a historic town 'of a thousand windows', the latter is a rare example of a well-preserved Ottoman town. Both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- *The Albanian Alps* = beautiful, wild mountain ranges with little infrastructure.
- *Lake Skhodra* = a large lake at the Adriatic seaside between Montenegro and Albania.

Andorra (*mini state*)

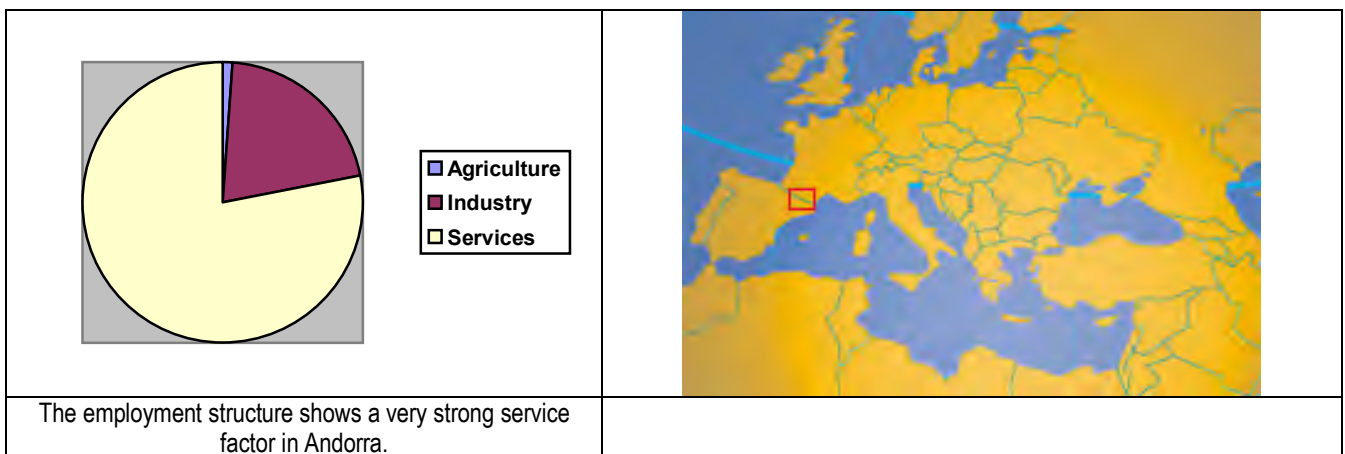
National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Principality of Andorra Native name(s): Principat d'Andorra	
Capital city and population (thousand): Andorra la Vella 20	Language(s): Catalanian, French, Spanish	
Country's population (thousand): 80	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 468
Administrative division: 7 parishes (parròquies / church districts)		

Geography

It is a mini state in the Pyrenees Mts between France and Spain.

Economy

People in Andorra grow **tobacco** and breed **sheep**, though **tourism** is the most important source of income. Also, Andorra grants very favourable conditions for taxation. It is named a 'tax Paradise'. The EU tolerates the **taxation policy** of the mini states, because they are affiliated to major EU countries like France, Spain or Italy.



Administration

Though the UN does not recognize Andorra, it is Spain's clerical bishop's land (a parliamentary church monarchy) on the one hand and its foreign affairs are handled by France on the other. A foreigner must live 20 years in Andorra until citizenship is guaranteed, or an ancestor certification is needed.


Society

People are Catalanian mostly, and French. Health care is completely free.

Landmarks

- *Madriu Clarol Perafita Valley* = The valley is a glacial landscape, with high pastures, craggy cliffs, and steep wooded valleys. UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Andorra la Vella* = The old town of Andorra, a tourist destination.

Armenia (Hayastan)

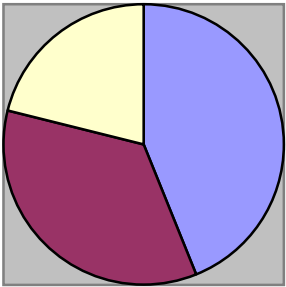

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Republic of Armenia Native name(s): Hayastani Hanrapetoutyoun)</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (million): Yerevan 1,2</p>	<p>Language(s): Armenian + Russian</p>	
<p>Country's population (million): 2.9</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Dram = 100 luma</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 29 743</p>
<p>Administrative division: 10 provinces (hye)</p>		

Geography

Armenia lies higher than 100 metres above sea level in the Caucasian Mts. There is a large lake, Sevan in the middle of the country. Armenia is situated in the 'backyard' of Europe together with Azerbaijan. It is the religion and culture of the population that keep the country a European one, because the geographical boundaries of Europe is represented by the water divide of the Caucasus Mts, and in Armenia rivers flow to the Caspian Sea so the geographically its European situation is debatable. Up to 1991 Armenia used to be a republic of the Soviet Union.

Economy

The mountains are rich in minerals in Armenia: **mercury**, **copper**, **gold** and **silver** are mined. Consequently **metallurgy** has also developed. Traditional craftsmanship includes **gold-** and **silversmithy**. The most important product of agriculture is **tobacco** and **grapes**. The latter is used to make **brandy** distillation. The rivers are used for hydropower energy production.

 <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: blue;"></td> <td>Agriculture</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: red;"></td> <td>Industry</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: yellow;"></td> <td>Services</td> </tr> </table> </div>		Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Agriculture						
	Industry						
	Services						
<p>The Armenian employment structure shows a very weak economy.</p>							

Society

95 % of the inhabitants are Armenian who are related to the Albanians and Thracians, since these languages belong to the Thracio-Illyrian group of languages within the eastern branch of Indo-European language family. There are 2% Azeri 2 % Kurdish and 1 % Russian national minorities in the country. The Armenians are 93 % (!) Armenian Catholics and that makes them and their old culture European indeed.

Landmarks

- *Ararat Mt.* = is known from the Bible where Noah's Arc landed after the Great Flood. It is situated south of Yerevan, the Armenian capital. Though the 5165 m high mount is the symbol of Armenia, it lies on Turkish territory.
- *Lake Sevan* = a large lake situated at an elevation of 1900 m and a mountain national park.
- *Dilijan Nature Reserve Area* = of beech and oakwoods.
- *Garni Temple* = an ancient monument.
- *Sardarapat* = a huge battle memorial.
- *Tuff* = volcanic rock of different colours composing the mountains of the country in abundant volume. It has been used for building purposes.
- *Armenian cognac* = famous traditional brandy from grapes and herbs.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites* = the monasteries of *Haghpat* and *Sanahin*; the cathedral and churches of *Echmiadzin* and the *Archeological Site of Zvartnots*; the Monastery of *Geghard* (being partially carved out of the adjacent mountain) and the Upper Azat Valley

Azerbaijan (Azərbaycan / Азәрбајҹан)

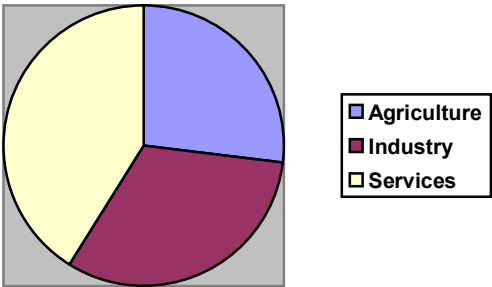

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Azerbaijan Native name(s): Azərbaycan Respublikası Азәрбајҹан Республикасы	
Capital city and population (million): Baku 1	Language(s): Azerbaijani + Russian	
Country's population (million): 9.6	Currency: 1 Manat = 100 qapik	Territory (sq kms): 86 600
Administrative division: 59 districts (rayonlar / районлар)		

Geography

Whether this country belongs to Europe or Asia is debatable. If it is accepted, that the watershed divide of the Caucasus Mts form the southern boundary of Europe, then a small part of Azerbaijan along the Caspian Sea has to belong to Europe. This status is not strengthened by the population, the vast majority of whom are Muslims. But this is the case with Turkey, too. Azerbaijan is situated around the large lowland of the River Kura flowing to the Caspian Sea. Its northern and southern parts are covered by mountains. Azerbaijan was part of the USSR as a Soviet republic up to 1991.

Economy

The country's land is very rich in oil (black gold) along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Local oil has been known since ancient times, and the Azeri land itself got its name from the burning black springs: 'the land of fires'. Therefore **oil refinery, chemistry and plastic** production is important, especially in the capital city, Baku. Baku used to be the destination of the German troops during World War II when they were stopped at Stalingrad (today's Volgograd). The once abundant oil wells are running out of stock around Baku, but the quality of this oil is the best in the world for airplane fuel and precision engineering. The Azeri mountains are rich in minerals (**iron and copper ore**). Air and **environmental pollution** is high in the industrial regions. In agriculture they grow **tobacco, rice, tea and cotton**.

	
The employment structure does not show a very modern economy in Azerbaijan.	



Society

Due to political borders, only one third of the Azeri population lives in Azerbaijan; their majority lives in Iran. 86 % of the population is Azeri and 4 % Russian, and 2 % Armenian. The latter have an autonomous territory named Mountain Karabakh. There was a civil war in the 1990s. 90 % of the population is Muslim and 6 % Orthodox Christian.

Landmarks

- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Azerbaijan* = the Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshahs' Palace and the Maiden Tower; the Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape.
- *Oil fields of along the Kaspi Sea* = a large reservoir of crude oil.

Belarus (Беларусь / Bielaruś)

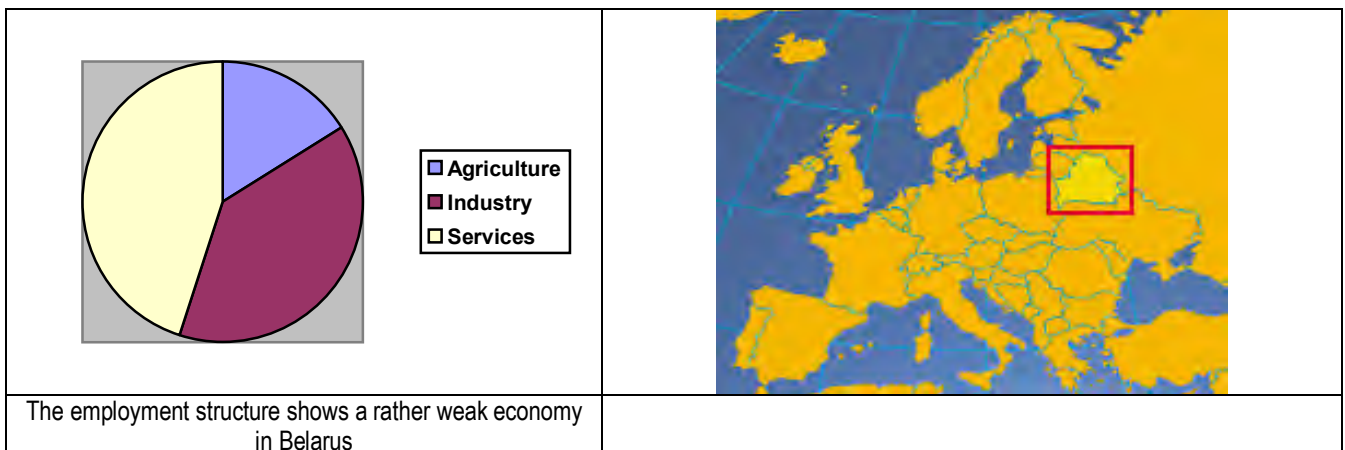
National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Belarus Native name(s): Рэспубліка Беларусь (Respublika Bielaruś) Республика Беларусь (Respublika Belarus')	
Capital city and population (million): Minsk 1,6	Language(s): Belarus, Russian	
Country's population (million): 9.4	Currency: 1 Rouble = 100 kapiejkas	Territory (sq kms): 207 595
Administrative division: 6 provinces (вобласці / vobłasci / области / oblasti)		
Region / Seat	Region / Seat	Region / Seat
Brest	Hrodna	Minsk
Homiel	Mahilyow	Vitsebsk

Geography

The country is situated in the Eastern European Plain. It is full of marshlands and lakes, and there is extensive forest, too. The climate is continental. Its main rivers are the Pripjaty and the Dneper flowing towards the Black Sea and the Dvina flowing the the Baltic Sea. The expression Belarus means 'White Russian'. Its history is also associated with that of Russia. After the disintegration of the USSR, Belarus maintained the strongest economic and political links with Russia.

Economy

The Belarussian economy lacks **energy** and relies on Russian **exports**. In the Soviet times many **engineering firms** were developed in Belarus and they function on imported raw materials. Agriculture grows **flax** that is the main raw material for **textile** industry in the country. Due to the forested lands **wood processing** and **paper** industry is also well developed. As for cereals they grow mainly **potatoes** and **rye**.





Society

The national composition of the country is the following: 78 % Belarussian, 15 % Russian, 4 % Polish and 3 % Ukrainian. 60 % of the population are Orthodox Christian, 8 % Catholic and 30 % are atheist due to the Soviet times.

Landmarks

- *Boris Stones* = a que of huge medieval artcrafts (boulders) erected along river Dvina.
- *Niasvizh Castle* = a famous palace, World Heritage Site and the most popular tourist attraction.
- *Belovezhskaya National Park* = the Eastern European ancient woodland, the last shelter of the European bison (wisent). It is a transboundary property shared with Poland. World Heritage Site.
- *Mir Castle Complex* =from the Middle Ages.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна и Херцеговина)

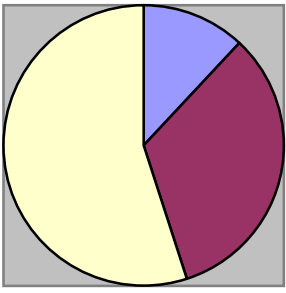
National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <p>Native name(s): Bosna i Hercegovina Босна и Херцеговина</p>		
Capital city and population (million): Sarajevo 0.5	Language(s): Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian		
Country's population (million): 4.6	Currency: 1 Pound Sterling = 100 pence	Territory (sq kms): 51 129	
Administrative division: 2 entities (entiteti / ЕНТИТЕТИ)			
Entity	Seat	Entity	Seat
Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine / Федерација Босне и Херцеговине	Sarajevo / Сарајево	Republika Srpska / Република Српска	Banja Luka / Бања Лука

Geography

Bosnia Herzegovina is situated in the central part of the Dinarides in South Europe, on the western side of the Balkan Peninsula. It is a mountainous region with the exception of its northern borders. The climate is continental and there is a Mediterranean impact from the south as well. Its main rivers are the Neretva, Drina and the Sava on the northern border. The country was part of Yugoslavia up to 1992. Yugoslavia was formed after World War I by the French and the English with Serbian and Croatian assistance in trying to prevent German and Austro-Hungarian influence on the Balkan region once again.

Economy

There are mines of **copper, manganese and iron** ores. In Banja Luka there is **wood processing and paper industry**. In Zenica there is **metallurgy** and some **engineering**. The country has rather low economic output, it is listed among the ten poorest countries of Europe. The land has a great many natural beauties, but because of the civil wars of the 1990s the sites of tourist interest (during the 1960s-1980s) have not regained their popularity.

 <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: blue;"></td> Agriculture</tr></table></div>	

Administration

The country was divided into two by the Dayton agreement in 1995: the federal republic of the Bosnians and Croats (consisting of 74 municipalities in the middle), and the Serbian-Bosnian (Srpska) republic (consisting of 63 municipalities half encircling Bosnia on the west, north, and east).

Society

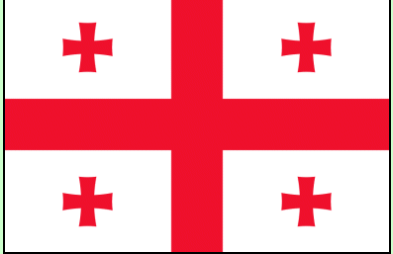

The artificial state of Yugoslavia numbering at least eight nations could be kept together only by a strong communist dictatorship of Marshal Tito after World War II. After his death, however, a civil war broke out in 1992 in the former Yugoslavian republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where both the Serbians and the Croats wanted to dominate at the expense of the Muslim Bosnians. This civil war led to genocide of the Bosnians especially in and around Sarajevo. It is the fault of the French and English colonial diplomacy against the Germans, at the end of World War II, when they created Yugoslavia.

The national and religious separation can well be detected in the composition of the population: 44 % Bosnians and Muslims; 31 % of Serbians and Orthodox Christians; 17 % Croats and Roman Catholics.

Landmarks

- *Neretva River Valley* = a beautiful rocky canyon.
- *Mostar* = an ancient town on the Neretva, with an original Turkish mediaeval bridge over the river (a World Heritage Site) that was blown up during the civil war in 1993, but has been rebuilt. From the bridge the local youth traditionally jump into the river (20 m). World Heritage Site.
- *The Bazaar of Sarajevo* = the Turkish quarter of the capital city.
- *Mehmed Pasa Sokolovic Bridge in Visegrad* = old Turkish monuments by the River Drina. World Heritage Site.

Georgia (Skartvela)

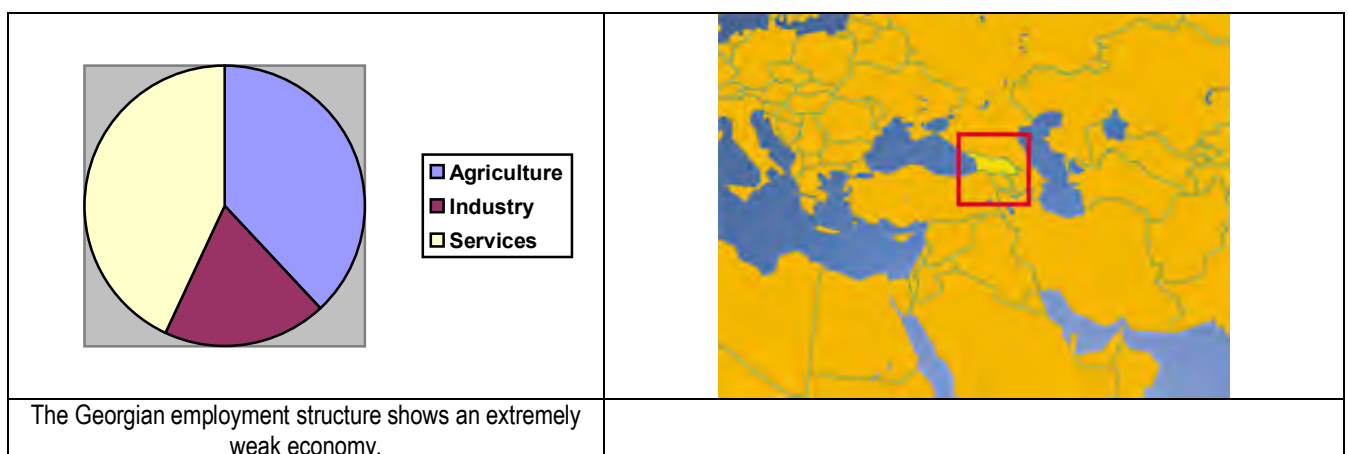
National Flag		Official name	Coat of arms
		Republic of Georgia Native name(s): Saqartvelos Respublika Ареспублика Қырғэыла (Arespublika Қарғтәла)	
Capital city and population (million): Tbilisi 1,3		Language(s): Georgian + Abkhaz (Abkhazia), Russian	
Country's population (million): 4.5		Currency: 1 Lari = 100 tetri	Territory (sq kms): 29 743
Administrative division: 2 autonomous republics + 9 regions (mharebi) + 79 districts			
Region	Seat	Region	Seat
Abkhazia Republic	Suhumi	Adjaria Republic	Batumi

Geography

The country is situated on the territory of the Caucasus Mts. between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The northern part is bordered by a long chain of peaks over 5000 metres⁸. Georgia has a Mediterranean seashore pleasant for holidaying on the Black Sea. The main river is the Kura flowing eastwards in the middle of the country. Georgia was a republic of the USSR up to 1991 when it became independent of the Soviet rule.

Economy

The economy of Georgia is poor and it lacks fuels. It has to **import energy**. Its economy is dominated by agriculture, the traditional products of which are **tobacco, tea leaves and grapes**. **Georgian tea** is well known of its good quality a fine flavour. Grapes are used to make **wine** and the famous **Georgian brandy**. Tourism would have splendid conditions for summer holidaying and winter sports in the high mountains, but because of political instability very few tourists dare visit the country.



Society

There has been a political uneasiness since the break up of the Soviet Union. In the south, Ossetia, a region of Georgia wants to separate and the Caucasian Russian republics back this movement. There has been a constant threat of civil war and, what is more, a war between Russia and Georgia.

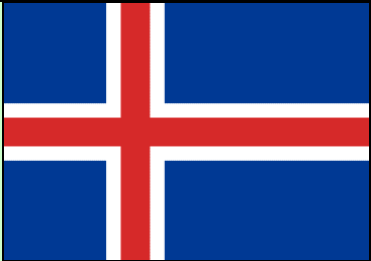

⁸ Europe's highest peak, the Elbrus (5642 m) is situated on the north-west border of Georgia.

70 % of the population are Orthodox Christian Georgians, 8 % Armenian, 6 % Muslim Georgians, 6 % Russians, 2 % Abkhazians and rest belong to the various other Caucasion nationalities. The two major religion are orthodox (75 %) and Muslim (15 %). Abhazia is noted for the fact that people live long; the longest living persons (well over 100 years) are recorded from this region.

Landmarks

- *Narikala Fortress* = an old castle from the 4th century.
- *Anchiskhati Church* = an old temple from the 6th century.
- *Sioni Cathedral* = an old temple from the 8th century.
- *Church of Metekhi* = an old church from the 13th century.
- *Tbilisoba* = 'Day of Tbilisi' a festival held each October, commemorating the city's foundation.
- *Old age people* = most of the very old age (above 100 year old, often 140 – 150 year old) population of Europe can be found in Abkhazia where there is the only dance and choral society with each member being over 100 years old.
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Georgia* = (1) the *Cathedral of the Dormition*, or the Kutaisi Cathedral, commonly known as Bagrati Cathedral is the 11th-century church in the city of Kutaisi, the region of Imereti. The cathedral is in ruins and used to be a masterpiece of medieval Georgian architecture. (2) *The Monastery of Gelati* is a monastic complex near Kutaisi. It contains the Church of the Virgin, and the 13th-century churches of St George and St Nicholas. (3) *Historical Monuments of Mtskheta*, an old city with monuments.
- *Upper Svaneti* = Svanetia is famous for its architectural treasures and picturesque landscapes. The old Svanetian towers were erected in the 9th-12th centuries. There are many Georgian Orthodox churches and fortified buildings. Architectural monuments of Upper Svanetia are included in the list of UNESCO World heritage Sites.
- *Svan culture* = survives most wonderfully in its songs and dances. Svanetia boasts the most complex form of Georgian polyphonic singing, traditional to Georgian vocal music. Georgian folk music possesses the oldest tradition of polyphonic music in the world.

Iceland (Ísland)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Iceland Native name(s): Lýðveldið Ísland			
Capital city and population (million): Reykjavik 0.1		Language(s): Icelandic			
Country's population (million): 0.3		Currency: 1 Crown = 100 aurar		Territory (sq kms): 102 819	
Administrative division: 8 regions (landsvæði)					
Region		Seat		Region	

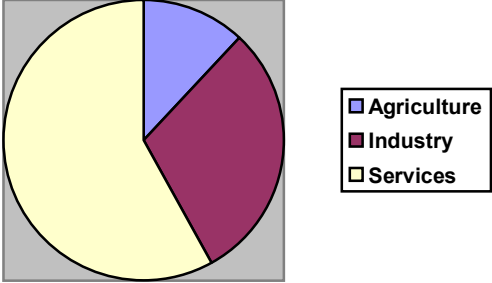

Geography

This is a large island in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean and since in history it was inhabited by the Vikings, its culture and people belong to Europe. In spite of being located so far north, its climate is not too cold, owing to two warm oceanic currents: the Gulf and the Irming. Its climate is oceanic, mild and wet. Because the island lies on the Mid-Atlantic volcanic fault system, it is an active tectonic land with volcanos, geysers, but the inner and northern parts of the island we can find ice sheets (glaciers) as well. Because of the low economic activity of the sparsely inhabited island, much of the natural environment is preserved in its original form.

Iceland is referred to as the 'Land of Fire and Ice'. There are 140 volcanoes, 40 out of which are still active. One tenth of the land is covered by ice (the Vatnajökul ice field is the largest). Lately in 2010 there was a volcanic eruption the ash of which reached Europe and blocked air traffic for quite a while. Previously in 2009, the European financial crises also started in Iceland⁹

Economy

80 % of the land is uninhabited. Iceland is a non EU country. People live on **fishery** and **sheep** breeding. The fish catching per capita makes Iceland the first in the world. The hot water of many **geysers** are used to heat homes and green houses of **vegetables, fruit and flowers**. Because of the few inhabitants and the relatively active economy, living standard is very high. **Tourism** is becoming another important source of income in Iceland.

	
The employment structure shows a lowly developing economy in Iceland	

⁹ As the joke went: 'Dear Iceland, we asked for cash, not for ash'.



Society

96 % of the population is Icelandic and they are members of the Evangelist Christian Church. Icelanders are the descendents of the Vikings coming from Denmark and Norway. From Iceland they colonized the shores of Greenland and North America Vinland.

Landmarks

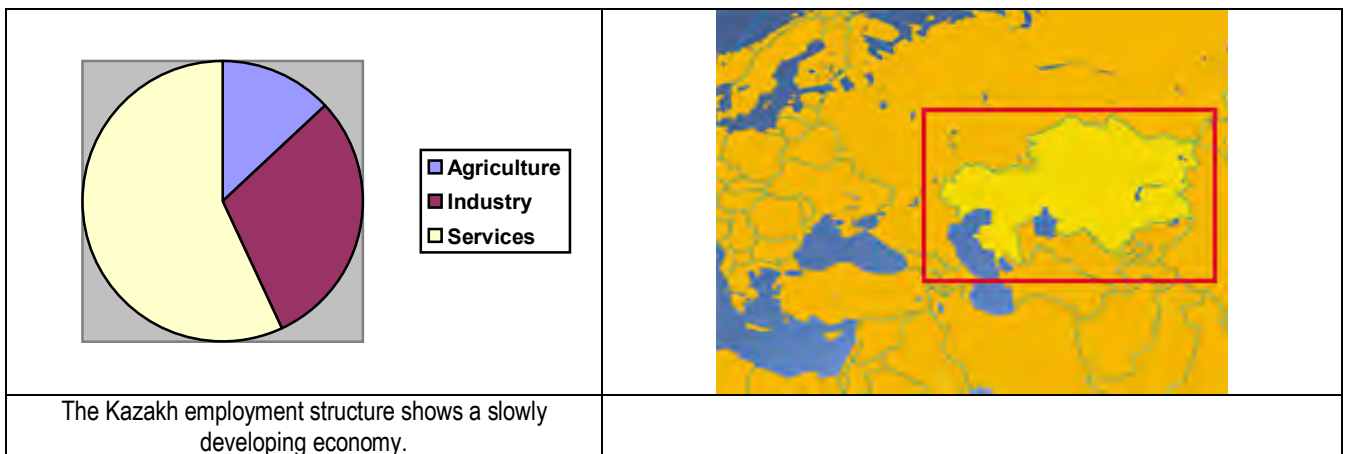
- *Hekla* and *Laki* = active huge volcanoes in Iceland.
- *Vatnajökull* = 1 km thick, 8500 sq km large ice field.
- *Pingvellir National Park* = is in the Hengil volcanic area, the most popular touristic destination in Iceland. Pingvellir is a site of historical, cultural, and geological importance. It is the site of a rift valley that marks the crest of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. It is also home to Þingvallavatn, the largest natural lake in Iceland. Parliament or Alþingi was established at Pingvellir in 930 and remained there until 1789. The Park is a World Heritage Site.
- *Surtsey* = a new, active volcanic island off the coast of Iceland, formed in the 1960s. It became a World Heritage Site in 2008.

Kazakhstan (Қазақстан / Qazaqstan) partly European

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Kazakhstan Native name(s): Қазақстан Республикасы (Qazaqstan Respwblıkası) Республика Казахстан (Respublika Kazahstan)	
Capital city and population (million): Astana 0.2	Language(s): Kazakh, Russian	
Country's population (million): 1.2 (only in the European part out of 17)	Currency: 1 Tenge = 100 tiyin	Territory (sq kms): 270 000 (only the European part out of 2 717 300)
Administrative division: 14 provinces (облыстар / oblistar / области / oblasti)		

Geography

It is a large Central Asian country, the westernmost part of which is situated in European territory, west of the River Ural flowing into the Caspian Sea. This part of Kazakhstan is plains and lowland belonging to the Caspian Depression. The Caspian Sea is subject to a slow process of being filled with the sediments of the River Volga. The European land of the country is grassland (steppe) with a cold and dry continental climate. There are two regions (oblasts) the northern part is West Kazakhstan and its seat is Uralsk; the southern part is the Atyrauskaya oblast which is a desert and semidesert lowland. Its seat is Atyrau by the Caspian Sea at the mouth of River Ural, on the far east borderline of Europe. The major Kazakh city in Asia is Alma Ata (1.1 million population). There are vast sand deserts in Kazakhstan and the Aral Lake threatened with ecological catastrophe.



Economy

Kazakh industry has been based on local **oil** and **gas** reserves and mining. Kazakhstan used to be a Soviet republic up to 1991. In the Soviet era **space industry** and **nuclear test sites** were developed with high technology in the country. Now these form the platform of Kazakh economy. Agriculture grows **wheat**, and breed **sheep**, **camels**. Local **cotton** and **wool** form the base for **textile** processing industry.

Society

Some of the Kazakhs are still nomadic. 44 % of the population is Kazakh and 36 % is Russian. The rest are different Central Asian peoples. 47 % are Muslim and 44 % are Orthodox Christian.



Landmarks

- *Rin Desert* = the southern part of the European area of Kazakhstan; a dry and cool semidesert.
- *Caspian Sea* = the world's largest inland sea, having no connection to the oceans.



Satellite image of the Caspian Sea (370 thousand sq kms). As a comparison, the largest freshwater lake (Lake Superior) is 82 thousand sq kms. The intensive sedimentation can be detected in the northern part of the sea, affecting and filling up the Kazakh coastline most heavily.

Kosovo (Kosovë) *non recognized*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Kosovo Native name(s): Kosovë i Metihija</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (million): Prishtinë (Priština) 0.2</p>	Language(s): Albanian, Serbian	
<p>Country's population (million): 1.8</p>	Currency: 1 Pound Sterling = 100 pence	Territory (sq kms): 10 887
Administrative division		

Geography

Kosovo is situated in the south –west part of Serbia, mainly inhabited by Albanians. It is a hilly area with some lead and zinc deposits. The climate is continental. In 2008 the Albanian majority of the Kosovo region separated against the political will of Serbia. The new state is not recognized by the UN because Russia blocks the acceptance, saying that this would further embolden the secessionist movements in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Moldova as well. Even though to prevent civil war the EU and the NATO sent the so-called KFOR (Kosovo Force) troops to Kosovo. Although populated with Albanians today, Kosovo is the ancient homeland of the Serbian nation. In preserving their regional identity the Serbians will not admit Kosovo as an independent state or part of Albania.

Economy

Economy is very poor in Kosovo, some industry is based on local **zinc** and **lead** deposits. Agriculture is growing corn and vegetable for self-supplying.

Society

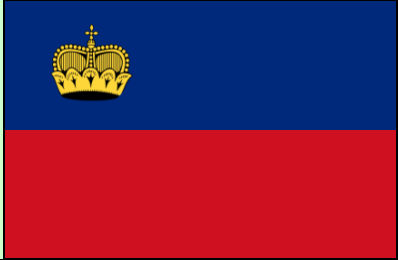

Kosovo has an unstable society on the verge of civil war. The EU and the NATO respects the rights of the Albanian nationality for autonomy on the one hand, they try to prevent war with Serbia on the other. Living standard is extremely low (2000 USD per capita per year).

Landmarks

- *Medieval Monuments in Kosovo* is a World Heritage Site consisting of four Serbian Orthodox Christian churches and monasteries which represent the fusion of the Eastern Orthodox Byzantine and the Western Romanesque ecclesiastical architecture to form the Palaiologian Renaissance style. (*Visoki Dečani Monastery*; the *Patriarchate of Peć* is a complex of churches and the spiritual seat and mausoleum of the Serbian archbishops; *Gračanica Monastery*; *Our Lady of Ljeviš*, a 12th-century church.)



Liechtenstein (*mini state*)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p style="text-align: center;">Principality of Liechtenstein Native name(s): Fürstentum Liechtenstein</p>	
Capital city and population (thousand): Vaduz 100	Language(s): German	
Country's population (thousand): 30	Currency: 1 Swiss Franc = 100 centimes	Territory (sq kms): 160
Administrative division: 11 communes (Gemeinden)		

Geography

Its a mini state in between Austria and Switzerland, in the mountains of the Alps. There are 10 settlements forming the country which is a constitutional monarchy (dutchy). It is in customs union with Switzerland.

Economy

The income of this mini state comes from 3 sources: application of very low **tax** rates ('tax Paradise'); issuing valuable **stamps**; **tourism**. The living standard is the highest here in European context. Lichtenstein is the world's largest exporter of false teeth (dentures). Also it is an international financial centre. Agriculture produces cheese.

Society

The population of the mini state is composed of Swiss, Austrians, Germans and Italians.

Landmarks

- *Museums* include National Arts, Ski, Postage, and Walser. There are two *castles* to visit: the Lischenstein Castle in Vaduz and the Guttenberg Catsle.
- *Hilly landscapes* in the Swiss Alps.



Macedonia (Македонија / Makedonija)

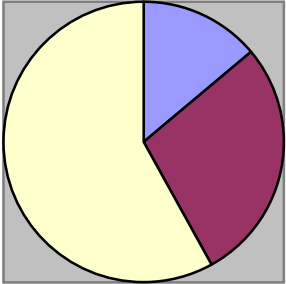

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</p> <p>Native name(s): Република Македонија (Republika Makedonija) Republika e Maqedonisë Makedonya Cumhuriyeti</p>	
Capital city and population (million): Skopje 0.4	Language(s): Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish	
Country's population (million): 2	Currency: 1 Denar = 100 deni	Territory (sq kms): 25 713
Administrative division: 84 municipalities (општини / opštini / komunat / belediyeler)		

Geography

It is situated in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula in a mountainous area. The climate is continental and Mediterranean in the valleys facing south. Its main river is the Vardar flowing to the Aegean Sea. Macedonia is a former Yugoslavian republic that became independent in 1991.

Economy

In the hills **iron**, **lead** and **zinc** are mined. In Skopje there is metallurgy, **textile** industry, **wood** processing. Agriculture is self-supporting with fruits, vegetables and breeding **sheep** and **goats**.

 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 5px;">■ Agriculture</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 5px;">■ Industry</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">■ Services</div> </div>	
The employment structure shows a very weak economy in Macedonia.	



Society

67 % of the population is Macedonian (orthodox Christian) and 23 % Albanian (Muslim). Macedonians living in this area belong to the Southern Slavic nations. When Macedonia became an independent nation Greece disputed the name, since there is a region in Greece under the same name. They say that Alexander the Great was Macedonian ruler and world conqueror, so there should be only one Macedonia which is not Slav, but Greek – in Greece.

Landmark

- *Ohrid Region* = Ohrid is notable for having once 365 churches, one for each day of the year and has been referred to as 'Jerusalem'. Ohrid town is rich in picturesque houses and monuments; tourism is predominant. World Heritage Site.

Moldova (Молдова)

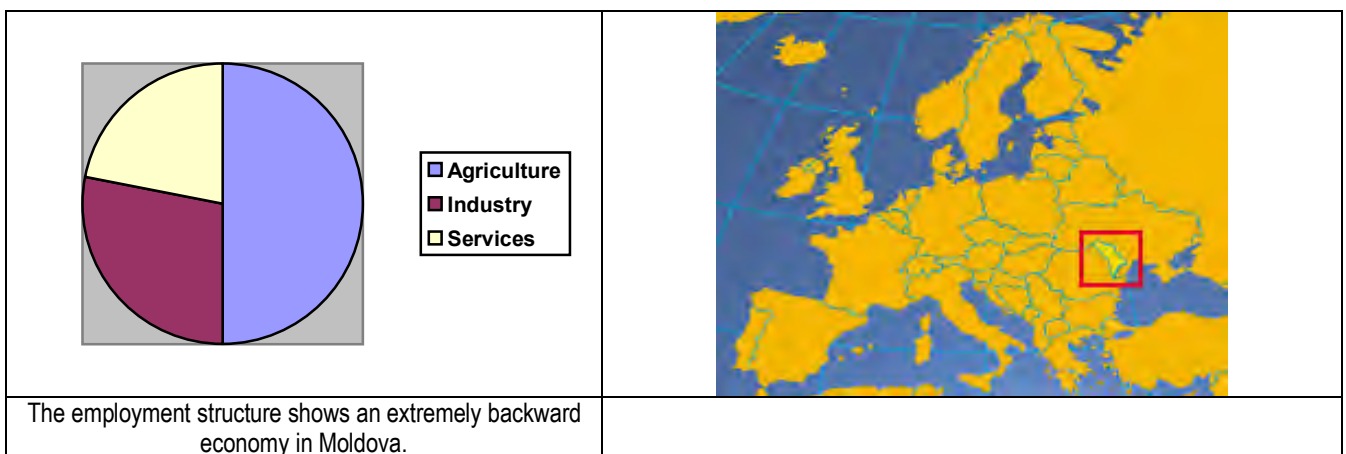
National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Republic of Moldova</p> <p>Native name(s): Republica Moldova (Република Молдова) Республика Молдова (Respublika Moldova)</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (million): Chişinău 0.7</p>	<p>Language(s): Moldovian / Romanian, Russian / Ukrainian</p>	
<p>Country's population (million): 3.5</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Leu = 100 bani</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 33 700</p>
<p>Administrative division: 32 districts (raioane / райоане)</p>		

Geography

Moldova can be found in the south eastern edge of the East European Plain, between two major rivers: the Prut and the Dniester. It is mainly plainland with low hilly areas. The climate is continental, and the land is covered by grass and is cultivated. Gypsum, lignite and phosphorites are mined.

Economy

Moldova has got a very weak economy. It inherited some **airplane engineering** in the capital city (Chişinău / Chisinau). Industry produces some agricultural machinery, textiles, shoes, household equipments. Agriculture produces **sunflower, sugar beet, tobacco, vegetables, fruits, wheat and maize**. **Energy** is produced by the **waters** of the River Dniester where there is a vast water reservoir.





Society

The European living standard is the lowest in Moldova. Moldovians in fact are Romanians (70 %). National minorities include 14 % Ukrainians, 13 % Russians, 3 % Turkish. 98 % are Orthodox Christian. Along the Dniester Russian national minority stands for regionalism in trying to separate from Moldova. This causes a constant domestic political uneasiness that does not encourage foreign capital investment (FDI) to support economy.

Landmarks

- *Stefan cel Mare Boulevard in Chisinau* = a street of museums (including the National Museum of Fine Arts of Moldova, History, Romanian Literature, Archeology and Ethnography), churches (like the Mazarakiarskaya Church of old Byzantine style, the Christmas Cathedral) and the Sacred Gate (a triumphal arch, symbol of the city).
- *Gratitude's Candle* = a monument located near Soroca dedicated to all heroes having kept Moldavian history, culture and language alive.
- *Dniester River* = one of the great East European rivers flowing to the Black Sea.
- *The Struve Geodetic Arc* = is a chain of survey triangulations stretching from Hammerfest in Norway to the Black Sea, across 10 countries and over 2 820 kms. The chain was established and used by a scientist Friedrich von Struve in the 1800s to establish the exact size and shape of the Earth. The Arc's first point is located in Tartu Observatory, where Struve conducted much of his research and the southernmost point near the Black Sea in Ukraine. In 2005, the chain was inscribed on the World Heritage List. The chain was made up of 265, main station points out of which 34 are marked by drilled holes in rocks, iron crosses, cairns, commemorative plaques or built obelisks. (It is a transboundary property in: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine.)

Monaco (*mini state*)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Principality of Monaco Native name(s): Principauté de Monaco</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (thousand): Monaco 30</p>	<p>Language(s): French</p>	
<p>Country's population (thousand): 30</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 2</p>

Geography

Monaco¹⁰ is a very small state which was formed by the union of two cities in 1861: Monaco and Monte Carlo. They are situated on the hilly coast of the Mediterranean Sea, between France and Italy, on the Cote d'Azur.

Economy

Monaco is in customs and duty union with France, however, its **tax policy** is free and cheap enough to attract company seats from all over the world trying to escape their national taxation. This kind of monetary policy is referred to as 'Tax Paradise' (Paradise meaning Heaven i.e. an optimal and best place to run a company from). EU policy is about to put an end to the practice of the European mini states – and first of all Monaco's – providing premises for companies to avoid taxation in their home countries.

Besides taxation policy Monaco makes profit from gambling, the main source of the national revenue comes from the operation of **casinos** and **tourism** of course.

Administration and society

It is a constitutional monarchy, composed of 2 districts. It is often referred to as the Las Vegas of Europe, because of the great many tourists arriving there to gamble all through the year. Monaco is a union of two formerly separate towns: **Monaco** and **Monte Carlo**. It is the world's second most densely populated state with a population density of 15 thousand persons per sq km.





¹⁰ The name Monaco is said to have originated in 'Monoichos' (Lone Traveller) i.e. one of the attributes of Heracles, the mythical Greek hero who once landed on this shore.

Landmarks

- *Tête de Chien* = the 'Dog-head' Rock above the town.
- *Monte Carlo Beach* = an artificial sandy seashore east of Monaco.
- *Grande Corniche* = the spectacular main road winding above Monaco, carved on the steep and rocky hillside sloping to the sea.
- *Grand Prix* = a car race held each year in Monaco.
- *Cap Martin* = a peninsula east of Monaco and Monte Carlo Beach with a nice view of the town.
- *The Casinos of Monaco* = the chief touristic attraction of the city.

Montenegro

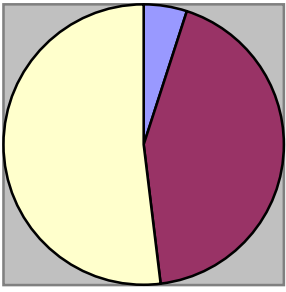

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Montenegro</p> <p>Native name(s): Црна Гора Crna Gora</p>	
Capital city and population (million): Podgorica 0.1	Language(s): Montenegrin / Serbian + Bosnian, Albanian, Croatian	
Country's population (million): 0.6	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 13 812
Administrative division: 21 municipalities (општине / opštine / komuna)		

Geography

Montenegro (Black Mountains) lies in the highest middle part of the Dinarian Mountains crossing the Balkan Peninsula from west to east. The entire territory is mountainous, leaving very little flat land for agriculture. The hills, the mountain ranges and the canyons of the rivers dissecting the land offer a beautiful landscape for tourism. The Adriatic sea coast of Montenegro is perhaps the most beautiful part of the Adriatic coast.

Economy

The territory of the country is rich in **bauxite** earth, and bauxite mining and **aluminium industry** is the most important branch of economy. There is still some **coal** mining activity. Agriculture can be characterized by **goat** and **sheep** breeding, its products (**cheese** and **meat**) have a long tradition in the food industry. In the south they grow **tobacco**, **olives** and **fruit**. The currency used in Montenegro is the Euro, though, the country does not belong to the Euro zone at any rate. Before the Euro Montenegro introduced the German mark to reduce inflation. After a long economic crisis Montenegrin economy is recovering due to the intensive FDI (foreign direct investment) generated mainly by Russian and English capital import into road building and tourism.

 <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-left: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 5px;">■ Agriculture</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 5px;">■ Industry</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">■ Services</div> </div>	
<p>The employment structure in Montenegro shows a rather weak economy.</p>	

Society



Montenegro used to be an underdeveloped Yugoslavian republic, and stayed with Serbia in an ever loosening confederation until 2006, when it became an independent republic. 75 % of the population

are Montenegrans and Serbians. National minorities include Bosnians, Albanians, Croatians and Gypsies. Because of economic relations, mostly Russian tourists and businessmen are frequenting the Montenegrin places of interest.

Landmarks

- *Budva* = (a mini Dubrovnik) a medieval seaside town.
- *Kotor* = a fjord-like, long and narrow bay with very steep and high mountain walls surrounding it with some ancient small towns along it. A World Heritage Site.
- *Sveti Stefan* = (Saint Stephen) a former, little fishing village occupying the whole territory of a little island which has been turned into a luxury hotel village – a site to behold and visit, indeed.
- *Lake Shkodra* = the largest lake of the Balkan Peninsula along the Montenegrin – Albanian border.
- *Morava River Valley* = a canyon like valley in the Black Hills.
- *Durmitor National Park* = a mountainous area with 48 peaks above 2000 m. The Mts are bordered by 3 large canyons of the rivers Piva, Komamica and Tara, the latter being 40 km long and 1300 m deep and it is the second largest canyon of the world just behind Grand Canyon in Arizona. The park is the centre of Montenegrin mountain tourism. World Heritage Site.
- *Fried mutton* = along the roads at the restaurants, meat roasted on the spit can be seen, spiced by brooks.

Nagorno-Karabakh *non/partially recognized*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Nagorno-Karabakh Republic</p> <p>Native name(s): <i>Dağlıq Qarabağ / Yuxarı Qarabağ</i> Ընդաշին Ղարաբաղ Нагорный Карабах</p>	
Capital city and population (thousand): Stepanakert 52	Language(s): Armenian, Georgian, Russian	
Country's population (thousand): 150	Currency: Armenian Dram = 100 lumas	Territory (sq kms): 11 458
Administrative division: 8 rayons.		

Geography

Nagorno means mountainous or highland. True, the whole country is more than 1 thousand metres above sea level in the Southern Caucasus ranges. The country is on a plateau which slopes downwards towards the east and southeast, the climate is mild and temperate. This region is situated between Armenia and Azerbaijan. *De facto* it is an independent state (however it is recognized only by other unrecognized UN states), *de jure* it belongs to Azerbaijan. It has close relations with Armenia. There was a war between Karabakh and Azerbaijan in 1991-94, resulting in a long range instable political situation and hostility between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Economy

The origin of most venture capital comes from Armenians in Armenia, Russia, the USA, France, Australia, Iran, and the Middle East. The telecommunications sector was developed by a Lebanese company. Copper and gold mining has been advancing since 2002. The banking system is also flourishing with Armenian banks. Wine growing and processing of agricultural products, particularly wine (i.e. storage of wine, wine stuff, cognac alcohol) is one of the prioritized directions of the economic development.

Society

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has resulted in the displacement of some 500 thousand Azerbaijanis from Armenian territories including Nagorno Karabakh, and 220 000 Azeris, 18 000 Kurds and 3500 Russians fled from Armenia to Azerbaijan. Most of the Armenian population in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is Christian and belongs to the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Landmarks



- *Janapar* is a marked trail through mountains, valleys and villages of Nagorno-Karabakh, with monasteries and fortresses along the way. The trail is broken into day hikes, which will bring tourists to a different village each night. The paths have existed for centuries, but now are marked specifically for hikers.
- *Artsakh State Museum* is the historical museum of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Located in Stepanakert, the museum offers an assortment of ancient artifacts and Christian manuscripts.
- *Monasteries* represent the ancient culture of the Caucasian Region and many are destination for tourist, although from Armenia mainly: Gandzasar, Amaras, Tzitzernavank, St. Yeghish Arakyal, Dadivank, Gtichavank, Katarovank. s a beautiful mountain lake, located 2925 meters above sea level on the Plateau Celtic.

- *Tigranakert* the ancient city of Tigranakert is one of four cities that were founded in the 1st century BC in Armenia and named after King Tigran II the Great, ruler of the short-lived Armenian Empire. Tigranakert has been undergoing archaeological excavations since 2005 and is located in the Mardakert District.
- *Land mines*. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh is considered to be the most heavily mined region of the former Soviet Union. Mines were laid from 1991 to 1994 by both conflicting parties in the Karabakh – Azerbaijan war. The United Nations and the USA have estimated the number of mines in Nagorno-Karabakh at 100 000. There have been many civilian casualties resulting from the land mines.



The situation of Nagorno-Karabakh (NKR) in between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran

North Cyprus (Kıbrıs) *not recognized*

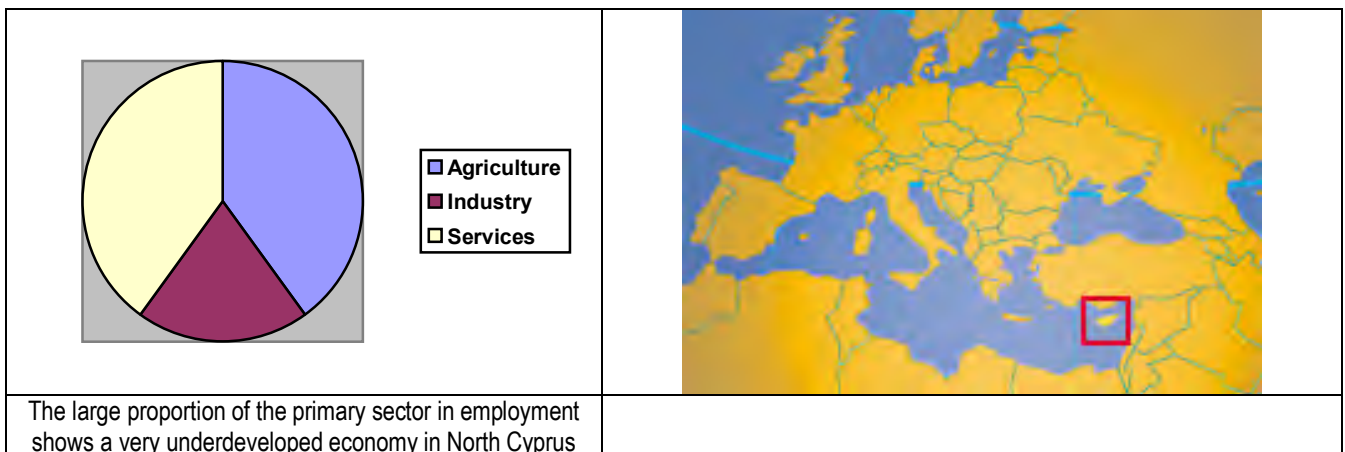
National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
 <small>www.theodora.com/flags</small>	Republic of North Cyprus Turkish Community Native name(s): Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti	
Capital city and population (million): Nicosia 0.15	Language(s): Turkish + Greek	
Country's population (million): 0.3	Currency: 1 Turkish Lira = 100 kurush	Territory (sq kms): 3355
Administrative division		
Region	Seat	Region

Geography

This country occupies the northern third of the island of Cyprus in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea with a beautiful landscape. In 1983 Turkey invaded this part of the island and with the help of Turkish troops a new republic was founded under the name of North or Turkish Cyprus. However it is not recognized in political sense by any country with the exception of Turkey of course.

Economy

The economy is very weak, confined to some **copper mining, fishing** and Mediterranean agriculture. It greatly relies on **imports** from Turkey. The living standard is also rather low.





Society

The population in North Cyprus is 100 % Turkish of Muslim religion. Before Cyprus joined the European Union, it was anticipated by EU politicians that North Cyprus and Turkey would revise their policies and let the Greek and Turkish parts of Cyprus unite, thus joining the EU. However, it did not happen and the Cyprus conflict further blocks further process for Turkey joining the EU.

Landmarks

- *700 years old fig tree* = in St. Nicholas Cathedral, Famagusta.
- *Othello Tower* = in Famagusta referring to a Venitian governor named Othello in 1506 and written by Shakespeare.

Norway (Noreg)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Kingdom of Norway Native name(s): Kongeriket Norge Kongeriket Noreg Norjan kuningaskunta Nøørjen gånkarijhke Norgga gonagasriika Vuona gånágisriikka			
Capital city and population (million): Oslo 0.5		Language(s): Norwegian + various Sami dialects			
Country's population (million): 4.7		Currency: 1 Crown = 100 ore		Territory (sq kms): 323 758	
Administrative division: 19 counties (fylker)					
Region	Seat	Region	Seat	Region	Seat
Akershus fylke	Oslo	Nordland fylke	Bodø	Sør Trøndelag f.	Trondheim
Aust Agder fylke	Arendal	Nord Trøndelag	Steinkjer	Telemark fylke	Skien
Buskerud fylke	Drammen	Oppland fylke	Lillehammer	Troms fylke	Tromsø
Hedmark fylke	Hamar	Oslo fylke	Oslo	Vest Agder fylke	Kristiansand
Hordaland fylke	Bergen	Rogaland fylke	Stavange	Vestfold fylke	Tønsberg
Møre og Romsdal	Molde	Sogn og Fjordane	Hermansverk	Østfold fylke	Moss
Region: Finnmark fylke/ Finnmarkin lääni/ Finnmárkkku fylka			Seat: Vadsø / Vesisaari / Čáhcesuolu		

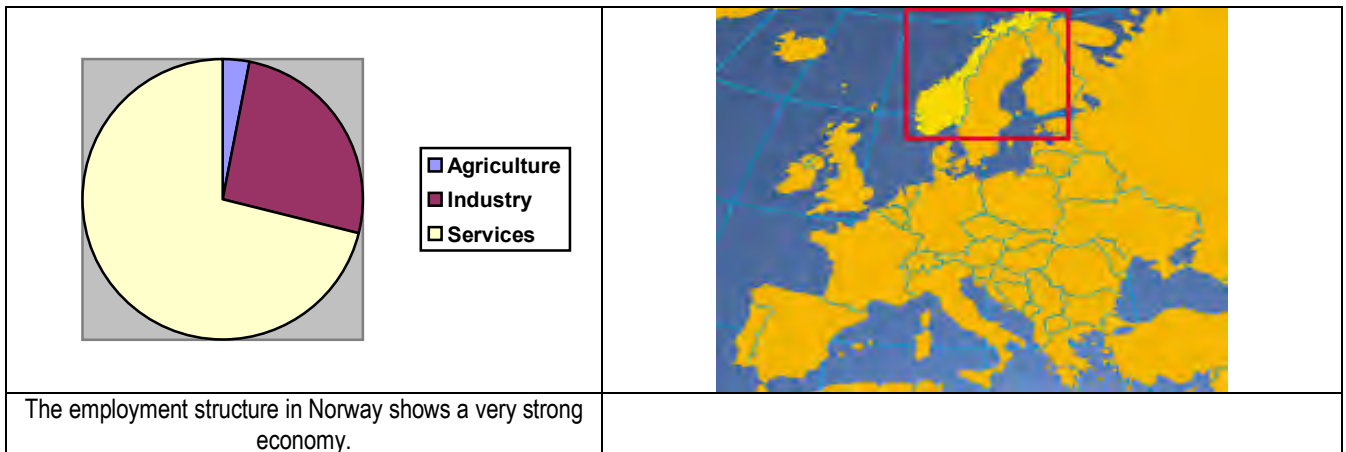
Geography

Norway is a mountainous area in the western part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Because of its Atlantic, oceanic climate it is very humid. There are many short but abundant rivers with high gradients what makes them perfect for water energy production. The most characteristic landscapes of Norway are those of the fjords (narrow and deep bays of the sea reaching deep into the mountainous area of the country). The northern parts of Norway represent the northernmost lands of Europe mainland.

Economy

Norway's main resource is **energy**. It is first in energy production per capita in the world. Norwegian energy comes 99 % (!) from **hydropower** plants. Therefore there is little or no environmental pollution. Besides this abundance of electric energy, the hydrocarbon (**oil** and **gas**) deposits under the North Sea, discovered in the early 1970s, further increased the richness and strength of Norwegian economy. Because electric energy is very cheap in Norway, they import bauxite and produce **aluminium** for export. Its **ship building** has to be noted. Because of the extensive forests, the wood industry, **paper** and **cellulose** production is important. **Chemistry** is based on the North Sea oil.

The **commercial fleet** of Norway is huge and the country is sometimes referred to as the 'carrier of the seas'. Its merchant fleet is the fifth largest in the world with over 1300 boats. Much of the **fishing** of **cod** and **herring** goes for export. Agriculture has got no favourable conditions, some **fodder** plants are grown and **cattle** breeding with **dairy** industry is common. The two major centres of economy: Oslo and Bergen.



Administration

Norway is a constitutional monarchy divided into 18 districts, the capital city (Oslo) and 4 territories. The only inhabited 'territory' is the Svalbard Islands (Spitzbergs) which are the northernmost European habitat with some 2500 people living there on coal mining and fur trapping.



Society

Norway is a non-EU country; the citizens have so far rejected all the proposals to join the Union. This is due to the very high standard of living which they fear they would lose if they joined. 97 % of the population is Norwegian and the rest is divided among Lapp, Finnish, Swedish and even Danish. The religion is 88 % Protestant.

Landmarks

- *Nordkapp (North Cape)* = the northernmost part of Europe mainland where the sun does not go down between 14 May and 30 July.
- *Lapp people* = the population living in the north of Europe (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia) they used to be nomadic with rich traditions and colourful costumes, living in tents while following the reindeer herds, however, today they live in permanent settlements and the reindeer are controlled from helicopters.
- *Fjords* = the characteristic deep, narrow and long valleys (bays) along the Atlantic coast of Norway. They were formed by glaciers during the Ice Age. Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord are World Heritage sites.
- *Gullfaks C* = an incredibly huge oil well platform on the North Sea, one of the largest buildings ever made by mankind.
- *Bryggen* = a row of Hanseatic commercial buildings in the city of Bergen. World Heritage Site.
- *Urnes stave church (Urnes stavkirke)* = a stave church (a medieval wooden church with a post and beam construction related to timber framing) at the Ornes farm, near Lustrafjorden in Luster municipality.
- *Røros World Heritage Site* = 333 years of copper mining activity on the mountain slopes of Røros.
- *The Rock carvings at Alta* = are part of an archeological site near the town of Alta in the county of Finnmark. There are some 5000 carvings (petroglyphs). The main site, located at Jiepmaloukta was turned into an open-air museum and World Heritage Site. The earliest carvings in the area date to around 4200 BC.
- *The Vega Archipelago (Vegaøyane)* = is a World Heritage Site. It is a cluster of around 6,500 small islands in Nordland, south of the Arctic Circle surrounds the main island of Vega and has been inhabited since the Stone Age, illustrating the human capacities to survive Nordic conditions.

Russia (Россия / Rossiija) partly European

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Russian Federation Native name(s): Российская Федерация (Rossijskaja Federacija)	
Capital city and population (million): Moscow 10	Language(s): Russian + 31 native languages	
Country's population (million): 113 (in the European part only /out of 143/)	Currency: 1 Ruble = 100 kopeks	Territory (sq kms): 3 960 000 (the European parts only, out of 17 125 000 sq kms ¹¹)
Administrative division of the whole of Russia: 47 provinces (области - oblasti). 22 republics with Crimea from 2014 (республики - respubliki). 8 territories (края - kraja). 13 autonomous federal districts (автономные федеральные округа - avtonomnyje federal'nyje okruga). 2 cities (города - goroda). 1 autonomous province (автономная область - avtonomnaja oblast).		

Geography

Russia is situated in the Eastern European plains which is the largest geographic region of the continent. The total area of Russia amounts to 17 million square kms out of which 2 million is in Europe and 15 million in Asia. This 2 million, however, is around 25 % of the total European continent. The European part of the country extends to the Ural Mts rich in metal ores (manganese, chrome, iron, copper), coal, crude oil, salt. The Kola Peninsula in the north is also rich in ores and phosphate. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, half of the most important industrial workshop of the Russians, the Donetz Basin went to Ukraine. This is the homeland of Russian (and Ukrainian) heavy industry and steel manufacturing based on local coal and iron deposits. The climate of the Eastern European Plain is continental, with cold winters and warm summers. The big rivers are the Volga (the largest in Europe: 3531 kms) and the Don. The south east boundary of Europe is the Caspian Sea, the only inland sea in the world. The Caspian Lowland is rich in hydrocarbons. To the south the Caucasus Mountain ranges border Russia between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The landscape of the Eastern European plain is the endless grassland, named steppe.

Economy

Russia is the world's richest country in all kinds of resources (minerals, raw materials, fuels, wood), especially if its Asian territories are also considered. In spite of this its economy reflected in the people's living standard is not too strong. This is due to the long lasting reign of the Russian feudal rulers (czars) and the nobility that slowed down industrial development¹². After World War I communism was introduced in the huge country under the rule of Lenin, then Stalin. The communist ideology recognized the fact that is the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wanted to overtake the western world in economic development; it has to keep down all investment in

¹¹ With Crimea

¹² Economic development was first initiated by Great Peter I who invited German craftsmen to settle down along River Volga and in the Donetz Basin. The Volgan Germans were driven out at the time of Stalin.

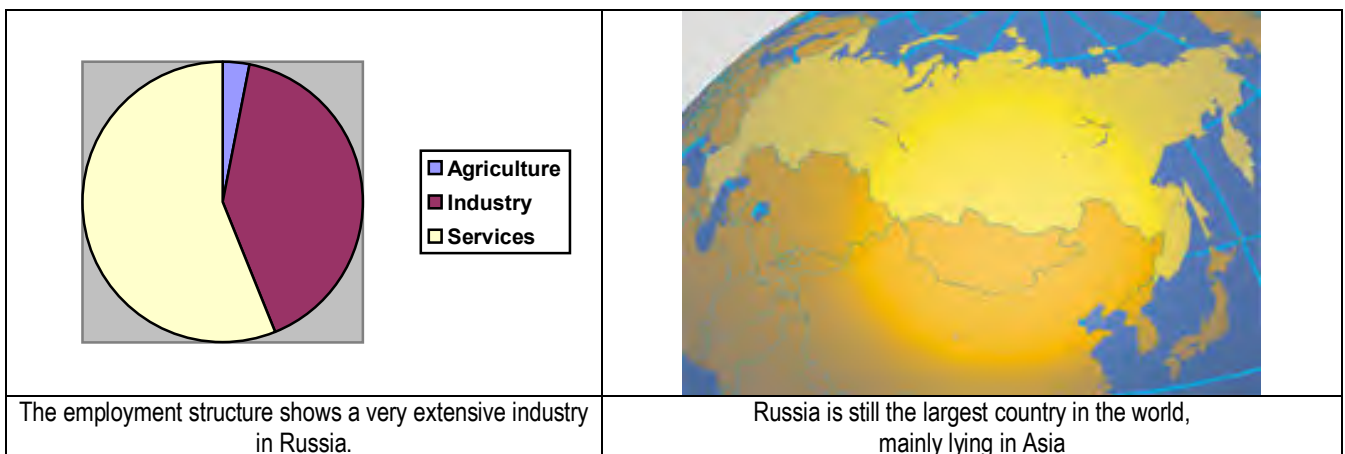
infrastructure and invest all in industrial production¹³. Thus the USSR produced a rapid economic growth and its people remained poor, lacking all kinds of services. This situation could only be controlled by a heavy dictatorship of the communist party and by preventing people from going abroad or learn the news and ideas of the western world.

By 1992 the political system of the USSR had changed, due to the beneficial activity of Michael Gorbachev, the last secretary general of the Russian communist party. The USSR desintegrated, but still the Russian Republic has remained the largest country in the world. Its industry, though large, cannot produce quality goods for the world market. High technology is present only in **military weapon** production, and **space research and technology**.

Traditional hubs of industry are represented by the 5 regions below:

1. The North-west: **Saint Peterburg, Arhangelsk** and **Murmansk** specializing in **wood** processing, precision **engineering**, **electronics** and **ship building**. 2. The Central region: **Moscow** and **Kursk** specializing **textile** industry, **engineering**, and **steel metallurgy**. 3. The Volgan region: **Volgograd, Novgorod** specializing in **energy** production both water and nuclear, **aluminium metallurgy, chemistry, oil refinery, vehicle** and **airplane manufacturing**. 4. The Uralian region: **Magnitogorsk, Jekatherinburg** specializing in **precious metal** processing, **steel** and **aluminium metallurgy**. 5. Finally the vast Siberian region Novokuznetz, Krasnojarsk specializing in mining, chemistry, wood processing, energy production; but this is outside of Europe.

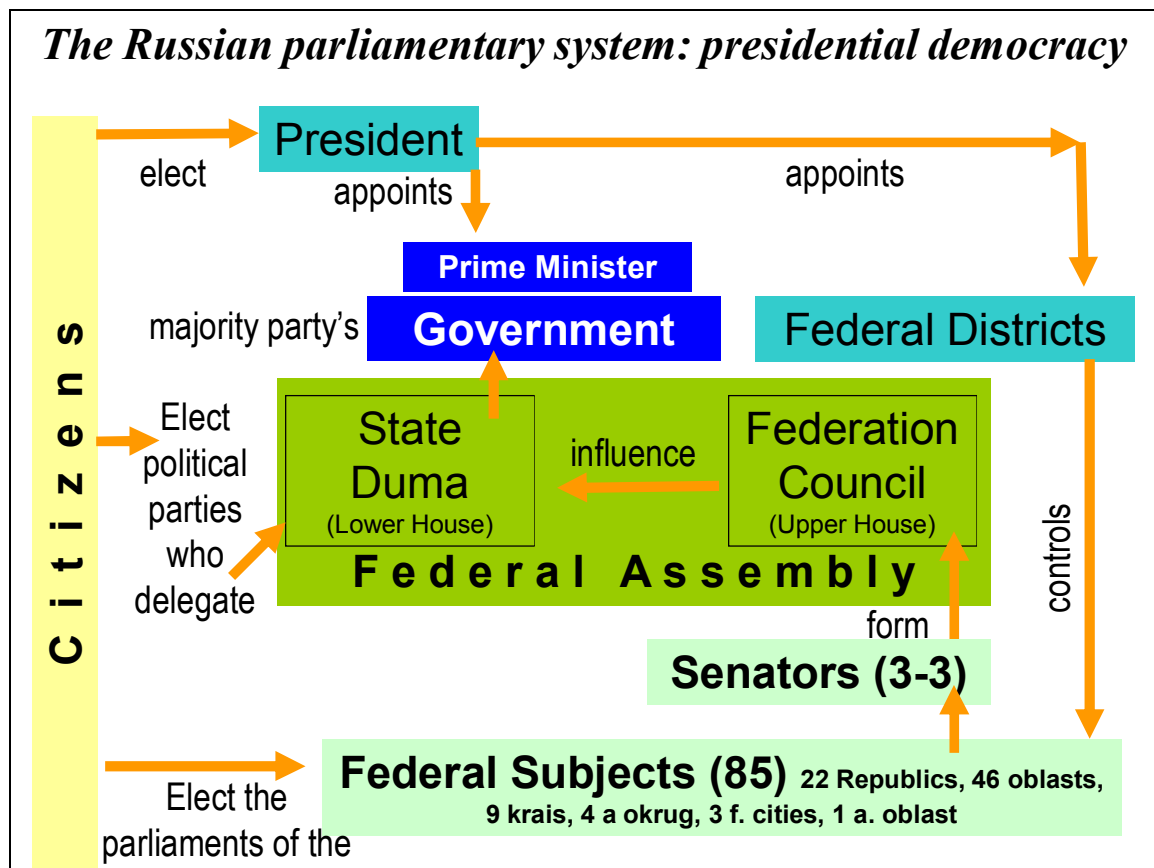
The soils of the Eastern European Plain are usually good and fertile 'black earth', especially favourable for crop cultivation. They grow **wheat, maize, sunflower, sugarbeet, hemp**. They breed **cattle** and **pigs**.



Administration

In the Russian, federal type of state, the autonomous republics (21) are the territorial organizations, where there are considerable national minorities living in them with Russians. Where the ethnic or national peoples form the majority compared to Russians, they have autonomous districts (13 okrugs). The krajs (8) can be found in the Far East (the frontiers) with a military type administration serving the border defense. There is 1 autonomous territory (Jewish) in Siberia in the Far East. The 47 oblasts can be found mainly in the European part of Russia. They are Russian districts, together with the 2 huge metropolises: Moscow and Saint Peterburg. In federal states the president has got more administrative power than the prime minister.

¹³ The index of economic growth is the quotient of the value of production divided by the value of infrastructural investments. The recognition of this led to the rapid economic growth of the communist countries in the 1960s-1970s.



The Russian federal parliamentary system shows a very strong presidential power therefore it is named presidential democracy type

Society

The largest national group is Russian (82 %). Among the very many national and ethnic minorities the two largest are the Tartar (4 %) and the Ukrainian (3 %). The rest are composed of mainly Siberian and Central Asian native peoples. The dominating religion is Orthodox Christianity (55 %) and Islam (18 %), Protestant Christianity (10 %) and Roman Catholic (7 %). Due to the impact of the long lasting communist dictatorship the philosophy of which (Marxism – Leninism) denied the importance of religion in Russia the number of actual atheists is high.

Russian state was founded by the Vikings in the early Middle Ages along the great rivers of Eastern Europe (in Kiev, Novgorod and Moscow); even the name of the Slavic states is borrowed from a Viking word: 'Russ' meaning assembly of the people, parliament or government.

Since the living standard is not too high in Russia, people's demand creates a huge market. Most of the Russian population live in the European part of the country so Russia is taken as a European country.



Landmarks

- *Kremlin, Saint Basil's Cathedral; Red Square* = places of interest in Moscow: the fortified palace, seat of the Russian government; a typical richly decorated orthodox temple with 'onion roofs'; the centre of Moscow. They are part of the World Heritage.
- *Caviar* = a luxury Russian delicacy, consisting of salted sturgeon roe coming from the Caspian Sea first of all.
- *Winter Palace (Зимний дворец)* = former seat of the czars in Saint Peterburg.

- *Hermitage Museum* = national museum in Saint Peterburg.
- *Transiberian Railway* = the world's longest railroad from Moscow to Vladivostok. In Europe it goes 1815 kms, the rest (7582 kms) is in Asia.
- *Steppe* = the dominating Russian grassy landscape in the middle and south part of the country; much of it is cultivated.
- *River Volga* = the Volga Mother, the national river of Russia. It is Europe's longest river with 3531 kms, though it is only the 18th longest river of the world.
- *Samovar* = a typical, traditional Russian boiler of water to make tea.
- *Mount Elbrus* = the highest peak of the Caucasus Mountains, and the highest in Europe, too: 5642 metres.
- *Western Caucasus* = is the region of Caucasus from the Black Sea to Mount Elbrus. It includes a natural World Heritage Site situated north from the Russian resort of Sochi. It is the only large mountain area in Europe that has not experienced significant human impact. Its habitats are exceptionally varied for such a small area, ranging from lowlands to glaciers. The area contains the Caucasian State Nature Biosphere Reserve.
- *Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius* = is the architectural ensemble of the most important Russian monastery and the spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is situated in the town of Sergiyev Posad.
- *Church of the Ascension in Kolomenskoye* = a masterpiece of the North Russian architecture along Moscow River. Its vertical composition was borrowed from the hipped roof-style wooden churches of the North of Russia. World Heritage Site.
- *Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands* = are located in the Onega Bay of the White Sea. World Heritage Site.
- *Ensemble of the Ferapontov Monastery* = a convent in the Vologda Region. It is a World Heritage Site and is considered one of the purest examples of Russian medieval art.
- *Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent* = (also known as Bogoroditse-Smolensky Monastery). It is the best-known cloister in Moscow. World Heritage Site.
- *Historic and Architectural Complex of the Kazan Kremlin* = is the chief historic citadel of Tatarstan, situated in the city of Kazan. It includes Qol-Sharif mosque and Orthodox cathedral. World Heritage Site.
- *Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments* = includes Tsarskoe Selo, Peterhof, Pavlovsk Palace, Strelna, Gatchina, Oranienbaum, Ropsha, Pulkovo, Shlisselburg, Kronstadt. They belong to the World Heritage.
- *Historic Centre of the City of Yaroslavl* = a World Heritage Site located at the confluence of the Volga and the Kotorosl Rivers.
- *Historic Monuments of Novgorod* = World Heritage Site since 1992.

- *Kizhi Pogost* = an island is located on Lake Onega in the Republic of Karelia. The pogost is the area inside a fence which includes two large wooden churches (the 22-dome Transfiguration Church and the 9-dome Intercession Church) and a bell-tower. The pogost is famous for its beauty and longevity, despite that it is built exclusively of wood. World Heritage Site.
- *The Virgin Komi Forests* = is a natural UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Northern Ural Mountains of the Komi Republic. It is the largest virgin (primeval, ancient) forest in Europe. It belongs to the Ural Mountains taiga ecoregion.
- *White Monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal* = is the name of a World Heritage Site in Russia. The site includes 8 medieval limestone monuments in the vicinity: the Assumption Cathedral, the Golden Gate, the Cathedral of Saint Demetrius, the Castle of Andrew the Pious, the Church of Intercession on the Nerl, the Suzdal Kremlin with the Cathedral of Nativity, the Monastery of Saint Euthymius, the Church of Boris and Gleb. 3 other monuments can be mentioned: the Saviour Cathedral in Pereslav-Zalessky, the Cathedral of Saint George in Yuriev-Polsky, the cathedrals of the Knyaginina Convent in Vladimir and the Intercession Convent in Suzdal.

San Marino (*mini state*)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of San Marino Native name(s): Repubblica di San Marino	
Capital city and population (thousand): San Marino City 5	Language(s): Italian	
Country's population (thousand): 30	Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents	Territory (sq kms): 61
Administrative division: 9 municipalities (castelli)		

Geography

San Marino is situated on the Adriatic coast of Italy, not far from Rimini, the well known holiday beach, on the foothill of the Appennines. It is a mini state; the city is situated on a hill. This tiny country surrounded by Italy, is the oldest republic in Europe and in the world, too, for it was founded in 301 A.D. by a priest named Marino. Also, it has the oldest constitution for it was laid down in 1263.

Economy

The small territory, and especially the capital town is frequented by 3 million tourists a year, so tourism is its main source of income.

Administration and society



The country includes 9 villages which are castellies = church districts. The inhabitants are Italians, and they live among the decorations recalling their historical past.

Landmarks

- *Monte Titano* = a limestone hill (750 m high) in the centre of San Marino Old City.
- *Moscato di San Marino* = sweet local white wine.
- *Torta di San Marino* = traditional chocolate cake.
- *San Marino Archers' Contest* = held on 3rd September each year
- *Piazzale Belvedere* = a square on the top of Monte Titano with a spectacular view of the surroundings of San Marino.
- *Parso delle Streghe* = 'witch path' on the edge of the Titano Mountain top with a nice view.
- *Historic Centre of San Marino* = World Heritage Site from 2008.



Serbia (Србија / Srbija)

National Flag		Official name		Coat of arms	
		Republic of Serbia Native name(s): Република Србија (Republika Srbija) Szerb Köztársaság Srbská republika Republika e Serbisë			
Capital city and population (million): Belgrade 1.2		Language(s): Serbian + Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak (in Voivodina) and Albanian (in Kosovo)			
Country's population (million): 7.2		Currency: 1 Dinar = 100 para		Territory (sq kms): 88 361	
Administrative division					
1 republic (република / republika)		2 autonomous provinces (аутономни покрајини / autonomni pokrajini)		Seat	
Република Србија / Republika Srbija		Београд / Beograd		Војводина / Vojvodina / Vajdaság / Voivodina	
--		--		Нови Сад / Novi Sad / Újvidék / Nový Sad	
--		--		Косово и Метохија / Kosovo i Metohija / Kosovës dhe Metohisë	
--		--		Приштина / Priština / Prishtina	

Geography

The north part of the country is a flat land, favourable for crop cultivation. It is the plain of the River Danube. The region is named Voivodina and this part used to belong to the Hungarian Kingdom in history. After the World Wars I and II this fertile land became part of the Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia used to be a country of many nations, so after the death of its charismatic communist leader, Marshal Tito, Yugoslavia began to fall to pieces in 1991. There were civil wars accompanying the formation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1999 even NATO had to interfere by bombing Serbia.

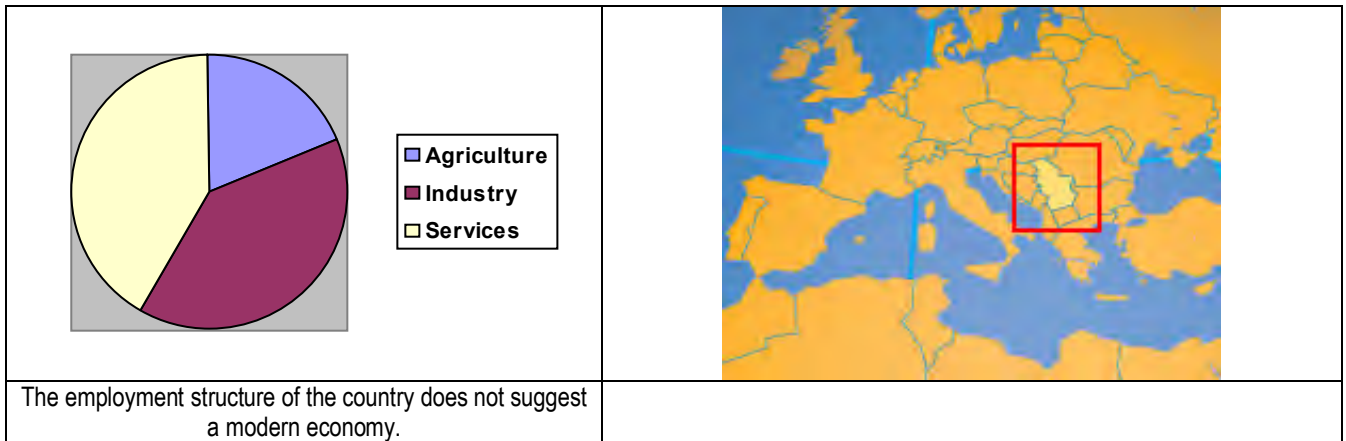
The middle and southern part of Serbia is a hilly land. Besides the north (Voivodina) with an originally Hungarian population, the southernmost part of Serbia (Kosovo) is inhabited by Albanians, and the south west mountainous Serbian region is inhabited by the Crna Gorians or Monte Negrans. Montenegro (Black Mountains) seceded from Serbia in 2006 and became an independent republic. Also, Kosovo tried to secede in 2008.

Economy

Serbian mountains (the Dinarian Mts) are rich in metal and **precious metal ores**, so **mining** and **metallurgy** have traditionally developed in industry. The centre of **engineering** is at **Kragujevac** south of Beograd. The capital city, **Beograd** (White Castle) is the **gateway to the Balkan Peninsula**.

Agriculture is well developed in the north (**Voivodina**) where **wheat, corn, sunflower, sugarbeet** are grown and **food industry** has traditions.

Tourism lost almost all its importance, since the secession of Montenegro with the short, but beautiful Montenegrin coast of the Adriatic Sea.



Society

As it was mentioned in the geographic description, Serbia is the most uneasy region of Central and Southern Europe in a political sense. Serbian policy tries to keep up the country's integrity by forceful assimilation of the Hungarian national minority in Voivodina. In Kosovo, however, the Albanian national minority is in regional majority and there is a constant threat of a new civil war, because Kosovo Polje, the heart of Kosovo is the ancient national homeland of the Serbian nation, even so if it is inhabited by Albanians in modern times. In Serbia there was a 6 hundred year long Turkish oppression that restructured the national distribution of the Serbians and Albanians in Kosovo, too.



Serbian people mainly follow the Eastern Christian Orthodox Church (70 %) and some of them the Catholic church (7 %) in the northern plains (Hungarian and German national minorities). The Albanian inhabitants of Kosovo are Muslims as for religion. The national composition of Serbia is still many faceted: the majority (62 %) are Serbians. Among the minorities the Kosov dwelling Albanians are the largest (18 %), Montenegrans (5 %), Gypsies (6 %), Hungarians (4 %), Bosnians (4 %), Croatians (1 %).

It is very difficult for the Serbians to witness and to put up with the degradation of the former Yugoslavia, since the Serbian capital (Beograd) used to be the federal capital of Yugoslavia supporting the Serbians to play a dominant and leading political role in the whole of Yugoslavia.

Landmarks

- *Kalamegdan* = The Castle of Beograd where in 1456 a Hungarian warlord beat the Turkish sultan's army; it was a victory in memory of which the Pope ordered the bells to be tolled in the Christian world at every noon.
- *Stari Raz and Sopoćani Monastery* = Raz used to be the first capitals of the medieval Serbian state, today it is ruined. The monastery at Sopoćani is a reminder of the contacts between Western Europeans and the Byzantians. Both sites are part of UNESCO cultural World Heritage.
- *Studenica Monastery* = is one of the largest and richest Serb Orthodox monasteries. World Heritage Site.
- *Gamzigrad-Romuliana* = Felix Romuliana is an archaeological site, spa, resort and World Heritage Site.

South Ossetia *non/partially recognized*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Republic of South Ossetia</p> <p>Native name(s): Республик Хуссар Ирыстон სამხრეთი ოსეთი Республика Южная Осетия</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (thousand): Tskhinvali (Cxinvali, ცხინვალი) 30</p>	<p>Language(s): Ossetian, Georgian, Russian</p>	
<p>Country's population (thousand): 50</p>	<p>Currency: Russian Ruble = 100 kopeks</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 3 900</p>
<p>Administrative division</p>		

Geography

The mountainous area of South Ossetia is situated on the Southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus Mountain ranges. Therefore her climate is not too cold, much milder than the climate of North Ossetia (being part of the Russian Federation on the Northern slopes of the Caucasus Mts). 90 % of South Ossetia lies above 1 thousand metres above sea level. When Georgia declared independence (1990) the ethnic tensions grew and led to a series of civil wars between South Ossetia and Georgia. As a result, the territory is *de facto* sovereign (recognized only by Russia and a very few other UN countries, and the unrecognized ones), but *de jure* it is part of Georgia.

Economy

The majority of the population survives on subsistence farming. Virtually the only significant economic asset that South Ossetia possesses is control of the Roki Tunnel¹⁴ that used to link Russia and Georgia, from which the South Ossetian government reportedly obtains as much as a third of its budget by levying customs duties on freight traffic. South Ossetia is seriously dependent on Russian economic assistance. South Ossetia's economy is primarily agricultural, although less than 10% of South Ossetia's area (on the South part) is cultivated. **Cereals, fruit** and **vines** are the major products. **Forestry** and **cattle** industries are also maintained. The industrial facilities around the capital are not significant.

Society

Ossetians are in majority (46 %) compared to Georgians whose proportion dropped from 29 to 9 %, due to the Ossetian – Georgian Wars in 1991-92, 2004 and 2008 when some 15 thousands Georgians were forced to leave to Georgia. The vast majority of the Ossetians are Christians, but Islam has some followers, too.

Landmarks

- *Ksani Fortress* - From historical monuments best preserved medieval fortress in the Mukhrani area.
- *Kelitsba Lake* is a beautiful mountain lake, located 2925 meters above sea level on the Plateau Celtic.

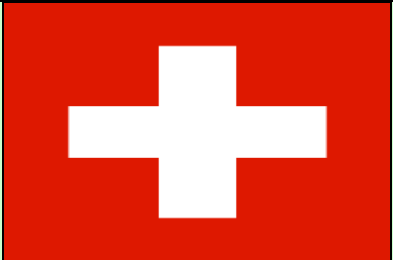

¹⁴ The tunnel, completed by the Soviet Union in 1984, is one of only a handful of routes that cross the North Caucasus Range. It is at about 2000 meters altitude and its length is 3730 meters, and near the Roki Pass at about 3000 meters altitude, which can only be used in summer.

- *Mountains of South Caucasus* offer splendid facilities for hiking, both in winter and summer. There are mountain villages above 2000 meters and spas in Narzan. This is the region where the Russian tundra meet the Alpine vegetation. Environment here is completely natural. The sights to see include ancient temples, unique local culture, traditions and cuisine with only organic food.



The situation of South Ossetia within Georgia (in the middle)

Switzerland (Schweitz / Suisse / Svizzera)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms	
	Swiss Confederation Native name(s): Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération Suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun Svizra		
Capital city and population (million): Bern 0.1	Language(s): German, French, Italian, Romansh		
Country's population (million): 7.6	Currency: 1 Franc = 100 centimes	Territory (sq kms): 41 285	
Administrative division: 26 cantons (Kantone / cantons / cantoni / chantuns)			
Region	Seat	Region	Seat
Aargau / Argovie / Argovia	Aarau	Nidwalden / Nidwald	Stans
Appenzell / Appenzello	Herisau	Obwalden / Obwald / Obwaldo	Sarnen
Appenzell Innerhoden / ~o Interno	Appenzell / Appenzello	Sankt Gallen / Saint Gall / San Gallo	<i>same</i>
Basel Landschaft / Bâle-Campagne / Basilea Campagno	Liestal	Schaffhausen / Schaffhouse / Sxhaffusa	<i>same</i>
Basel Stadt / Bâle-Ville / Basilea-Citta	Basel / Bâle / Basilea	Schwyz / Schwytz / Svitto	<i>same</i>
Bern / Berne / Berna	<i>same</i>	Solothurn / Soleure / Soletta	<i>same</i>
Freiburg / Fribourg / Friburgo	<i>same</i>	Thurgau / Thurgovie / Thurgovia	Frauenfeld
Genf / Genève / Ginevra	<i>same</i>	Tessin / Ticino	Bellinzona / Bellinzone
Glarus / Glaris / Glarona	<i>same</i>	Uri	Altdorf
Graubünden / Grisons / Grigioni	Chur / Coire / Coira	Wallis / Valais / Vallese	Sitten / Sion
Jura / Giura	Delémont	Waadt / Vaud	Lausanne, Losanna
Luzern / Lucerne / Lucerna	<i>same</i>	Zug / Zoug / Zugo	<i>same</i>
Neuenburg / Neuchâtel	<i>same</i>	Zürich / Zurich / Zurigo	<i>same</i>

Geography

The country lies exclusively in the territory of the high mountains of the **Alps** and the **Jura** Mountains in the north. The third largest river of Europe (the **Rhine**) originates in Switzerland. Also, the River Rhône flows from Switzerland towards France. The terrain of the country is Europe's highest lying land, with an average elevation of 1300 metres above sea level.

Economy

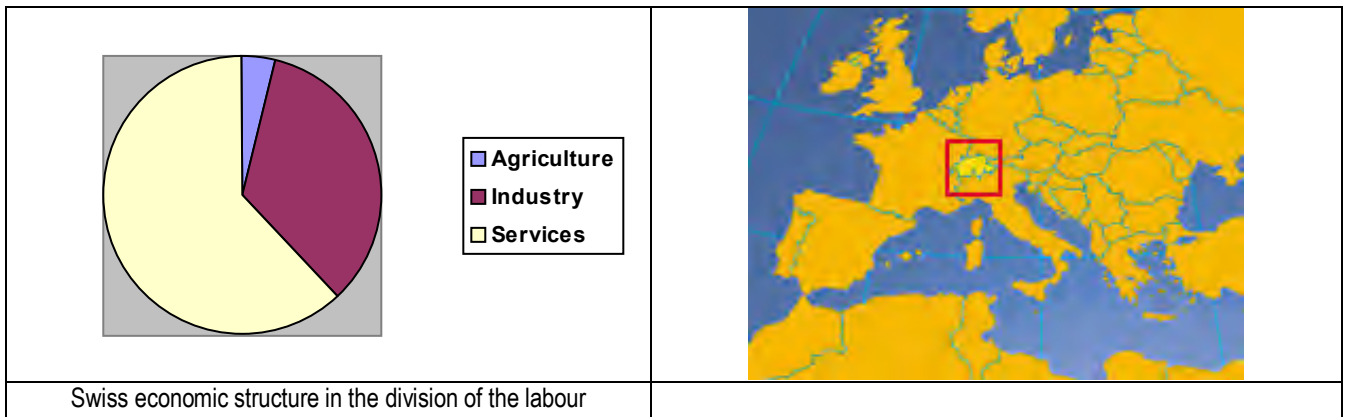
The cantons of Switzerland reached political **independence** both from the German and French empires at a very early stage of history, in the Middle Ages. This independence was reinforced in 1815 when the country was guaranteed a politically **neutral non-aligned status** by all the countries of the world. This position led to the development of the banking industry and Switzerland became the world's safest international **financial centre**.

Traditional branches of industry include the manufacture of **watches** and clocks and **pharmaceuticals**. The centre of the watch industry is **Geneva** (0.1 M), and that of the pharmaceutical industry is **Basel** (0.2 M).

Agriculture traditionally is confined to **cattle breeding** and consequently **dairy industry** is very important – it produces high quality of different **cheeses** and **chocolates**. Swiss chocolate like a Swiss watch is a trademark in itself.

Energy production is based on water: **hydroenergy** stands for 60 % of energy production and the rest is produced by **nuclear power** plants. Thus Switzerland is free of environmental pollution. **Tourism** is another important branch of economy in summer and especially in winter in the mountains.

Infrastructure (transportation, communication) is very well developed and **living standard** is very **high**. The busiest and relatively largest city is **Zurich** (0.3 M), the financial centre.



Society

Swiss society is by far the closest one in Europe. Foreigners are not at all welcome to immigrate in the local communities. Though there are numerous foreign workers from south-east Europe (Turkey and the Balkan countries) they will never be accepted as Swiss members of the community. Application for Swiss citizenship is a very long lasting and bureaucratic process.

In the western third of the country the Swiss native population speaks French (21 %); in the central part: German (72 %), in the south eastern part: Italian (6 %), and in the easternmost part: the so called Retoromansh (1 %). However, English is spoken and understood all over the country.

Some 60 % of Swiss population lives in urban area (towns). The proportion of the followers of the Roman Catholic Church is 46 % and the Protestants number 40 % of the citizens.

Administration



The country is a federal republic with strong microregions of historic origin. The names of the small regions are kantons. Kantons have an elaborated structure of legislation and financial independence. There are 20 kantons and 6 semi kantons.

Landmarks

- *Swiss watch* and *Swiss chocolate* = the name of the nation in itself can stand for a quality trademark of these products.
- *The Alps* = High mountainous region, especially favourable for winter sports.
- *Rhine waterfall* = Famous touristic destination.

- *Matterhorn* = Famous, steep, horn shaped peak of the Alps.
- *Alphorn* = Traditional, very long horn of low voice used by the shepherds of the Alps.
- *Milka* = the best known Swiss chocolate trade mark in Europe, first produced by Suchard in 1825. A purple cow symbolises it.
- *William Tell* = A legendary national hero of the Swiss, who according to the tale, was forced to shoot off an apple off the head of his own son with his cross-bow.
- *Benedictine convent of Saint John (Claustera Son Jon)* = is an ancient monastery in Müstair village, and, by reason of its exceptionally well-preserved monument of Carolingian art, has been a World Heritage Site.
- *Abeby of St. Gall (Fürstabtei Sankt Gallen)* = is a religious complex in the city of St. Gallen. World Heritage Site.
- *Old City of Bern* = the medieval city center, a World Heritage site.
- *Tre Castelli* = the 3 Castles of Bellinzona are a group of fortification located around the town of Bellinzona in Canton Ticino.
- *Jungfrau – Aletsch Pprotected Area* = Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch is located between the cantons of Berne and Valais. It is a mountainous region, containing the northern wall of Jungfrau and Eiger peaks, and the largest glaciated area in Western Europe, comprising the Aletsch Glacier. This protected area was the first World Natural Heritage site in the Alps, when was inscribed in 2001.⁴
- *Monte San Giorgio* = is a wooded mountain in Canton Ticino. It is a World Heritage site of geological importance, because it is the best known record of marine life in the Triassic period. The Italian side of the mountain was added to the World Heritage Site in 2010.
- *Wine-growing area of Lavaux* = it consist of 830 hectares of terraced vineyards that stretch for about 30 km along the south-facing northern shores of Lake Geneva. It is a cultural landscape World Herigage site.
- *Sardona Tectonic Area (Glarner Überschiebung)* = The Glarus thrust is a majorthrust fault in theAlps of Eastern Switzerland. The area is of geologic importance showing the traces of high mountain evolution. UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Rhaetian Railway* = a famous mountain railway network and service. In 2008 the network of the Albula/Bernina Landscapes (the part from Thusis to Tirano in Italy, including St. Moritz) was added to the list of World Heritage.
- *La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle* = architectural heritage of a watchmaking area, part of the Word Cultural Landscape Heritage.

Transnistria (Trans-Dniestr / Transdniestria) *non/partially recognized*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic Native name(s): Република Молдовеняскэ Нистрянэ Приднестровская Молдавская Республика Придністровська Молдавська Республіка	
Capital city and population (thousand): Tiraspol 135	Language(s): Russian, Moldovan Romanian, Ukrainian	
Country's population (thousand): 505	Currency: Transnistrian Ruble = 100 kopeks	Territory (sq kms): 4163
Administrative division: 5 raions (districts)		

Geography

Transnistria is landlocked and borders Moldova to the West, and Ukraine to the East. It is a narrow valley stretching in the North-South direction along the bank of the Dniester river, which forms a natural boundary along most of the border with (the rest of) Moldova. The name means in Russian: the land 'by the Dnester'. All UN member states consider Transnistria a legal part of the Republic of Moldova, only the partially recognised states of South Ossetia and Abkhazia recognize it as a sovereign entity. It declared independence from Moldova the former Soviet republic, in 1990. A Russian military contingent is present in Transnistria the status of which is disputed.

Economy

Transnistria's economy is frequently described as dependent on contraband¹⁵ and gunrunning¹⁶ These allegations are denied by the government of course. The leading industry is the Russian holding **steel**, which accounts for about 60% of the budget revenue. The textile industry (the Tirotext) claims to be the second largest **textile** company in Europe. The energy sector is dominated by Russian companies. The gas transmission and distribution company probably controlled by **Gazprom**. The banking sector of Transnistria consists of 8 commercial banks, including Gazprombank. The oldest alcohol producer is located in Tiraspol, produces and exports **brandy, wines and vodka**.

Society

Transnistrians have dual or triple citizenship, including: Moldavian (300 000), Russian (100 000), Ukrainian (100 000). As for nationality, 30 % are Moldovans, 30 % Russians and 30 % Ukrainians (the rest are Bulgarians, Poles and Gypsies /Roma/). 90 % of the population belong to the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church.

Landmarks

- *Dniester* is a major Eastern European river running through Ukraine and Moldova to the Black Sea.



¹⁵ The word **contraband**, denotes any item which, relating to its nature, is illegal to be possessed or sold.

¹⁶ Arms trafficking, also known as **gunrunning**, is the illegal trafficking or smuggling of contraband weapons or ammunition.



Transnistria (Transdniester in brown) between Romania, Moldova (light brown) and Ukraine.

Turkey (Türkiye) partly European

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	Republic of Turkey Native name(s): Türkiye Cumhuriyeti	
Capital city and population (million): Ankara 3	Language(s): Turkish + Kurdish	
Country's population (million): 24 (in the European part and Istanbul, out of a total 76)	Currency: 1 Turkish Lira = 100 kurush	Territory (sq kms): 23 506 (the European part out of the total 783 562)
Administrative division: 81 provinces (iller)		

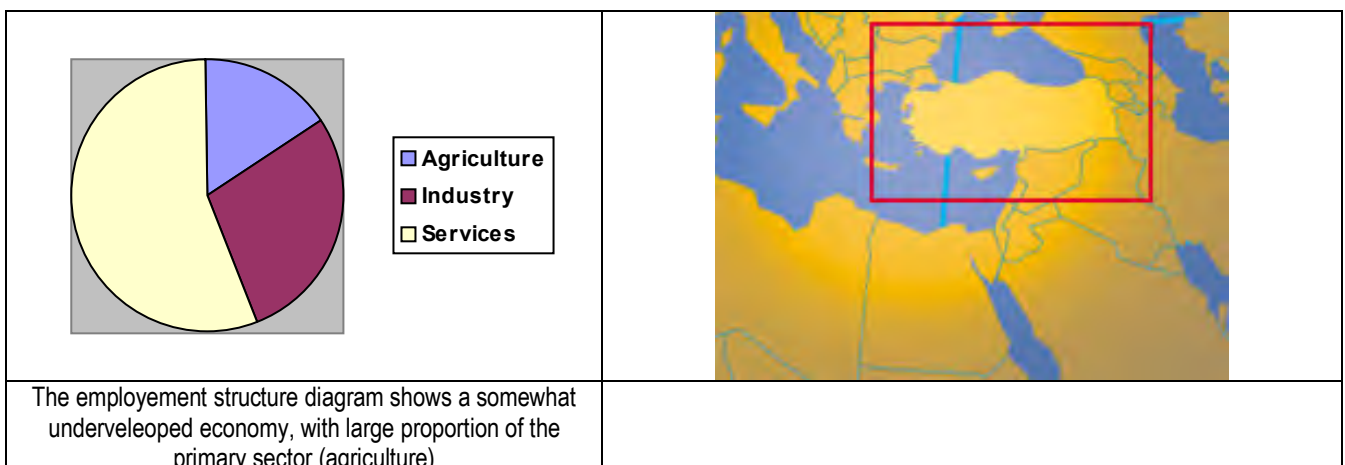
Geography

Only a little westernmost part of the country lies on the European Continent, west of **Istanbul**, the major city of trade, industry and services with a population of 12 million. Istanbul used to be Byzantium, the seat of the Eastern Roman Empire in ancient times and in the Middle Ages. Later Byzantium was occupied by the Otterman Turks and it became the capital city of the Turkish Empire under the name of Constantinople. And today it is one of the world's largest cities lying on both sides of the Strait of **Bosphorus** in the Marble Sea, dividing Europe from Asia Minor. **Asia Minor** is a huge peninsula of Asia. Its coasts have mild climate (Mediterranean) but the inner parts are dry and hilly. This region used to be the origin of the later European civilization for the culture, the religion and the peoples of the ancient Greeks come from Asia Minor, today occupied by Turkey.

Economy

Turkey used to be a powerful empire always threatening Central Europe with its expansive policy through the centuries of history. However, after World War I in 1923 it lost most of its colonies in Asia, Africa and Europe (the Balkan Peninsula).

The **steel** industry is very important in the economy of Turkey. The traditional branches of economy include growing and producing **tobacco**, and weaving expensive **carpets**. In the Mediterranean Sea coast of Turkey there are frequented resort and summer holidaying places. Agriculture grows wheat, barley, millet, cotton and fruit. They breed goats and sheep.



Society



Although Turks and Hungarians are relative nations belonging to the same language family, in history the two cultures had been fighting against each other for over five hundred years. The Hungarian Kingdom used to be the 'shield of the Christian Europe' to protect the German, Italian territories from Turkish invasion. 99 % of the Turkish population follow Islam. The largest national minority is represented by the Kurdish nation, composing 20 % of the population of Turkey. The Kurds, just like gypsies, living in the territories of quite a few countries, never have had the chance in history to organize their own state. Therefore in Iraq and in Turkey the Kurds fight bitterly for their national independence. The political tension in the east part of Turkey, where most of the Kurdish people live is one main reason why the European Union is not willing and is reluctant to accept the application of the Turks. The other reason is the case of North Cyprus under Turkish invasion.

Turkey sends much cheap labour to seek and find physical jobs in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, North Italy and the Benelux states. Because of Turkey's long relationship and contact with European culture, the Islamic Fundamentalism is not so strong there as in other Arabic countries in the Near and Middle East or in Africa. This liberal Muslim attitude is manifested e.g. in women's human rights.

Landmarks

- *Aya Sophia Church* = The most famous and largest mosque in Istanbul.
- *The Bazaar* = The market place quarter of Turkish towns, especially in Istanbul where all kinds of works of handicraft can be purchased and bargaining and even haggling is expected.
- *Troy* = On the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor there are the ruins of the ancient city of Troy the site of the 10 year long battle between the Greeks and the Asians, sung by Homer – the first European epic poet. The symbol of the Troy war is the Trojan Horse built by Ulysses. The archeological site of Troy is part of the World Heritage.
- *Bosphorus* = 'Oxford'. The narrowest part of the Marble Sea dividing Europe from Asia. There is a bridge now, connecting the continents at Istanbul.
- *Historic areas of Istanbul* = the city is historically known as Byzantium and Constantinople and it is the 5th largest city in the world with a population of 12.8 million, also making it the second largest metropolitan area in Europe by population. Istanbul has served as the capital city of the Roman Empire (330–395), the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire (395–1204 and 1261–1453), the Latin Empire (1204–1261), and the Ottoman Empire (1453–1922). The city was chosen as joint European Capital of Culture for 2010. Historic areas of Istanbul were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985.

Ukraine (Україна / Ukraïna)

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Ukraine Native name(s): Україна (Ukraïna) Украуна (Украйна) Ukrajna Украина (Ukraina)</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (million): Kiev 2.6</p>	<p>Language(s): Ukrainen / Russian + Russian and Tatar (Crimea), Hungarian (Transcarpathia)</p>	
<p>Country's population (million): 41.6</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Hryvnia = 100 kopiykas</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 577 000</p>
<p>Administrative division: 24 provinces (область - oblast) + Crimean Tartar Republic¹⁷</p>		

Geography

The huge country lies on the **vast plains of Easter Europe**. The south part of it is a peninsula into the Black Sea, and the southwestern part of it reaches the mountain ranges of the Carpathians. The plainland of the Ukraine is very fertile cropland and the climate is continental with cold winters and hot summers. Large rivers cross the plainland flowing towards the Black Sea (Dneper, Dnester).

The Ukrainian capital, Kiev was founded by the Vikings at an early stage of history; the Kievien parliament had a Viking name: the Rus (people's assembly) that is where the name Russia originates from. The Ukrainian land was the scene of constant sufferings, civil wars and wars between Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Cossacks, Tartars and Turks all through the Middle Ages and even in modern times. Then during Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union the great famine initiated by political will, struck Ukraine and millions of people died of starvation. Also, during World War II this land was the part of the Soviet Union that was destroyed to the greatest degree, for the frontline between Germans and Russians went through in it twice.

Economy

The country used to be part of the Soviet Union up to 1991, when it became independent. The Ukrainian heavy industry and engineering was established and developed under the Soviet period. Industry was based on Russian minerals and oil. The heart of the Ukrainian heavy industry is the **Donets Basin** – once the center of the Soviet heavy industry. It was developed on local coal deposits. At Krivoi Rog iron ore is mined. Both **metallurgy** and **engineering** have low standards in production. Technologies are out of date. The tense political terms with Russia made the Ukrainian economy lose much of its its markets. Energy production is based on local **coal** and imported oil and gas. Therefore environmental pollution is felt. Quite a few **nuclear power plants** were erected during the great scale and rapid development of the Soviet times. These power plants were built in record times; consequently their safety equipment is not always efficient. In 1986 the world's worst nuclear catastrophe occurred in Ukraine, at **Chernobil**. The environmental radioactive consequences are destroying human lives even today in Ukraine in great and ever growing numbers.

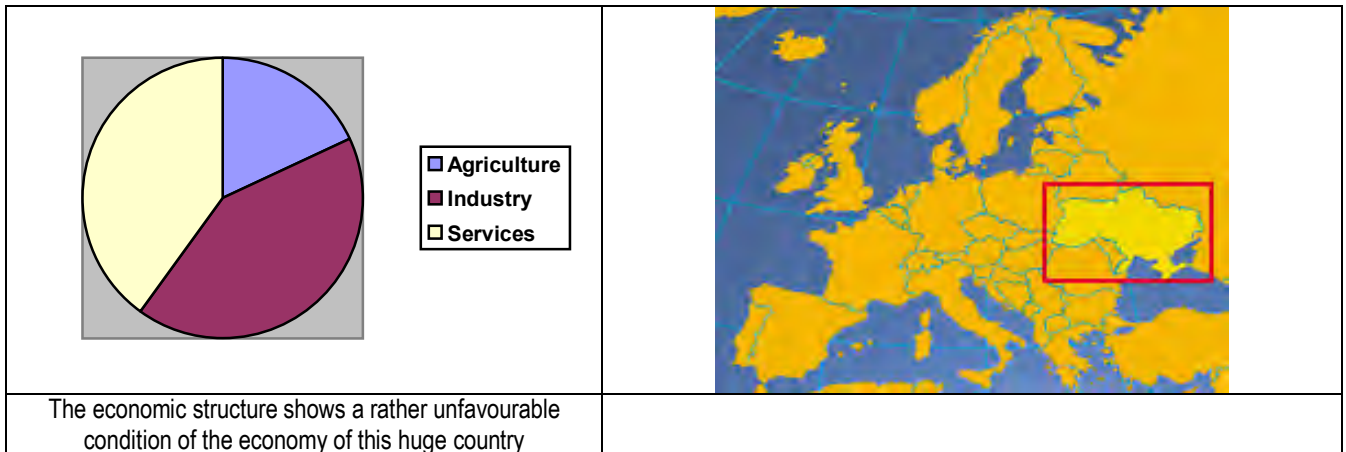
Much of Russia's crude oil and natural gas are imported towards Central and West European countries via Ukraine in pipes. As for transport fees the government asks for discounts which is not always granted by Russian companies. This lead to **political tension** now and then in which Ukraine blocks the westwards-bound Russian oil and gas import.

¹⁷ It seperated and was annexed to the Russia in 2014 (Ukrainian population and territory data reflect the change)

The division of Ukraine and Russia was not without regional and political debates concerning the Black Sea ports which serve as the bases of the Post-Soviet or Russian navy and other Russian military equipment in Ukrainian territory.

Ukrainian agriculture has good conditions for **wheat, potato, rye, barley** and **corn** production.

Tourism can be mentioned as an economic sector only along the Black Sea coast and especially in the **Crimean Peninsula** of Mediterranean climate and landscape.



Society

The living standard is very low in Ukraine. 90 % of the population belong to the Orthodox (Eastern) Christian Church. 71 % of the inhabitants live in urban area. As for the national minorities, in Ukraine 75 % of the population declare themselves Ukrainian and 22 % Russian. There are 1 % Belarussian, 1 % Gypsy and some 1 % Hungarians. The Ukrainian population is falling fast; from 1992 to 2007 it declined from 52 to 46.5 million.

Landmarks

- *Endless croplands* = the characteristic landscape of Eastern Europe.
- *Steppe* = Eastern European grassland or prairie.
- *Jalta* = The best known and most beautiful resort place in the Crimean Peninsula.
- *Odessa* = The largest port of Ukraine on the Black Sea.
- *Potemkin Stairs (Potomkinski skhody)* = a giant stairway in Odessa, symbol of the city.
- *Theatre of Opera and Ballet* = in Odessa.
- *Serpent's Wall (Zmiyevi valy)* = an ancient fortification line stretching 1000 kms long.
- *Cathedral of Holy Wisdom* = a 1000 year old church in Polotsk.
- *Saint Sophia Cathedral (Sobor Sviatoyi Sofiyi)* = it is the best known landmarks in Kiev, and the first Ukrainian patrimony to be inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990.
- *Pechersk Lavra (Kyievo-Pechers'ka lavra)* = the Kiev Monastery of the Caves is a historic Orthodox Christian monastery in Kiev. A World Heritage site.
- *Lviv Old Town* = Lviv's historic center as part of the World Heritage.
- *Primeval Beech Forest of the Carpathians* = an outstanding example of undisturbed, complex temperate forests, constitute a transnational serial property of 10 separate components (6 in Ukraine and 4 in Slovakia). They contain an invaluable genetic reservoir of beech and many species associated with, and dependent on these forest habitats. It is a World Heritage site.

Vatican (Vaticanum) *mini state*

National Flag	Official name	Coat of arms
	<p>Vatican City State Native name(s): Status Civitatis Vaticanae</p>	
<p>Capital city and population (thousand): Vatican City 1</p>	<p>Language(s): Italian, Latin, German</p>	
<p>Country's population (thousand): 1</p>	<p>Currency: 1 Euro = 100 cents</p>	<p>Territory (sq kms): 0.4</p>

Geography

The Vatican is the smallest country (a city state) in the world. Out of its 1 thousand inhabitants, there are only some 450 Vatican citizens, all ecclesiastical people, for the Vatican is a church monarchy. It is the centre of the Roman Catholic Church, the largest Christian church in the world. The Vatican is a quarter of Rome, Italy, situated in the heart of the 'Eternal City' of Rome. It can be found in the very vicinity in and around the Saint Peter's Cathedral and Square.

Economy

The Vatican is the residence and the office of the head of the Catholic Church, the Pope and his administration. Besides the Cathedral, there is the Pope's residence and the Governing Palace and some museums. The Vatican is the second country in the world following the USA, to have the largest amount of solid **gold reserves**. In the Vatican the revenue comes from the Church **donations**, but **tourism** of the believers is also an important source of income.

Society

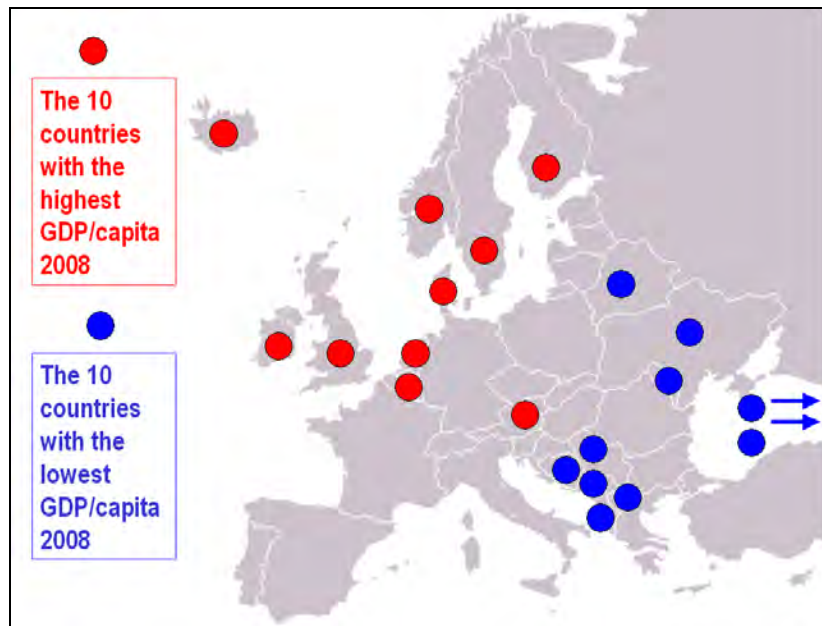
As the Vatican is the centre of the Church it has to be noted that most of the followers of the Roman Catholic Church are to be found in South America, because of the Spanish and Portuguese colonization.

Landmarks

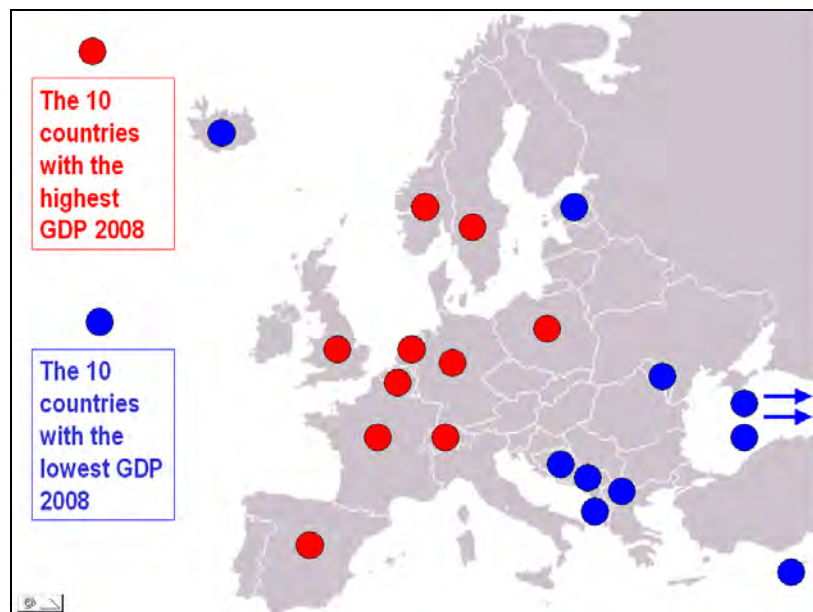
- *Saint Peter's Cathedral* = (San Pietro) the centre of the Roman Catholic religion, like that of the Caba Stone Palace in Mecca for the Muslims. San Pietro is the largest Christian cathedral in the world.
- *Vatican Palace* = with its 1400 rooms it is the 2nd largest palace in the world exceeded only by the palace of the sultan of Brunei.
- *Sistine Chapel* = part of the Vatican touristic attraction with the world famous wall paintings of Michelangelo, entitled Last Supper and Last Judgement.
- *Swiss guards* = the ceremonial and body guards of the Pope since 1506.
- *Vatican City* = the State of the City of the Vatican, is a landlocked sovereign city-state whose territory consists of a walled enclave rich in monuments within the city of Rome. World heritage site.
- *Basilica of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls* = is one of four churches that are the great ancient major or papal basilicas of the Vatican: the basilicas of St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, St. Peter's and this one.



Regional differences in Europe's economic development



In this map the 10 regions (countries) with the highest living standard can be seen marked in red (with the exception of the mini states Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Andorra and San Marino). The 10 countries with the lowest living standard are given a blue circle (with the exception of Kosovo, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, being non recognized or partly European). Georgia and Armenia are off the map. All the Nordic countries and Austria seem to be the richest, and the Balkan, East Europe and the continent's Trans-Caucasian 'backyard' represent the poorest regions.



In this map the regional distribution of largest (in red) and the least (in blue) actual economic outputs of the countries can be seen. Russia and Turkey are omitted from the largest ones as they are only partly European. The mini and the non recognized states are omitted from the smallest ones (the Vatican, Monaco, San Marino, Kosovo, Andorra, North Cyprus, Lichtenstein and Malta). Georgia and Armenia are off the map.

The greatest regional economic impact in Europe

This took place in 1989-1990 in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany when the USSR (Soviet Union) withdrew its military troops from Central Eastern European countries and then it collapsed (1991). The economy in the countries belonging to the socialist system¹⁸ produced goods and services of bad quality, but they could be sold to the population of the vast Soviet republics where people had low demand. These goods and services could not have been sold in the world market.¹⁹

With the exception of the Soviet Union the socialist countries did not have many natural resources, but their industries produced all kinds of goods at high expense based on cheap Soviet raw materials. It led to a low standard of efficiency and effectiveness. Infrastructure was neglected in order to produce fast economic growth by investing only in production. This led to out-of-date, slow services, to narrow and bad roads, to crowded transportation, to the lack of modern communication and banking system, to environmental pollution, and did harm to people's health²⁰.

To meet the slowly increasing demand of the people, socialist states borrowed credits from western banks which of course led to debt. Meanwhile, national (and ethnic) rights and feelings were oppressed by the totalitarian governments.

What happened after the post socialist countries introduced democracy and market economy in 1990-1991? Their industries that relied on Soviet imports, collapsed. High unemployment occurred. Multinational companies occupied their markets. The facilities of the industries and the socialist agricultural cooperatives were privatized in the name of democracy. This led to the new owners selling these facilities to multinational companies whose only interest was to let these facilities perish so that they can export their own products and services. Thus these post socialist countries lost all their national economy that was replaced by goods and services of multinational capital. Thus their skilled labour became employed by foreign companies and their unskilled labour remained unemployed.

Because of the 70 – 40 years of oppressing national autonomy, once the communist dictatorship was gone, national minorities began to form their own independent states. Czechoslovakia became Slovakia and Czechia. Yugoslavia became Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo. (East Germany was lucky alone to be able to unite with the German homeland.) The USSR also disintegrated into 15 (!) independent countries! And this process has not stopped after two decades. So in Central East and Eastern Europe the opposite of the EU's national integration process is under way. These movements have been accompanied by civil wars very often. Even by genocide. Many million European people paid a high price for democracy: they either got killed or lost their jobs or had to live under ever worsening living standards. This is the heritage of socialism and communism in Europe.

Nothing is left, but the good old political jokes from the 1960s and 1970s that helped people to survive the communist rule. 'When will the Lenin statue give a sound and tell us something?' The answer to this question was something that was impossible even to imagine in the Soviet era. 'When out of it a church bell will be cast.' Or: 'What is the Soviet dwarf like?' Answer: 'huge.' Or: 'what is socialism?' Answer: 'a constant fight against the difficulties that would never have occurred without it.'

¹⁸ There was a joke: which two systems cannot stand each other? Answer: the socialist system and the nervous system.

¹⁹ Another joke from that age. What is the Council of Mutual Economic Cooperation (numbering 7 socialist countries)? Answer: Seven lean cows milking one another.

²⁰ Why are the health limits of environmental pollutions higher in the socialist countries than in the western world? Answer: because the socialist type of man is healthier, stronger, and can take more.

Information society

In the ancient times and the Middle Ages the resource on which economy could develop used to be the **fertile land**. Those regions could develop, where there was abundance of arable land: Mesopotamia in Asia, the Nile River Valley in Egypt, China, etc.

At the time of the industrial revolution **iron and black coal** became the main resource of economic development: Manchester, England, the Ruhr and Alsace regions were the workshops of Europe giving strength to the European nations like the English or the French to colonize and rob the rest of the world. **Industrial society** was based on steel.

Our age is the **consumers' society**, when those regions grow rich which happen to have oil and gas beneath them (think of Dubai), because the economy of services relies on **hydrocarbon** energy. Remember the many circle diagrams in the text: the more working age population is employed in the services, the more developed the region or country is.



And what about **information society**, the threshold of which we are just stepping over. What is the resource of information society? Fortunately, the distribution of this resource is democratic indeed. It is human **knowledge**. The main tool to accumulate knowledge was invented as the latest wonder of the world: the Internet. A very simplified summary of the economic calculations, predicting China to overtake the USA in a few decades, lies in figures of population number: Where there is the vastest amount of population there must be the vastest amount of human knowledge, the vastest amount of resource for economic development as well. So pay attention to China, India, Mexico, etc. And pay attention to a talented, educated population as well. Information is knowledge; information is economic power in the information society.

And a practical question to finish with. How can you transform information into money (capital)? Thousand pieces of information reaches us day by day in the street, from TV, Internet, newspaper, radio, workplace, friends, etc. We can choose some of them (probably the items that raised our interest) and build into our own system (notebook, blog, log, textbook, calendar, etc). Thus the information is turned into knowledge. The recipients store a lot of (inactive) knowledge in their own systems. The if we want, we can learn some of the pieces of knowledge stored in our own system. By learning, knowledge is transformed into ability. This is what we can sell, IF there is demand for it on the market. It is our responsibility, to acquire such abilities that are useful and attractive and thus can be sold in the market within our scope.

Information – systematizing – knowledge – learning – ability – selling – capital



Sources

Avanzi, L. – Fittipaldi, M. 2005. Punto Europa 15 + 10 = 1 – Forli Panamoduli

Gallup, J.L. – Sachts, J.D. – Mellinger, A.D. 1999. Geography and economic Development = International Regional Science Review 22. 2. pp 179-232

IMF, WB, CIA (en.wikipedia.org/list_of_countries_by_GDP)

Probáld, F. 2005. Regional Geography (in Hungarian) NTK, Budapest

Tamasics, K. 1996. Europe's Geography (in Hungarian) NTK, Budapest

www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/countries/ (basic facts of countries of the world)

www.geonames.de/indcou.html (a collection of every country's administrative divisions)

<http://www.thesalmons.org/lynn/world.heritage.html> (UNESCO World Heritage List)

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

The author:



Prof. István Tózsza PhD, habil
head of the
Department of Economic Geography and Futures Studies
Corvinus University of Budapest
istvan.tozsza@uni-corvinus.hu