

48. Russian Federation

= stretching across two continents – Europe and Asia = *the largest country in the world*
= *sparsely populated* even though it has vast natural resources, mineral reserves and fertile land
= former communist state – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), communist regime collapsed in 1991 => many parts of the USSR declared independence, e.g. Ukraine, Georgia, etc.
= nowadays Russian Federation (Russia) struggles to establish a Western-style democracy and economy.



Population: 145 million

GDP/capita (2001): 1900 USD

Moscow = the capital city of Russia

- *Kremlin palace* – the home of *tsars* (emperor) for centuries, since 1917 the headquarters of the world's first communist government => USSR = industrial and military superpower but a great cost for Russians

St. Petersburg = very elegant city = “*Venice of the North*”

- the centre of arts and culture and has many 18th-century buildings
- former capital of Russia (1713-1917), under the communist rule it was renamed *Leningrad*

Population: very diverse and consisting of many different ethnics, e.g. *Russians* (majority), *Tatars* (Islamic descendants of the Mongols), *Ukrainians*, *Belorussians*, *Kazakhs*, *Armenians*, etc.

Siberia = to the E of the Ural mts. to the Pacific Ocean

- vast, uninhabited land covered with coniferous (evergreen) forest = *taiga* containing ¼ of the world's wood reserves
- in the north part of Siberia, climate gets colder => *tundra* with permafrost, lot of animals adapted to cold climate = reindeers, bears, Siberian tigers, etc.

Raw materials = Siberia is rich in natural resources (coal, natural gas, oil, metals and gold) => many industries were located here in the past

- *Western Siberia* = 1/3 of the world's natural gas reserves, but climate is harsh and pipeline transportation over long distances is expensive

Agriculture = only about 10% of Russian land is used for growing crops (the fertile triangle)

- the world's leading producer of wheat, rye and potatoes
- south-central part = the most fertile (wheat production)
- taiga provides work in paper production and furniture making => many of these forests have been cleared => forestry industry has moved south and east into Siberia near lake Baikal, Amur river and Pacific coast

Industry = vast *industrial complexes* in iron-rich Ural mts. (coal, iron, steel, chemical industry) => *heavy industries* => nowadays they are old and inefficient polluting the environment with harmful emissions

Trans-Siberian railroad transports vast amounts of minerals from Siberia to European Russia.

Lake Baikal = “the blue eye of Siberia”, it's the deepest lake in the world and the largest freshwater lake (>20% of the world's entire supply of water)

Keywords

Kremlin palace, tsars, Siberia, taiga, tundra, reindeer, Tatars, pipelines, industrial complex, Trans-Siberian railroad