

49. Eastern Europe

= Ukraine, Moldova

= Belarus and Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)

Ukraine

Capital: Kiev

Population: 51 million

GDP/capita (2001): 900 USD

= vast, fertile plains with huge coal resources => it was 1 of the most powerful countries of the former USSR

- ethnic tension ⇔ every fifth citizen is Russian
- 1986: world's worst nuclear accident – Chernobyl contaminated a huge area affecting people, animals and soils
- Kiev: it was invaded by the Mongols, later a part of Polish-Lithuanian Empire (14th century), part of Russian Empire since the 17th century, nowadays centre for communications, culture and education
- *cereals* = ¾ of Ukraine is covered by steppes => wheat, corn, barley, oats and rye = extensive farming ⇔ lack of new technology
- *Donbass Basin* = eastern Ukraine = the largest coalfield in Europe, major industrial area => coal-fired and hydro-electric power plants => iron and steel industry => shipbuilding and heavy machinery ⇔ nowadays many mines and factories are inefficient
- other large cities: Uzghorod, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa



Moldova

Capital: Chisinau

Population: 4.5 million

GDP/capita (2001): 400 USD

= Moldova was a part of Romania before including into the USSR

- the most densely populated republic of former Soviet Union
- *Moldovians* = 2/3 of the total population, besides Russians and Ukrainians
- *agriculture* = main source of income (corn, sunflower, tobacco and vines) => food-processing industry
- import of oil ⇔ lack of mineral wealth



Belarus

Capital: Minsk

Population: 10.2 million

GDP/capita (2001): 2,200 USD

= poor, rural republic, sparsely populated with very poor natural resources (only rock-salt, different types of sand → high-quality glassware)

- large *marshland in southern Belarus* = the largest in Europe => alder and aspen trees with elks, lynxes and boars
- heavy industries: oil-refining and machinery manufacturing (survival of the former USSR)
- *Lukashenko* = Belorussian dictator => responsible for many kidnaps and elimination of opposition members
- Minsk: industrial centre of the country and also the headquarters of CIS



Estonia

Capital: Tallinn

Population: 1.4 million

GDP/capita (2001): 3,600 USD

= land of forests, low hills and lakes, the smallest of the Baltic states

- timber, shipbuilding and food-processing industry
- tensions between native Estonians and Russian population (1/3 of the total)
- Protestants
- other large cities: Võru, Tartu



Latvia

Capital: Riga

Population: 2.4 million

GDP/capita (2001): 2,600 USD

= central position among the Baltic states with easy access to the sea => important harbours

- cool, damp (humid) climate => dairy farming and meat production + fishing and timber industry
- Riga: important trading port since the Middle Ages
- also large share of Russian population and Protestants
- other large cities: Jelgava, Daugavpils



Lithuania

Capital: Vilnius

Population: 3.7 million

GDP/capita (2001): 2,900 USD

= population concentrates to the interior of the country, not to the coast

- native Lithuanians and Roman Catholics
- very fertile soils => intensive agriculture
- *amber* = 90% of the world's reserves located in the coast of Lithuania
- other large cities: Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys



Keywords

Chernobyl, cereals, steppes, Donbass basin, Moldovians, marshland