

FACTS ABOUT UKRAINE

Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe. Slightly smaller than Saskatchewan, it borders Russia to the east, Belarus to the north, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the west, Romania and Moldova to the south-west, and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south. It occupies a strategic position at the crossroads between Europe and Asia.

Ukraine is a unitary state composed of 24 oblasts and one autonomous republic Crimea (Krym). Ukraine is a republic under a semi-presidential system with separate legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The President is elected by popular vote for a five-year term and is the formal head of state.



Flag



Coat of arms

Two equal horizontal bands of blue (top) and yellow represent grain fields under a blue sky



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Official language | Ukrainian |
| Government type: | republic |
| Independence | from the Soviet Union |
| Declared | August 24, 1991 |
| Area | |
| Total | 603,628 km ² 233,090 sq mi |
| Water (%) | 7% |

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Population | |
| 2008 estimate | 46,372,700 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Population growth rate | |
| 2008 estimate | -0.651% |

Currency Hryvnia (UAH)

Time zone EET (UTC+2)

Internet domain .ua

Calling code +380

National holidays

- January 1 - New Year's Day
- January 7 - Christmas
- March 8 - International Women's Day
- Easter
- Holy Trinity Day (Troitsia) - Pentecost
- May 1 & 2 - Labour Days
- May 9 - Victory Day
- June 28 - Constitution Day
- August 24 - Independence Day



History

Ukraine was the centre of the first eastern Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, which during the 10th and 11th centuries was the largest and most powerful state in Europe. Weakened by internecine quarrels and Mongol invasions, Kyivan Rus was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and eventually into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The cultural and religious legacy of Kyivan Rus laid the foundation for Ukrainian nationalism through subsequent centuries. A new Ukrainian state, the Kozak Hetmanate, was established during the mid-17th century after an uprising against the Poles. Despite continuous Muscovite pressure, the Hetmanate managed to remain autonomous for well over 100 years. During the latter part of the 18th century, most Ukrainian ethnographic territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire. Following the collapse of tsarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to bring about a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was reconquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two artificial famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died. In World War II, German and Soviet armies were responsible

for some 7 to 8 million more deaths. Although final independence for Ukraine was achieved in 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR, democracy remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties. A peaceful mass protest, known as the "Orange Revolution", in the closing months of 2004 forced the authorities to overturn a rigged presidential election and to allow a new internationally monitored vote that swept into power a reformist slate under Viktor Yushchenko.

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Climate

The climate of Ukraine is mostly temperate continental. A subtropical Mediterranean climate is prevalent on the southern portions of the Crimean Peninsula. The average monthly temperature in winter ranges from -8° to 2° C, while summer temperatures average 17° to 25° C.

Economy

The World Bank classifies Ukraine as a middle-income state. Significant issues include underdeveloped infrastructure and transportation, corruption and bureaucracy. But the rapidly growing Ukrainian economy has a very interesting emerging market with a relatively big population, and large profits associated with the high risks. The Ukrainian stock market recorded 130% growth in 2007— second highest in the world.

By December 2007 the average nominal salary in Ukraine reached 1,675 hryvnias per month (\$363 CAD). Despite remaining lower than in neighbouring central European countries, the annual growth of average salary income in real terms is about 20 per cent for several years (2001-2006) in a row.

Ukraine produces nearly all types of transportation vehicles and spacecraft. Antonov airplanes and KrAZ trucks are exported to many countries. The majority of Ukrainian exports are marketed to the European Union and Commonwealth of Independent States.

The country imports most energy supplies, especially oil and natural gas, and to a large extent depends on Russia as an energy supplier. While 25% of the natural gas in Ukraine comes from internal sources, about 35% comes from Russia and the remaining 40% from Central Asia through transit routes that Russia controls. At the same time, 85% of the Russian gas is delivered to Western Europe through Ukraine.

After 15 years of negotiations, Ukraine was invited to join the World Trade Organization on February 5, 2008. Ukraine ratified the agreements on April 10, 2008, and will become a WTO member 30 days after the ratification.

Natural resources

Iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, sulfur, graphite, titanium, magnesium, kaolin, nickel, mercury, timber, arable land.

Culture



Ukrainian customs are heavily influenced by Christianity, which is the dominant religion in the country. The culture of Ukraine has been also influenced by its eastern and western neighbours, which is reflected in its architecture, music and art.

The tradition of the Easter egg, known as pysanka, has long roots in Ukraine. This tradition is thousands of years old, and precedes the arrival of Christianity to Ukraine.

The Ukrainian diet includes chicken, pork, beef, fish and mushrooms. Ukrainians eat a lot of potatoes, grains, fresh and pickled vegetables, and different kinds of bread. Popular traditional dishes include varenyky (sometimes called perogies), borsch and holubtsi (cabbage rolls). Ukrainians drink juices, milk, buttermilk, mineral water, tea, coffee, beer, wine and horilka (vodka).

Ukrainians like to spend time outdoors organizing picnics, socializing, playing soccer (European football) and visiting with friends or family members. It is common practice to shake hands when greeting people, or to hug a close friend. It is also traditional at gatherings where food and drink are served for those present to offer toasts. For example, the first toast is to the host(s), the second is to friendship (unless at a birthday party where it is for the parents of the person celebrating their birthday), while the third is to the ladies (which men drink while standing).

Ukrainian workplace culture is more formal than in Canada especially with regards to worker-management relations, where there is a distance is kept with superiors.

In Ukraine, gender roles tend to be more traditional, respect towards and helping of older people is very common. Grandparents play a greater role in raising children than in the West.

Demographics

Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001 census)

Religion

Ukrainian Orthodox - 83.8%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 8%, Roman Catholic 2.2%, Protestant 2.2%, Jewish 0.6%, other 3.2%

Language

According to the Constitution, the state language is Ukrainian. Russian, which was the *de facto* official language of the Soviet Union, is widely spoken, especially in eastern and southern Ukraine. The 2001 census indicates that 67% of the population declared Ukrainian as its native language and 24% declared Russian. The remaining 9% includes Romanian, Polish, and Hungarian-speaking minorities.

