

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Moldova

CAPITAL: Chisinau

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 33,700 Sq Km (13,000 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 4,520,600



LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY: Moldova is located on the southwestern part of the East European Plain and is a former republic of the USSR. It is bound by Ukraine to the north, east and south, and Romania to the west. The country is generally a hilly plain that slopes from the northwest to the southeast and is dissected by many streams and deep river valleys. The Moldovan Uplands or Kodry are located in the center of the country and rise to 429 metres (141 feet) in the north. The Northern Moldovan Plain has an elevation between 250 to 300 metres (82 to 98 feet) and also contains broad flat valleys while along the western bank of the Dneestr River, the gently sloping Dneestr Uplands are found, which in turn fade into the Podolian Plateau to the south. Along the Baltic Sea Lowlands there are level plains and the country's principal rivers are the Dneestr and Prut. Major Cities (pop. est.); Chisinau 753,500, Tiraspol 186,000, Balti 164,900, Tighina 141,500, Rabnita 62,900 (1991). Land Use; forested 12%, pastures 13%, agricultural-cultivated 65%, Other 10% (1993).

CLIMATE: Moldova has a continental climate with moist summers and cool dry winters. Rainfall is heaviest between May and June while annual average precipitation varies from 610 mm (24 inches) in the northern regions to 410 mm (16 inches) in the south where droughts are also common. Average temperature ranges in Chisinau are from -5 degrees Celsius (23 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) in July

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Moldovans who account for 65% of the population while 14% are Ukrainian and 13% are Russian. Other ethnic minorities include Belarussians, Jews and Germans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 129 persons per sq km (336 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 47.1% urban, 52.9% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 47.1% male, 52.9% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 65.0 years male, 71.8 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 28% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 21% 30 to 44, 15% 45 to 59, 10% 60 to 74, 3% 75 and over (1989). Birth Rate; 16.5 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 10.5 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 6.0 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 19.8 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians, of which the majority are Orthodox Christians.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Romanian, although Russian is also widely spoken and each ethnic minority also has its own language.

EDUCATION: Aged 15 or over and having attained: incomplete primary or no formal schooling 24.5%, incomplete secondary 20.4%, secondary or incomplete post secondary 46.4%, higher 8.7% (1989). Literacy; N/A.

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: On Aug. 27, 1991 Moldova declared its independence, although prior to independence its history was closely tied with that of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In Mar. 1953 Yosef Stalin died and was succeeded by Georgy Malenkov who was in turn forced to relinquish the party leadership to Nikita Khrushchev after a little over one week in power. In 1955 the Warsaw pact militarily aligned the Soviet Union with other communist countries and in Nov. 1956 the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to quell uprisings. In 1957 three communist ministers unsuccessfully attempted to depose Khrushchev which resulted in their expulsion from the central committee. In 1962 under Khrushchev's rule the USSR was involved in the Cuban Missile crisis and in the same year relations with China were broken off as a result of ideological differences. In Oct. 1964 Khrushchev was forced to retire and was succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev. In Aug. 1968 the Warsaw Pact forces led by the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to halt their Prague Spring reforms. In 1977 Breshnev was elected President. In Nov. 1982 Brezhnev died and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB. Andropov introduced limited economic reforms and established an anti-corruption program. In Feb 1984 Andropov died and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko who in turn died on Mar. 10, 1985. On Mar. 11, 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as Chernenko's successor and Gorbachev embarked on a program which restructured the USSR's relations with the West. Gorbachev also established Glasnost (openness) as well as Perestroika (restructuring and reform). In Apr. 1986 a meltdown in the reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine sent radioactive fallout across northern Europe. In Dec. 1987 the USSR and USA signed the Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). In Feb. 1988 a dispute erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in mass demonstrations and strikes in the two republics. In Dec. 1988 an earthquake in Armenia killed some 50,000 people. In Apr. 1989 troops violently repressed demonstrations in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. In Dec. 1989 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted multiparty politics. In Jan. 1990 Gorbachev visited Lithuania and was met by some 250,000 pro-independence demonstrators. In Feb. 1990 some 18 people were killed in riots over housing discrimination in Tajikistan. In May 1990 Boris Yeltsin was elected President of the Russian Federation and on Nov. 1, 1990 launched a 500 day plan to give the Russian Republic a free market economy. In June 1990 Nakhichevan an Azerbaijani enclave bordering Iran declared its intention for a unification with Iran while a civil war was escalating between Azerbaijan

and Armenia. In the same month around 150 people were killed during ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan. In Jan 1991 another 15 people were killed as the Red Army seized a television station in Lithuania while in Latvia the Soviet Black Berets killed 5 people in an attack on the ministry building. In the same month troops were being deployed in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova. In Mar. 1991 pro-Yeltsin demonstrators held a mass rally. On Aug. 18, 1991 as Gorbachev was vacationing in the Crimea, the Politburo hard liners attempted a coup to remove Gorbachev from power through the declaration of a State of Emergency under the control of a State Committee. Almost immediately republic leaders declared the emergency committee illegal as well as unconstitutional and began to barricade their parliaments as troops and tanks were deployed throughout the republics. By Aug. 20 senior officers had refused to order their troops to use force against the civilians and on Aug. 21, 1991 the coup collapsed as troops were ordered to return to their barracks. Immediately following the unsuccessful coup many republics suspended or purged the communist party and on Sept. 5, 1991 after 3 days of debate the 74 years of centralized communist control came to an end. In Jan. 1992 Moldova became a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) while during the first half of the year spasmodic fighting erupted between the Moldovan Army and Russian and Ukrainian separatists from the region to the east of the Dniester River. In June 1992 the Russian 14th Army assisted the separatists in defeating the Moldovan Army in the battle for Bendery. In July 1992 Pres. Mircea Snegur and Russian Pres. Yeltsin signed a pact that resulted in a cease-fire. Also in 1992 tensions also increased with the country seemingly moving closer to unification with Romania. In 1993 the Moldovan Army failed to regain control over the separatist region controlled the the Russian 14th Army while the situation remained a stalemate with Russia insisting it would only withdraw its troops following a political solution. In the south, a tentative agreement on local autonomy for another separatist region, the "Gagauz Republic", resulted in a peaceful solution without confrontation. The government also relinquished its desire for unification with Romania choosing instead to remain independent. Also in 1993 the government obtained loans from the IMF and World Bank to support the country's economic reform programs.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Leu (L) (plural; Lei) divided into 100 Bani.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$5,140,100,000 (1993). Public Debt; N/A. Imports; USD \$745,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$617,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; R -30,200,000 (1992). Economically Active Population; 1,950,000 or 44.8% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 1.2% (1994).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the CIS.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Barley, Clay, Corn, Fruit, Grapes, Limestone, Livestock, Oil and Natural Gas, Quartz Sands, Rye, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Tobacco, Vegetables,

Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Ceramics, Clothing Manufacture, Electrical Equipment, Food Processing, Instruments, Machine Assembly, Milling, Textiles, Wine Production.

MAIN EXPORTS: Building, Materials, Canned Foods, Cement, Cured Tobacco, Electrical Equipment, Fruit, Instruments, Materials, Sugar, Textiles, Wine.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 1,150 km (715 mi) (1991), passenger-km 8,875,000,000 (5,515,000,000 passenger-mi) (1991), cargo ton-km 15,007,000,000 (10,278,000,000 short ton-mi) (1991). Roads; length 10,300 km (6,400 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 177,100 (1988). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; passenger-km 2,352,000,000 (1,461,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 19,000,000 (13,013,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 5 with a total circulation of 205,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,421,000 (1991). Television; receivers 1,264,000 (1991). Telephones; units 523,900 (1993).

MILITARY: 11,850 (1995) total active duty personnel with 89.0% army, 0.0% navy and 11.0% air force while military expenditure accounts for 0.8% (1992) of the Gross National Product (GNP).