

OFFICIAL NAME: Russian Federation

CAPITAL: Moscow

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Federal Multiparty Republic

AREA: 17,075,400 Sq Km (6,592,800 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 148,518,500



LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY: Russia occupies a large area of Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is bound by the Barents Sea and Norway to the northwest, Finland, the Gulf of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus to the west, Ukraine, the Black Sea, Georgia and Azerbaijan to the southwest, the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China to the south, the Sea of Japan to the southeast, the Sea of Okhotsk and Bering Sea to the east, the East Siberian and Chukchi Seas to the northeast as well as the Laptev Sea, Arctic Ocean and Kara Sea to the north. Around 70% of the total land area consists of broad plains. In the west lies the East European Plain which includes the low Valdai, Central Russian and Volga Hills as well as the Oka-Don and Caspian Lowlands. The north to south Ural Ranges, which have an average elevation of between 800 and 1,200 metres (2,625 and 3,937 feet), marks the eastern boundary of the East European Plain. Further east, the flat and broad West Siberian Plain, which contains marshy lowlands, gives way to the strongly uplifted Middle Siberian Plateau. A complex chain of deep river valleys cut the undulating plateau and in various places high mountains rise above the plateau's surface. Further east the plateau transforms into the Central Yakut Plain. The mountainous regions are predominant in the east and south, although the northern ranges of the Greater Caucasus which include the country's highest point Mt. El'Brus at 5,642 metres (18,510 feet) and others are also found in European Russia. Many active volcanoes are also found along the Pacific coast of the Far East and throughout the Kuril Islands. Russia also contains some 2 million fresh and saltwater lakes as well as many glaciers in the Arctic and high mountain regions. In addition, there are also around 120,000 rivers in the northern area of Siberia with most icebound for eight months of the year. Major Cities (pop. est.); Moscow 8,570,000, Petersburg 4,321,000, Nizhny Novgorod 1,425,000, Novosibirsk 1,418,000, Yekaterinburg 1,347,000, Samara 1,223,000, Omsk 1,161,000, Chelyabinsk 1,125,000, Kazan 1,092,000, Ufa 1,092,000, Perm 1,086,000, (1994). Land Use; forested 46%, pastures 5%, agricultural-cultivated 8%, other 41% (1993).

CLIMATE: Russia's climate is almost universally continental, although it increases from west to east as the Atlantic Ocean's influence decreases. The climate of East Siberia is severely continental while the northern areas have an arctic climate. In the southern areas of the Far East, the monsoonal climate is influenced by the Pacific Ocean resulting in moderately warm and rainy summer conditions while winter is cold with little snow. Throughout Russia, winters are cold while summers are hot in the south and relatively warm elsewhere. Snow cover lasts from 60 to 80 days in the south and from 260 to 280 days in the Far North with

the northern areas of the Far East experiencing permafrost. Rainfall is highest in the westerly mountain regions which has an average annual precipitation of up to 2,000 mm (79 inches) while on the East European Plain it averages between 600 and 700 mm (24 to 27.5 inches) and up to 1,000 (39 inches) in the southern areas of the Far East. Average temperature ranges in Moscow are from -16 to -9 degrees Celsius (3 to 16 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 13 to 23 degrees Celsius (5 to 73 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Russians who account for 82% of the population while 3% are Ukrainians and 4% are Tartars. Other ethnic minorities include Armenians, Azerbaijani, Kazakhs, Jews and Germans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 9 persons per sq km (22 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 73.7% urban, 26.3% rural (1992). Sex Distribution; 47.0% male, 53.0% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 63.5 years male, 74.3 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 23% under 15, 21% 15 to 29, 24% 30 to 44, 16% 45 to 59, 10% 60 to 69, 6% 70 and over (1992). Birth Rate; 12.1 per 1,000 (1991). Death Rate; 11.4 per 1,000 (1991). Increase Rate; 0.7 per 1,000 (1991). Infant Mortality Rate; 17.8 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with the majority of the population Russian Orthodox.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Russian which is spoken by the majority of the population while each ethnic minority also has its own language.

EDUCATION: Aged 15 or over and having attained: primary or no formal schooling 19.4%, incomplete secondary 21.0%, secondary and incomplete post secondary 48.3%, higher 11.3% (1989). Literacy; N/A.

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: On Dec. 8, 1991 Russia 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 Brezhnev 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 1992 Russia acquired the former USSR's permanent seat on the UN Security Council as its defacto successor and also took over all Soviet properties and embassies abroad. In Jan. 1992 Russia became a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) following agreements reached in Nov. 1991 with Ukraine and Belarus. Also in Jan. 1992 Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar announced plans for price liberalization that resulted in rapid price increases while the central bank began to extend further credit to support industry and trade. Following Russia's initiative, which resulted from the effects of the common currency and each republics implementation of trade barriers to protect their industries and goods, the other CIS republics followed suit. Russia

also imposed export quotas and taxes which resulted in exporters leaving their hard-currency earnings in foreign offshore banks while imports were also centralized. On March 31, 1992 the 18 of the 20 sovereign republics signed a federal treaty that established the Russian Federation, with Tartarstan endeavoring to gain a separate agreement with the federation and Checheno-Ingushetia announcing its independence. In June 1992 Pres. Yeltsin and Ukraine's Pres. Leonid Kravchuk reached an agreement over the former USSR's Black Sea Fleet in which command was to be withdrawn from the CIS, the point of contention and be placed under a joint Russian-Ukrainian command for three years. Also in June 1992 Russia recognized and sided with the Transdnistria republic separatists from Moldova. In July 1992 Russia signed high-level economic and military agreements with Belarus. In Sept. 1992 Russia and Georgia signed an agreement that recognized Abkhazia as a part of Georgia while the Russian Parliament under the speaker, Ruslan Khasbulatov threatened to annex South Ossetia, another conflict spot in Georgia. In Oct. 1992 Pres. Yeltsin banned the Parliament's (Supreme Soviet) private army following Khasbulatov's continual demands that the government be subordinate to it rather than the president. In Nov. 1992 the Constitutional Court ruled that the Communist Party ban was constitutional, following the Communists claims that the 1991 ban was unconstitutional. In Dec. 1992 Pres. Yeltsin made various deals including the slowdown of market reforms with the influential Civic Union, a center-right coalition of four groups, in an attempt to halt demands that the government resign. However, on Dec. 9, 1992 during a session of the Congress of the People's Deputies, Pres. Yeltsin and the Congress clashed over their failure to endorse Yegor Gaidar as Prime Minister with Pres. Yeltsin describing the congress as a "fortress of conservative and reactionary forces." On Dec. 12, 1992 Pres. Yeltsin and Ruslan Khasbulatov agreed to a national referendum on a new constitution to be held in April 1993, that many of Pres. Yeltsin's emergency powers be extended until the referendum, that the Congress could nominate and vote on its own choices for Prime Minister as well as the President's nomination and that it also had the right to reject the President's nominations for the Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior and Security ministries. On Dec. 14, 1992 Pres. Yeltsin nominated Viktor Chernomyrdin as Prime Minister which the Congress confirmed. On Dec. 29, 1992 Russia and the US announced they had agreed on the terms for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) pact which would reduce each country's nuclear arsenal by two-thirds. Also in 1992 Russia signed a bilateral treaty with Britain and Pres. Yeltsin pledged to abandon military support for North Korea following his visit to South Korea. In early 1993 Khasbulatov and the Parliament adopted the tactic of blocking Pres. Yeltsin that gradually wore away his control over the government. On March 10, 1993 Khasbulatov opened the eighth Congress of People's Deputies with a strong attack on Pres. Yeltsin accusing him of acting unconstitutionally and voted to amend the constitution, strip Pres. Yeltsin of his emergency powers and cancel the planned constitutional referendum for April. Pres. Yeltsin responded by walking out of the Congress while the first deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko declared the referendum would proceed on April 25, 1993. On March 16, 1993 Pres. Yeltsin in accordance with a ruling of the eighth Congress meeting decreed that the chairman of the central bank and three other officials should be members of the government, although the Congress's ruling made it clear that the officials would continue to be subordinate to the Parliament. On March 20, 1993 Pres. Yeltsin announced that he intended to establish a "special regime" accusing the Parliament of attempting to restore

communist control, although the Constitutional Court ruled that he was acting unconstitutionally. On March 26, 1993 the ninth Congress led by Khasbulatov attacked Pres. Yeltsin, although the deputies narrowly failed to reach the required two-thirds majority votes to impeach the President. The Congress voted that in order for Pres. Yeltsin to win the referendum he had to obtain 50% of the electorate and not just a 50% majority, however, the Constitutional Court supported Pres. Yeltsin in ruling that he only required a simple majority. On April 25, 1993 some 64.5% of the electorate voted with 58.7% expressing confidence in Pres. Yeltsin, 53% expressing confidence in his social and economic policies, 49.5% supported early presidential elections and 67.2% supported early parliamentary elections. In April 1993 Pres. Yeltsin attended a summit with US Pres. Clinton in Vancouver B.C, Canada following which the US extended a US \$1.6 billion aid package. In June 1993 Pres. Yeltsin convened a constitutional assembly with some 700 representatives approving a draft constitutional on July 12, 1993 that envisaged the dissolution of the Congress and establishment of a bicameral legislature. Following which the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) immediately rejected the draft constitution declaring the Congress of the People's Deputies was the ultimate lawmaking body and only they could decide on a new constitution. Also in July 1993 when the President was on holiday the Parliament passed decrees revising economic policy and launching investigations on key presidential advisors alleging corruption. In Aug. 1993 Pres. Yeltsin announced he would deploy all means necessary to bring about new parliamentary elections. On Sept. 1, 1993 Pres. Yeltsin suspended Vice Pres. Aleksandr Rutskoy and later agreed to Presidential elections if the Parliament also called elections, which they ignored. On Sept. 21, 1993 Pres. Yeltsin dissolved the Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet, decreeing elections for a two-chamber parliament were to held on Dec. 11-12, 1993. Following which the Supreme Soviet declared Yeltsin's decree null and void, and proclaimed Rutskoy as President who in turn dismissed Yeltsin and three key ministers that led to a political impasse. On Sept. 24, 1993 Russia and nine other former USSR republics signed a Treaty on Economic Union. On Oct. 3, 1993 the political impasse between the Parliament led by Khasbulatov and the President turned into armed conflict as police failed to control demonstrators urged on by Khasbulatov who called for the storming of the Kremlin. Pres. Yeltsin responded by sending in Army tanks on Oct. 4, 1993 that proceeded to shell the Parliamentary building (White House) with Rutskoy and Khasbulatov ultimately surrendering. Following which Pres. Yeltsin banned many political parties and newspapers that supported the impasse and Khasbulatov while the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Valery Zorkin was forced to resign and the court temporarily suspended. In Oct. 1993 Pres. Yeltsin visited Japan and apologized for the Soviet treatment of Japanese prisoners during WWII and further affirmed that the unfulfilled 1956 agreements on the return of two of the Kuril Islands were still valid. In Nov. 1993 Pres. Yeltsin introduced his new draft constitution for a two-year bicameral legislature in a television broadcast and announced a referendum and elections for Dec, 12, 1993. The new draft constitutional also enabled the President to appoint the Prime Minister and Military Leadership even if the Parliament disapproved of his nominations, and removed the ability for the President to be impeached if he breached the constitution. On Dec. 12, 1993 the draft constitution was approved by 60% of the voters. Also in Dec. 1993 the CIS Interstate Bank was established to facilitate trade transactions.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Rouble (R) divided into 100 Kopecks.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$349,062,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$130,800,000,000 (1995). Imports; USD \$28,135,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$49,935,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; USD \$21,800,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 74,590,000 or 50.4% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 18.1% (1995).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the CIS, Germany, Italy, the US and the UK.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Antimony, Asbestos, Barley, Basalt, Bauxite, Coal, Cobalt, Copper, Corn, Diamonds, Gas, Gold, Granite, Iron Ore, Lead, Livestock, Marble, Mercury, Millet, Molybdenum, Nickel, Oats, Oil, Phlogopite, Platinum, Potassium Salt, Potatoes, Rye, Silver, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Timber, Tin, Tobacco, Tungsten, Various Precious and Semi Precious Stones, Vegetables, Wheat, Zinc.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Armaments, Cement, Chemicals, Electronic Equipment, Engineering, Fertilizers, Fishing, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Mining and Mineral Refining, Oil and Gas Processing, Ship Building, Timber Processing, Transport Equipment.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Coal, Fabrics, Fertilizers, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Metal Ores, Natural Gas, Oil, Petrochemicals, Petroleum Products, Textiles, Timber, Transport Equipment.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 158,100 km (98,239 mi) (1992), passenger-km 254,700,000,000 (158,263,000,000 passenger-mi) (1992), cargo ton-km 2,326,000,000 (1,593,000,000 short ton-mi) (1992). Roads; length 893,000 km (554,884 mi) (1992). Vehicles; cars 9,661,000 (1992), trucks and buses 465,000 (1992). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; passenger-km 150,400,000,000 (93,454,000,000 passenger-mi) (1992), cargo ton-km 2,400,000 (1,644,000 short ton-mi) (1992).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 339 with a total circulation of 57,000,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 48,800,000 (1992). Television; receivers 54,200,000 (1992). Telephones; units 23,397,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 1,520,000 (1995) total active duty personnel with 78.2% army, 13.2% navy and 8.6% air force while military expenditure accounts for 21.5% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).