

## Russian Federation

**Type of Government:** Authoritarian semi-democracy.

**Head of Government:** Vladimir Putin (term expires 2018)

**Capital city:** Moscow

**Ideology:** Nationalist, centralized capitalism.

**Region:** Eastern Europe (same as Azerbaijan)

**Neighbours:** Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



### DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 143.4 million, making Russia the 9<sup>th</sup> largest in the world by population but largest by land mass.
- **Age:** The average life expectancy for males is 62.77 years for males and 74.64 years for females. A large gender imbalance: only 0.859 males to every 1 female.
- **Religion:** Orthodox Christianity (the Russian Orthodox Church) 79%, although majority do not attend services.
- **Ethnicities:** 81% Russians, 3.7% Tatars, 1.4% Ukrainians.
- **Language:** Russian, though 27 other languages also spoken.

### ECONOMY

- Russia suffered from serious economic disjunction when the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s and the country reverted to capitalism. Since 2000, higher domestic consumption of consumer goods and a stabilised political scene have kick-started Russia's economy.
- Russia has a poverty rate of 13.3%. Though high, this is dramatically smaller than the poverty rate of 40% in 1998 at the peak of the Soviet Union collapse. Poverty is still a pervasive issue.
- Growing middle class; only 8 million classified as 'middle-class' in 2000 but 55 million in 2006.

#### Major Industries

- Unusually large resources and manufacturing sectors (31%, though 60% is still services): Aircraft (which can include combinations with the military) 29%, Defence 20% and Automotive 7%.

#### Exports

- **Major Trade Partners:** Netherlands 12.2%, China 6.4%, Italy 5.6%, Germany 4.6% and Poland 4.2%. Primary trading bloc is the European Union.
- Energy and mineral industries that use coal, natural gas, metals and timbers are very significant, accounting for 80% of Russia's exports abroad. Russia

#### Imports

- Most imports are received from China (15.5%) and Germany (10%).

- Imports include vehicles, pharmaceutical products, plastic, semi-finished metal products, meat and agriculture, in particular from Ukraine.

### Natural Resources

- Russia has enormous reserves of natural resources including oil and natural gas.



## MILITARY

**Size:** 1.04 million active troops with 2.4 million active reservists, ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in active service below North Korea and 6<sup>th</sup> largest in total, ~800,000 more than USA and ~1,000,000 less than China.

**Army:** 23,000 battle tanks, 20,000 armoured vehicles and 4,500 rocket launchers.

**Navy:** 24 nuclear submarines, 16 diesel-electric submarines and 37 surface combat vessels including cruisers, destroyers, frigates and one aircraft carrier. Russia lacks a warm water port, so its navy is small.

**Airforce:** 170,000 service people and more than 4000 aircraft. Many of these aircraft are outdated.

**Exotic weapons:** Russia is a nuclear state with 3100 active nuclear warheads. Russia's has a large chemical weapons stockpile, though it has committed to destroy them all eventually.

## POLITICAL

### Domestic Politics

- Russia has a long tradition of autocracy, stretching back to Ivan the Terrible (1547). Present system came into being after the Soviet Union collapsed; a network of oligarchs owns much of the wealth in Russia, though they are all subject to leader Vladimir Putin (increasingly intolerant of dissent and minorities).
- Primary domestic concerns include corruption (they are the 39<sup>th</sup> most corrupt state on Earth), serious inequality, poor infrastructure, and increasing political instability.

### Foreign Policy Concerns

- Russia historically attempts to project a sphere of influence over its Western borders; Syria, Ukraine, Belarus, and post-Soviet "stans" are all important allies. Russia has determinedly resisted any intervention in Syria and generally opposes military intervention at the UN.
- Russia is generally dismissive of "western" human rights and Western-backed development.
- Russia has serious internal problems; people from a province of Russia called Chechnya are fighting for independence. For this and other reasons, they have a good relationship with China.

### More Information

**Wikipedia:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia>

**CIA:** <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>

**BBC:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17839672>

**Latest news from the New York Times** (<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/russia/index.html>),

the **Economist** (<http://www.economist.com/topics/russia>),

the **Guardian** (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/russia>), and

**Al-Jazeera** (<http://www.aljazeera.com/category/country/russia>)