



## UKRAINE

Ukraine gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and has since veered between seeking closer integration with Western Europe and reconciliation with Russia, which supplies most of the country's energy. Europe's second largest country, Ukraine is a land of wide, fertile agricultural plains, with large pockets of heavy industry in the east.

Following independence, Ukraine declared itself a neutral state, but nonetheless formed a limited military partnership with the Russian Federation, other CIS countries and a partnership with NATO since 1994. In the 2000s, the government began leaning towards NATO, and a deeper cooperation with the alliance was set by the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan signed in 2002. It was later agreed that the question of joining NATO should be answered by a national referendum at some point in the future. Former President Viktor Yanukovich considered the current level of co-operation between Ukraine and NATO sufficient, and was against Ukraine joining NATO. In 2013, protests against the government of President Yanukovich broke out in downtown Kiev after the government made the decision to suspend the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement and seek closer economic ties with Russia. This began a several-months-long wave of demonstrations and protests known as the Euromaidan, which later escalated into the 2014 Ukrainian revolution that ultimately resulted in the overthrowing of Yanukovich and the establishment of a new government. These events precipitated the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, and the War in Donbass in March 2014; both are still ongoing as of May 2016. On 1 January 2016, Ukraine joined the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the European Union.

### Physical Geography

Official name: **Ukraine**

Region: **Europe**

Size in Squared Kilometers: **603,550 sq km**

Bordering Countries: **Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia**

**Physical Features:** Most of Ukraine consists of regular plains with the average height above sea level being 175 metres (574 ft). It is surrounded by mountains to its west and extreme south. Wide spaces of the country's plains are located in the south-western part of the East European Plain. The plains have numerous highlands and lowlands caused by the uneven crystallized base of the East European craton. The highlands are characterized by Precambrian basement rocks from the Ukrainian Shield.

**Climate:** temperate continental; Mediterranean only on the southern Crimean coast; precipitation disproportionately distributed, highest in west and north, lesser in east and southeast; winters vary from cool along the Black Sea to cold farther inland; warm summers across the greater part of the country, hot in the south

### Cultural Geography

**Population :** 42,539,010 (2016 est.)

**Ethnic Groups:** 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 est.)

**Official Language:** Ukrainian

**Other Languages:** 67.5%, Russian (regional language) 29.6%, other (includes small Crimean Tatar-, Moldavian-, and Hungarian-speaking minorities) 2.9% (2001 est.)

**Capital:** Kyiv (Kiev)

**Other Major Cities:** Kharkov, Lvov, Odessa, Donetsk, Dnepr

**Quality of life :** Low

### Political Geography

**Founded:** 24 August 1991

**Type of Government :** semi-presidential republic

**Country's leaders:**

**President:** Petro Poroshenko

**Prime minister:** Volodymyr Groysman

**Chairman of Parliament:** Andriy Parubiy

**Allies:** European Union and NATO members, Georgia, Algeria, China, Canada, USA, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Austria, Turkey, Singapore, Israel, Armenia, Azerbaijan

**Enemies:** Russia, Moldova, Romania

### Economic Geography

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** \$339.5 billion (2015 est.)

**Natural resources:** coal, hydroelectricity and nuclear fuel raw materials, grain, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, vegetables

**Currency:** Hryvnia

**Major Exports and Imports:**

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**Exports:** machinery ferrous and nonferrous metals, fuel and petroleum products, chemicals, machinery and transport equipment, foodstuffs

**Imports:** energy, machinery and equipment, chemicals

**Major Trading Partners:**

**Export partners:** Russia 12.7%, Turkey 7.3%, China 6.3%, Egypt 5.5%, Italy 5.2%, Poland 5.2%

**Import partners:** Russia 20%, Germany 10.4%, China 10.1%, Belarus 6.5%, Poland 6.2%, Hungary 4.2%

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