

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world. It occupies about one-seventh of the earth's surface. It covers the eastern part of Europe and the northern part of Asia. Its total area is about 17 million square kilometers. The population of the country is about 143.3 mln. people. The country is washed by 12 seas of 3 oceans: the Pacific, the Arctic and the Atlantic. In the south Russia borders on China, Mongolia, Korea, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. In the west it borders on Norway, Finland, the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine. It also has a sea-border with the USA.

There is hardly a country in the world where such a variety of scenery and vegetation can be found. We have steppes in the south, plains and forests in the midland, tundra and taiga in the north, highlands and deserts in the east.

There are two great plains in Russia: the Great Russian Plain and the West Siberian Lowland. There are several mountain chains on the territory of the country: the Urals, the Caucasus, the Altai and others. The largest mountain chain, the Urals, separates Europe from Asia.

There are over two million rivers in Russia. Europe's biggest river, the Volga, flows into the Caspian Sea. The main Siberian rivers — the Ob, the Yenisei and the Lena — flow from the south to the north. The Amur in the Far East flows into the Pacific Ocean.

Russia is rich in beautiful lakes. The world's deepest lake (1,600 metres) is Lake Baikal. It is much smaller than the Baltic Sea, but there is much more water in it than in the Baltic Sea. The water in the lake is so clear that if you look down you can count the stones on the bottom.

Russia has one-sixth of the world's forests. They are concentrated in the European north of the country, in Siberia and in the Far East.

On the vast territory of the country there are various types of climate, from arctic in the north to subtropical in the south. In the middle of the country the climate is temperate and continental.

Russia is very rich in oil, coal, iron ore, natural gas, copper, nickel and other mineral resources.

The capital of Russia is Moscow. It is its largest political, scientific, cultural and industrial centre. It is one of the oldest Russian cities.

The national symbols of the Russian Federation are a white-blue-red **banner** and a double-headed eagle.

The Russian Federation is a presidential republic headed by the President. The country government consists of three branches: **legislative**, **executive** and **judicial**. The President controls only the executive branch — the government, but not the Supreme Court and Federal Assembly.

The legislative power belongs to the **Federal Assembly** comprising two chambers: **the Council of Federation** (upper Chamber) and the **State Duma** (lower Chamber). Each chamber is headed by the Speaker. The executive power belongs to the government (the Cabinet of Ministers) headed by the Prime Minister. The judicial power belongs to the system of Courts comprising the Constitutional Court, the **Supreme Court** and federal courts.

Our country has a multiparty system. The largest and most **influential** political parties are the «United Russia», the Communist party, «The Patriots of Russia», «The Justice Russia», «The Apple», Liberal-Democratic and some others.

The **foreign policy** of the Russian Federation is that of international cooperation, peace and friendship with all nations irrespective of their political and social systems.