

## Basic information about EASTERN EUROPE AND CAUCASUS

**7 countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine

**Area:** 18 106 443 sq. km.

**Population:** 218 418 000 citizens

**Coverage:** 10 time zones

**Environment:** 5 climate zones

**Highest point:** Elbrus mtn. (5,633 m)

**Lowest point:** Caspian Sea (-28 m)



... and thousands of youth organisations and millions of opportunities!!!

## Selection of on-line resources for EECA

Travel Information: [www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide)

Regional Railway timetable: [www.poezda.net/en/web](http://www.poezda.net/en/web)

Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty: [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org)

"Transitions On-Line" internet newspaper: [www.tol.cz](http://www.tol.cz)

Virtual Library: [www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb)

Commonwealth of Independent States statistics: [www.cisstat.com/eng](http://www.cisstat.com/eng)

Maps of the region: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth.html)

SALTO EECA RC : [www.salto-youth.net/eeca](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca)

EECA Support Service: [www.salto-eeca.eu](http://www.salto-eeca.eu)

EAC Executive Agency: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php)



**SALTO-YOUTH**  
EASTERN EUROPE AND CAUCASUS  
RESOURCE CENTRE



[www.salto-youth.net/eeca](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca)  
[eeca@salto-youth.net](mailto:eeca@salto-youth.net)  
+48 22 622 37 06

## Eastern Europe and Caucasus Manual

[www.salto-youth.net/eecainfo](http://www.salto-youth.net/eecainfo)

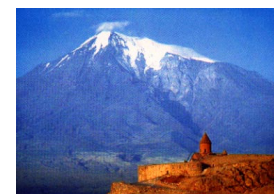
Eastern Europe and Caucasus is a region that spreads from the eastern boundaries of European Union till Pacific coast of Russian Federation throughout most of Commonwealth of Independent States.



The boundaries of Eastern Europe can be subject to considerable overlap and fluctuation depending on the context they are used in, which makes differentiation difficult. As is also true of continents, regions are only social constructs and should not be understood as physical features defined by abstract, neutral criteria.



In many outdated sources, the term "Eastern Europe" still encompasses most, or all, such European countries that until the end of the Cold War (around 1989) were Communist states or countries under Soviet influence, i.e., the former "Eastern Bloc". A view that Europe is divided strictly into the West and the East is considered pejorative by many in the nominally eastern countries. Many people in the region may feel the label stigmatizing in comparison with countries that successfully have asserted their belonging to "the West" despite their equally, or more, "eastern" location — and history as parts of Imperial Russia (Finland) or Eastern Orthodoxy (Greece). Czechs, for instance, will often point out that Prague is significantly west of Vienna, but Austria is never categorized as Eastern Europe. Therefore it is necessary to remember, that the eastern countries of European Union, which have a border with Eastern Europe and Caucasus Region are mostly called Central or Central-Eastern Europe.



**SALTO-YOUTH**  
EASTERN EUROPE AND CAUCASUS  
RESOURCE CENTRE



[www.salto-youth.net/eeca](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca)  
[eeca@salto-youth.net](mailto:eeca@salto-youth.net)  
+48 22 622 37 06

Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA) region consists of 7 countries:

**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia,  
Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine.**

All of this 7 societies have own languages (even often with own, distinctive alphabets!), own culture and national identity with many ethnic minorities. Nevertheless the history of XIX and XX centuries left a clear stamp on them. Eastern European and Caucasian states for many years were under the control of Imperial Russia and later, a part of Soviet Union. Therefore they have a lot of common cultural patterns. Russian is predominantly spoken as a first or second language, the economy is still in transformation from central planning to free market, the issues of democracy and human rights are very actual.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet republics adopted capitalism as their *new economic system*. The gross domestic product in Eastern Europe and Caucasian countries immediately went down, totalling only 86 percent of its 1991 volume. Inflation was also rampant. In Russia itself, the perceived failure of capitalism to improve lifestyle culminated in the 1998 Russian economic crisis, which was followed by a return to more interventionist economic policies by the government.

The reasons for capitalism's apparent failure in the post-Soviet states has been a subject of debate. Poor or limited transportation and communications infrastructure, untested legal systems and weak property rights protection, political instability, and dense bureaucracy are all cited. Popular opposition to capitalism is also noted, with many of the people who lived their entire lives in communism become passive and hold a so-called *homo sovieticus* mentality. Finally, the free market neoliberalism implemented in most former Soviet republics is called into question and accused of being a flawed economic model.



Regarding *freedom survey* in the former Soviet republics, Freedom House Foundation's 2006 report listed Russia, Belarus and Azerbaijan as "not free", Armenia, Georgia and Moldova were listed as "partly free" and Ukraine as "free" country. Nevertheless it is necessary to remember, that most of this countries don't agree with the methodology of this survey and accuse the Freedom House for imputing "western standards" into "eastern reality".

*Conflict zones in the post-Soviet space:* Chechnya, which was seeking independence from Russia. Even the Russian authorities were restored, the situation in Northern Caucasus is still unstable; Transnistria is de-facto independent from Moldova; Abkhazia and South Ossetia are de-facto independent from Georgia; Nagorno-Karabakh is de-facto independent from Azerbaijan. It means generally, that these regions posses most of the independent state's features (e.g. visas, border controls, government, police, taxes, etc.).

All EECA countries belong to the organization uniting most of the post-soviet states: *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS). It has been said to have been created to "allow a civilized divorce" between the former Soviet republics. Anyway, some members have since signed a number of separate documents promoting closer cooperation, when the others rather strive to untie common relations .

(source: *Wikipedia*)

