
I. THE COUNTRY

Geography

Turkey covers an area of about 781 000 km² and has a coastline extending more than 6 400 km. The greater part of the country (Anatolia) lies in Asia and is bordered on the north by the Black Sea and the U.S.S.R., on the east by Iran, and on the south by Iraq, Syria and the Mediterranean Sea. The remainder of the country (about 24 000 km²) is in Europe and is known as Thrace. It borders Greece and Bulgaria to the west and north, with the coastline in the south extending along the Sea of Marmara. Turkey's 69 provinces are divided into seven regions—Marmara, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Central, Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia.

History and Government

Modern Turkey is the direct descendant of the Ottoman Empire that once stretched around the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. After many years of ascendancy, in which the Ottoman Empire spread well into Europe almost to Vienna, the Empire declined until, with the First World War, it was shorn of many of its former territories.

The end of the First World War marked the start of modern Turkey. The war brought into power General Mustafa Kemal who, as first president, proclaimed Turkey a republic in 1923. Taking the name of Kemal Ataturk (father of the Turks), he led the country into the twentieth century, reorganizing its political and social structures and Westernizing its society.

Ataturk initiated the industrialization of Turkey to reduce its dependence on a largely agricultural economy. After his death in 1938, this process continued under succeeding governments. As a result, modern Turkey has a substantial and growing industrial base. Turkey is a member of NATO and has associate membership status in the European Community (EC).