

## RUSSIA

Official Name:	Russian Federation — Russia
Capital:	Moscow
Head of State:	President Boris Yeltsin
Head of Government:	Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin
Foreign Minister:	Andrei Kozyrev

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### DOMESTIC SITUATION

Russia is a federation composed of 88 administrative entities, including 21 ethnic-based republics and 67 regions. In 1991, Russia's population was about 148 million, of whom 81.5 percent were ethnic Russians. Other major ethnic groups include Tatars, Bashkirs, Yakuts, Tuvinians, Chechens, and Ossetians. There are also sizeable Ukrainian, Belarusan and Jewish minorities.

The Russian Federation is undergoing dramatic constitutional change. The formerly powerful Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet has been dissolved by President Yeltsin. He is promoting a new constitution that would create a presidential republic with a streamlined legislature.

Russia has existed as an independent sovereign state since December 1991. Canada has recognized it as the continuing state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). Russia has tried to invest the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), consisting of almost all the republics of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), with greater substance. Despite many deep reservations, even hostilities, there are signs that greater co-operation, particularly in the economic sphere, may lie ahead. There remain serious political difficulties between Russia and neighbouring republics, particularly where there are large Russian minorities that fear being disadvantaged at the hands of new governments.

The Russian economy remains in serious difficulty. The transformation required is vast, beyond anything tried before. The technical economic challenges are formidable; the changes required in economic culture may be greater still. There is enormous economic potential, but it will be some time before it can be adequately tapped. Foreign assistance is available, but there are difficulties in disbursing it effectively.