

Kuban Republic

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The Kuban Republic is a state in the Caucasus that borders Russia on the north, Georgia on the south, and the Black Sea on the east. With an area of about 1600 km², it's the 25th smallest country in the world and also the smallest in the Caucasus region.

Geography and demography

Most of the country is mountainous, only sloping on the east. Nevertheless, its capital, Sochi, and other major cities lie by the sea level. In the mountains on the west, waterfalls are located, many of them being a touristic goal. The Sochi National Park (partly in Russia) is also a UNESCO heritage site.

About 800,000 people live there, the majority of them being Christians. Most of them live in the cities by the sea, the mountainous part of the country isn't very populated.

History

In the Middle Ages, Slavs started to settle in this region, but it wasn't very populated until the Ukrainian Cossacks came in the 19th century, and founded all the major cities that exist to this day - such as Krasnodar (part of Russia) and Sochi (the republic's capital). To this day ethnic Ukrainians make up the majority of the population (even though the Republic doesn't even border Ukraine).

Creation

After the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, civil war began in Russia. The Cossacks living in the Kuban region fought against the Bolsheviks with the White Army. They successfully fought until 1919, when the Cossacks sent their representative to the Versailles Peace Conference. He convinced the European authorities to support the creation of an independent republic (it was a bit of a calculation from the powers because they needed an ally against Soviet Russia by the Black Sea and the Caucasus). On March 7th, 1919, the Kuban Republic with Sochi as its capital was declared. Because the Red and the White Armies were still fighting against each other and the Republic was internationally recognized, it wasn't attacked by the Soviet Union (while most of the other national republics were quickly annexed).

During WW2 the republic stayed neutral, and control of a small mountainous nation was never the goal of the Nazis nor the Red Army.

With the start of the Cold War, the Kuban Republic chose to rely on the West. To achieve this economic (and then political) bond, the Republic started to export its goods to Western Europe and the USA.

Present day

The Kuban Republic is oriented toward trading with the USA, Western Europe, and countries by the Black Sea. After the breakdown of the USSR, the republic built a strong relationship with Georgia, based on religion and pro-European direction. Tourism plays a significant role in the country's economy - the whole Caucasus is famous for its nature barely touched by a human hand.

Symbols

Symbols of the country are the Chugush mountain and the Shakhe River, which serves as a natural border with Russia and is considered a symbol of safety and independence. A typical plant is a *Rhododendron caucasicum*.

A map of the Kuban Republic and its location in Europe:

