

Summary of Ukrainian history (from various sources)

Ukraine was the center of the first eastern Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, which during the 10th and 11th centuries was the largest and most powerful state in Europe. Weakened by internecine quarrels and Mongol invasions, Kyivan Rus was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and eventually into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The cultural and religious legacy of Kyivan Rus laid the foundation for Ukrainian nationalism through subsequent centuries.

A new Ukrainian state, the Cossack Hetmanate, was established during the mid-17th century after an uprising against the Poles. Despite continuous Muscovite pressure, the Hetmanate managed to remain autonomous for well over 100 years. During the latter part of the 18th century, most Ukrainian ethnographic territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire.

Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to achieve a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was reconquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two forced famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died. In World War II, German and Soviet armies were responsible for some 7 to 8 million more deaths.

Although final independence for Ukraine was achieved in 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR, democracy and prosperity remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties. A peaceful mass protest "Orange Revolution" in the closing months of 2004 forced the authorities to overturn a rigged presidential election and to allow a new internationally monitored vote that swept into power a reformist slate under Viktor YUSHCHENKO. Subsequent internal squabbles in the YUSHCHENKO camp allowed his rival Viktor YANUKOVYCH to stage a comeback in parliamentary elections and become prime minister in August of 2006. An early legislative election, brought on by a political crisis in the spring of 2007, saw Yuliya TYMOSHENKO, as head of an "Orange" coalition, installed as a new prime minister in December 2007.

Viktor YANUKOVYCH was elected president in a February 2010 run-off election that observers assessed as meeting most international standards. The following month, Ukraine's parliament, the Rada, approved a vote of no-confidence prompting Yuliya TYMOSHENKO to resign from her post as prime minister. In October 2012, Ukraine held Rada elections, widely criticized by Western observers as flawed due to use of government resources to favor ruling party candidates, interference with media access, and harassment of opposition candidates.

President YANUKOVYCH's backtracking on a trade and cooperation agreement with the EU in November 2013 - in favor of closer economic ties with Russia - led to a three-month protest occupation of Kiev's central square. The government's eventual use of force to break up the protest camp in February 2014 led to all out pitched battles, scores of deaths, international condemnation, and the president's abrupt ouster. An interim government under Acting President Oleksandr TURCHYNOV has called for new presidential elections on 25 May 2014.

Economy - overview:

After Russia, the Ukrainian republic was the most important economic component of the former Soviet Union, producing about four times the output of the next-ranking republic. Its fertile black soil generated more than one-fourth of Soviet agricultural output, and its farms provided substantial quantities of meat, milk, grain, and vegetables to other republics. Likewise, its diversified heavy industry supplied the unique equipment (for example, large diameter pipes) and raw materials to industrial and mining sites (vertical drilling apparatus) in other regions of the former USSR.

Shortly after independence in August 1991, the Ukrainian Government liberalized most prices and erected a legal framework for privatization, but widespread resistance to reform within the government and the legislature soon stalled reform efforts and led to some backtracking. Output by 1999 had fallen to less than 40% of the 1991 level. Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy supplies and the lack of significant structural reform have made the Ukrainian economy vulnerable to external shocks. Ukraine depends on imports to meet about three-fourths of its annual oil and natural gas requirements and 100% of its nuclear fuel needs.

Outside institutions - particularly the IMF - have encouraged Ukraine to quicken the pace and scope of reforms to foster economic growth. Ukrainian Government officials eliminated most tax and customs privileges in a March 2005 budget law, bringing more economic activity out of Ukraine's large shadow economy, but more improvements are needed, including fighting corruption, developing capital markets, and improving the legislative framework.

The economy contracted nearly 15% in 2009, among the worst economic performances in the world. In April 2010, Ukraine negotiated a price discount on Russian gas imports in exchange for extending Russia's lease on its naval base in Crimea, still in effect during the political crisis of 2013-14.

Demographics of Ukraine:

Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001 census)

Languages:

Ukrainian (official) 67%, Russian 24%, other (includes small Romanian-, Polish-, and Hungarian-speaking minorities) 9%

Religions:

Ukrainian Orthodox - Kyiv Patriarchate 50.4%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 26.1%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 8%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 7.2%, Roman Catholic 2.2%, Protestant 2.2%, Jewish 0.6%, other 3.2% (2006 est.)

Population:

44,573,205 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 31

Age structure:

0-14 years: 13.9% (male 3,180,376/female 3,004,250)

15-24 years: 12.1% (male 2,758,374/female 2,645,879)

25-54 years: 45% (male 9,693,346/female 10,355,403)

55-64 years: 13.5% (male 2,573,283/female 3,426,840)

65 years and over: 15.6% (male 2,269,784/female 4,665,670) (2013 est.)

population pyramid:

U.S. Relations With the Ukraine

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, Department of State
Fact Sheet
July 30, 2013

More information about Ukraine is available on the [Ukraine Page](#) and from other Department of State publications and other sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

U.S.-UKRAINE RELATIONS

The United States established diplomatic relations with Ukraine in 1991, following its independence from the Soviet Union. The United States attaches great importance to the success of Ukraine's transition to a democratic state with a flourishing market economy. U.S. policy is centered on realizing and strengthening a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine more closely integrated into Europe and Euro-Atlantic structures. The U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership highlights the importance of the bilateral relationship and outlines enhanced cooperation in the areas of defense, security, economics and trade, energy security, democracy, and cultural exchanges. It also emphasizes the continued commitment of the United States to support enhanced engagement between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Ukraine. To fulfill one of the key tenets of the charter, the two countries have established the Strategic Partnership Commission.

U.S. Assistance to Ukraine

U.S. Government assistance to Ukraine aims to support the development of a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine, fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community. A fact sheet on U.S. assistance to Ukraine can be found [here](#). (control click to follow links)

Bilateral Economic Relations

The United States has granted Ukraine market economy status and terminated the application of the Jackson-Vanik amendment to Ukraine, giving Ukraine permanent normal trade relations status. The United States and Ukraine have a bilateral investment treaty. U.S. exports to Ukraine include coal, machinery, vehicles, agricultural products, fish and seafood, and aircraft. U.S. imports from Ukraine include iron and steel, inorganic chemicals, oil, iron and steel products, aircraft, and agricultural products. The U.S.-Ukraine Council on Trade and Investment was established under the countries' agreement on trade and investment cooperation and works to increase commercial and investment opportunities by identifying and removing impediments to bilateral trade and investment flows.

Ukraine's Membership in International Organizations

Ukraine and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. Ukraine also is an observer to the Organization of American States. Ukraine has adopted a “non-bloc” foreign policy, including abandonment of its formal bid for NATO membership.

Bilateral Representation

The U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine is [Geoffrey R. Pyatt](#); other principal embassy officials are listed in the Department's [Key Officers List](#).

Ukraine maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 3350 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20007 (tel. 202-349-2920).

More information about Ukraine is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here: