

Ukraine Crisis

Based on Wikipedia

Ukraine is 5 times the size of England with 10M fewer people(44M). In the Middle Ages it was a key centre of East Slavic Culture. It was part of the powerful state of Kievan Rus' from around 800 to 1200 then was overrun by the Mongols. From then it was contested and ruled by a variety of powers. A Cossack Republic emerged and prospered during the 17 and 18th centuries but Ukraine remained divided until becoming a Soviet republic in 1920. It became independent in 1991.

77% are ethnic Ukrainian 17% Russian. Tartars, Romanians and Belarusians make up the rest Its army is second only to Russia in Europe.

The alphabet is Cyrillic and Russian is widely spoken. The dominant religion is Eastern Orthodox.

Orange Revolution

In 2004, Viktor Yanukovych, then Prime Minister, was declared the winner of the presidential elections, which had been largely rigged, as the Supreme Court of Ukraine later ruled. The results caused a public outcry in support of the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, who challenged the outcome of the elections. This resulted in the peaceful Orange Revolution, bringing Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko to power, while casting Viktor Yanukovych into opposition.

Yanukovych returned to a position of power in 2006, when he became Prime Minister in the Alliance of National Unity, until snap elections in September 2007 made Tymoshenko Prime Minister again.[119] Amid the 2008–09 Ukrainian financial crisis the Ukrainian economy plunged by 15%. Disputes with Russia over debts for natural gas briefly stopped all gas supplies to Ukraine in 2006 and again in 2009, leading to gas shortages in several other European countries Viktor Yanukovych was elected President in 2010 with 48% of votes.

HEADLINES from the Telegraph Online

G7 to 'intensify sanctions' on Russia

Ukrainian helicopter hit by grenade at a base in Eastern Ukraine

Russian airspace violation 'provocation for war'

Leaders call on Russia to stop its 'intimidation' of Ukraine as Putin's troops edge closer to the border

Energy giant sets payment deadline and warns Europe it risks "severe problems" in winter unless it helps Ukraine pay \$8.5bn gas bill this summer

The US has singled Germany and Italy as being particularly reluctant to impose new round of sanctions on Russia. Germany is particularly vulnerable to Russian retaliation as it imports around 50 per cent of its gas supplies from Russia.

Britain likewise has limited enthusiasm for further measures because of the extent of Russian investment in the City of London. However, Washington has said it would much prefer to act in concert with the EU rather than on its own.

Ukraine has said its forces had killed "up to five" militants in the separatist-controlled town of Slaviansk, in the east of the country

That's the way the EU cookie crumbles for the Ukraine

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