

## **Facts about Russia**

- At 17,075,400 square kilometres (6,592,800 sq mi), Russia is by far the largest country in the world, covering more than a ninth of the Earth's land area.
- Russia is also the ninth most populous nation in the world with 142 million people.
- Russia was communist until 1989 when Communism fell in Eastern Europe.
- Russia is rich in oil and gas.
- Vladimir Putin is the country's president.
- The majority of Russia's population has no religious affiliation due to the antireligious ideology of the Soviet Union.
- The Russian Orthodox Church is the official religion.
- The Ural mountain range forms a natural border between Europe and Asia.
- Lake Baikal in Siberia is one of the oldest and deepest of the world's lakes.
- Moscow, the capital of the Federation of Russia, is over eight hundred and fifty years old.
- St Petersburg is sometimes called the "Venice of the North" as it has many canals and hundreds of bridges.
- The Neva River in St Petersburg is the shortest and deepest European river.
- The Russian royal family was executed in Yekaterinburg in 1918.
- In 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed.
- Russia is famous for ballet and music.
- Yuri Gagarin was the first cosmonaut in space (1961).
- Russia is a member of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Other members are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the European Commission.