

## Evenk

### Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 35,527 Evenk in the Russian Federation. Evenk are composed of a number of groups that cover a vast area (approximately a quarter of Siberia). Formerly possessing a national autonomy, the Evenk autonomous okrug, they will form part of a newly reformed Krasnoyarsk Krai from 2007. In 2002 the total population of the Evenk AO was 18,200 (Russians 67.5 per cent, Evenks 14.0 per cent, Ukrainians 5.3 per cent, Yakuts 3.8 per cent and others 9.4 per cent).

The Evenk are one of the most geographically dispersed ethnic groups in Russia; up to half of Russia's Evenk population lives in the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia. There is also a significant Evenk population (30,000) in the People's Republic of China.

### Historical context

The Evenk are thought to be descendants of a fusion between Tungus and Yukagir cultures. They came under Russian influence from the seventeenth century. Traditional reindeer husbandry and hunting economies declined over the twentieth century as enforced processes of sedentarization, collectivisation and industrialization took place. The Evenk were awarded an AOk in Krasnoyarsk Krai in December 1930. In the 1980s a plan to construct a dam on the Lower Tunguska river, which would have flooded most of the Evenk autonomous okrug, was aborted after protests by Evenk groups, Russian environmental groups and the Association of the Peoples of the North.

### Current issues

In 2005 the populations of the Taimyr autonomous okrug, the Evenk autonomous okrug and Krasnoyarsk krai voted in favour of the unification of the three regions in a referendum. The unification was set for 1 January 2007. In the Evenk autonomous okrug 79 per cent of voters voted in favour of the merger.