Komi

Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 293,406 Komi in the Russian Federation. Komi are closely related to Komi-Permiaks and Udmurts of the Middle Volga and they share a common religion, Eastern Orthodox Christianity. They live in the Komi Republic (pop. 1,018,674: Komi 25.2 per cent, Russians 59.6 per cent, Ukrainians 6.1 per cent, others 8.1 per cent). Both Russian and Komi are official languages in the Komi republic.

Historical context

The area became a principality of Moscow in the fourteenth century. In August 1921, the region was constituted as the Komi (Zyrian) AO. In December 1936 it became an ASSR within the RSFSR. In June 1992 the Komi ASSR became a national republic of the Russian Federation.

The Komi People's Congress, which is 'dedicated to the defence of the cultural and ethnic rights of all Komi people', has advocated the retention of all Komi natural resources in order to bargain with Moscow over independence and unification with the Komi-Permiak national area.

In November 1992 the First World Congress of Finno-Ugrian peoples took place in the Komi Republic. Delegates called for self-determination for all indigenous peoples and national minorities and condemned 'Russian imperialism'. The Second Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples was held in July 1995 to demand new rights, including property rights in their traditional areas of settlement and language privileges.

In 1996 a bilateral agreement was signed between Moscow and the Komi Republic conferring some self-determination rights on the republic, mainly in the field of economic management of the republic's considerable oil, mineral and timber resources.