Komi–Permyaks

Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 125,235 Komi-Permyaks in the Russian Federation. Komi-Permyaks are ethnically close to Komi and share a common language, Komi. They are shamanist-animist in religious belief. Most Komi-Permyak live in the former Komi-Permyak AOk (pop. in 2002 136,076: Komi-Permyak 59 per cent, Russians 38.2 per cent, others 2.8 per cent) in the former Perm Oblast.

Historical context

The Komi-Permyak AOk was formed in February 1925. Since the late 1980s a local movement has advocated the unification of the AOk with the Komi republic.

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.

Current issues

In 2004 residents of the Komi-Permyak AOk and neighbouring Perm oblast voted in favour of merging their territories to form Perm krai (district). The unification came into force on 1 December 2005, as of which date the Komi-Permyak autonomous okrug was replaced by the Komi-Permyak okrug (also sometimes referred to as Permyakia) within Perm krai. The merger was the first of a series of proposed mergers between federal units of the Russian Federation, and specifically the unification of smaller, 'ethnic' territories designated as the national homelands of eponymous ethnic groups and Russian provinces. Eighty-five per cent of those who participated voted in favour. One of the principal arguments in favour of the merger was that living standards in the Komi-Permyak AOk would rise.