

Koryaks

Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 8,743 Koryaks in the Russian Federation. Koryaks are ethnically and linguistically close to Chukchi. Koryak was established as a literary language in 1932 using a Latin script and in 1937 converted to Cyrillic. Koryaks mainly live in the Koryak AOk (estimated population in 2005 23,800: Koryaks 26.7 per cent, Russians 50.6 per cent, Chukchi 5.6 per cent, Itelmen 4.7 per cent, others 12.4 per cent).

Historical context

In December 1990, the Okrug Soviet sought to convert the Koryak AOk to a republic as an indication of the rights of the peoples of the Russian Far East to assert their indigenous rights, especially over the area's rich gold deposits. The Koryak AOk is one of the least populated regions of Russia.

Current issues

In October 2005 the populations of the Koryak AOk and neighbouring Kamchatka oblast (province) voted to merge their regions in a referendum. Kamchatka krai, the new entity composed of the two regions, was set to come into being as of 1 January 2007.