

Mordovans

Profile

According to the 2002 national census, there are 843,350 Mordovans in the Russian Federation. Mordovans are divided into two main groups: Erzya (two-thirds) and Moshka (the remaining third). Their languages are mutually unintelligible. Mordovans are also referred to as Mordva or Mordvinians. They belong to the Volga-Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric peoples.

The population is scattered in the Middle Volga with the largest concentration in the Mordovan Republic, where Mordovans account for under a third of the population. Over three-quarters of all Mordovans live outside the republic. This accounts for the reported falls in the numbers of Mordovans - by 10 per cent in the Mordovan Republic and by 20 per cent in the Russian Federation as a whole.

Historical context

Initially constituted as an AO in January 1930, Mordova became an ASSR in 1934. It is now an ethnic republic of the Russian Federation.

Current issues

Current problems confronting Mordovans are the depletion of their ethnic share of the Mordovan Republic and in Russia at large, the preservation of two mutually unintelligible Mordovan languages and assimilation into Russian. More than 70 per cent of Mordovans are bilingual (Mordovan/Russian). According to statements by Mordovan President Nikolay Merkushkin in 2004, the Mordovan languages were introduced as supplementary subjects in the republic's secondary schools, while the study of the region's history has been made mandatory.