

## Ukrainians

### Profile

According to the 2004 census there were 282,406 Ukrainians in Moldova. Although Ukrainian settlement of Moldova predates that by Russians, and Ukrainians outnumber Russians, Moldovan Ukrainians have been heavily Russified, especially in urban areas. Many speak Russian as their first language (37 per cent).

Ukrainians in Moldova are split between urban and rural populations. Almost half of the Ukrainians in Moldova live within the area of the Transnistria Moldovan Republic, where significant numbers assumed a Russian-speaking identity. Thirty-seven per cent of Ukrainians in Transnistria in 1979 spoke Russian as their native language and 80 per cent spoke Russian as their second language. Elsewhere in Moldova, however, the large number of rural Ukrainians speaking Ukrainian as their first language has meant that a Ukrainian identity separate from that of the Russian-speakers in Transnistria has been preserved.

### Historical context

Most Ukrainians lined up with the Russians to oppose changes in language and unification with Romania. The Moldovan Government made some efforts to encourage Ukrainian culture, schools and clubs, measures in part designed to split the 'Russian' bloc. Ukrainian concerns at large have in any case been allayed by Moldova's shift away from a pro-Romanian orientation; ethnic Ukrainians in Transnistria, however, continue to support the de facto government of that region. At the same time the Ukrainian Government has sought to promote cultural and language activities among Ukrainians in Moldova.

### Current issues

According to reports some 70 ethnic Ukrainians from Transnistria organized a march to Kyiv in September 2004 to protest economic sanctions imposed on the disputed territory by Moldova. The de facto Transnistrian Minister for Foreign Affairs was quoted at the time as saying that some 20,000 inhabitants of the region hold Ukrainian passports.

Although Ukrainian-medium schooling is available in Moldova, most Ukrainians learn Ukrainian as a school subject. In 2002 there were reportedly 34 Ukrainian schools and three Ukrainian lyceums in Moldova.