

FOREWORD



This book was written to draw the reader's attention to a young sovereign state that appeared on the world's political stage more than sixteen years ago. The Ukraine Proclamation of Independence was drafted on August 24th 1991 and en-

dorsed by a nationwide referendum on December 1st of that same year. The Proclamation signified the realization of a patriotic endeavour of numerous generations of Ukrainians to gain sovereignty of their homeland and establish its rightful place in European history. Ukraine is an ancient country with cultural and state traditions reaching back to the end of the first millennium. Ukraine, a successor of Kievan Rus', the first Slavic state, gained national statehood twice in the course of its history in bitter struggles: once in the 17th century and again in early 20th century. Currently, Ukraine has followed the track of democratic statehood consolidation, which includes vigorous economic changes, development of institutions and integration into European and global political and economic structures.

On the world map, Ukraine is a land of vast extension within the Central Eastern European region, exceeding (603.7 thousand km²) such countries as France, Spain, Sweden, Germany and Poland by area. Additionally, it is the fifth largest continental European country by population (46.6 million on January 1st, 2007). The natural-climatic conditions show amazing diversity: Ukraine abounds in fertile plains (steppes), picturesque mountains, forests and rivers and is extremely rich in mineral resources. This is a land of blue skies and wide open spaces of golden wheat fields that have become national symbols, i.e. colours of the national banner. A genuine treasure of Ukraine is its several hundred kilometre long seaside of sunny beaches and resorts.

Present-day Ukraine is a country of cities, large industrial, academic and cultural centres such as Kyiv (Kiev), Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Donetsk, Odesa, L'viv. Ukraine's economic map represents its uniformity and regional features of the national economy, including a highly diversified industrial sector: extracting industries, iron



Ukraine, the second-largest European country, has a strategic geographical position at the crossroads between Europe and Asia. It is a key country for the transit of energy resources from Russia to the European Union, which is one rea-

son why Ukraine has become a priority partner in the neighborhood policy of the EU. Besides its efforts to maintain correct stable and close relationships with Russia, Ukraine has recently made resolute steps toward European integration, accession to the EU and NATO. In the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Ukraine has entered into several agreements, and in recent years, more than two thirds of its foreign trade turnover has transacted with the EU. Ukraine has also actively participated in peacekeeping and conflict management missions of the Union.

The relationship between Ukraine and Hungary has been cordial not only for the aforementioned reasons, but also because of the links between these states, which stretch back over a thousand year history and which have been peaceful compared with those between Poland and Ukraine or between Russia and Ukraine. These state relations basically started with the marriage of Hungarian king Andrew I to the Ukrainian princess Anastasia, daughter of the ruler of the Kievan Rus, Yaroslav the Wise (1038). These dynastic relations continued between Hungary and the Ukrainian principalities of Galych and Volhynia until the 14th century, when the Polish-Lithuanian incorporation of the Ukrainian lands occurred. Ethnic coexistence between the Hungarians and Ukrainians in the northeastern Carpathians date back to the 13th century. This Ukrainian population has proven to be a most reliable supporter among the ethnic minorities of Hungarian aspirations to independence in the 18–19th centuries. The venue of Hungarian–Ukrainian coexistence, Transcarpathia, was ceded to Czechoslovakia in 1919, after 1023 years in the Kingdom of Hungary; after an interruption of Hungarian authority between 1939–1944 – it became part of Soviet Ukraine, in 1945. Even

and steel smelting and non-ferrous metallurgy, heavy and transport engineering, manufacturing of precision instruments, sea-going and river vessels, construction of aircraft and rockets, nuclear energy. Favourable geographic settings and developed railway, public road, air, marine and pipeline communication networks have enabled Ukraine to successfully develop economic cooperation with local and distant countries to recognize its potential as a transit country.

Located on the crossroads of migration routes and in the zone of interference between global civilisations, Ukraine has played a role in connecting the Catholic and Protestant European West with the Eastern Orthodox and Muslim East. This gateway function helps to uniquely position the country. The historical-cultural atlas of Ukraine demonstrates a history of several thousand years along with the heritage of ancient Trypillian, Scythian and Antic periods, the principalities and Cossack epochs and explains the ethnographic diversity, multiethnic and multicultural character of the present-day population. Ancient cities and towns, museums and historical sites with a wealth of relics celebrate the memory of battles fought with foreign invaders, outstanding Ukrainian personalities – thinkers and masters of the Ukrainian language Hrihoryi Skovoroda and Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesia Ukrainka; musicians and artists like Mykola Lisenko and Serhiy Vasil'kovskiy; representatives of the national theatre and cinema – Maria Zan'kovetskaya, Lesia Kurbas and Olikhsandr Dovzhenko, Serhiy Paradzhanov; and scholars like Vladimir Vernadskiy, Ilia Mechnikov, Mikhail Hrushevskiy, Serhiy Korolev.

Ukraine is a hospitable and peace-loving country. It is the only power in the world that has voluntarily renounced its nuclear arsenal. In a complex and controversial world, Ukraine builds collaboration with other countries upon the principles of mutual understanding and confidence and establishes initiatives aimed at the creation of a system that grants international security.

This book is intended to familiarize the audience with the uniqueness and natural diversity of Ukraine, characteristic features of its regions, conditions for economic and cultural development and creative activities of its people. The publication, *Ukraine on Maps*, is the result of joint efforts of Ukraine and Hungarian geographers. I hope it will inspire many readers to seek a deeper understanding of the development of Ukraine and its regions.

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though conflicts arose between the Ukrainians and Hungarians between 1918 and 1945 it should be emphasized that their coexistence could be labeled as peaceful, relative to that with the other neighboring people. This is one of the reasons why Hungary was second to Poland to conclude a Basic Treaty with Ukraine (1993) just after Ukraine obtained its independence. This treaty enacted the invulnerability of the existing state boundaries.

Today, Ukraine and its two western neighbors, Poland and Hungary (both EU members), consider each other to be strategic partners of foremost importance. Apart from the centuries-old historical links, it is the geographical location and current economic interests of these countries that are preeminent. The new EU members receive energy sources through the pipelines leading from the Russian oil and gas fields to Europe via Ukraine; whereas Ukraine has gained access to the core areas of the EU in Germany and Italy i.e. its prominent trade partners via the highways in Poland and Hungary.

Since the disintegration of the USSR, the western world has had an ever-growing interest in the Ukraine, its people and its economy. As a result, a large number of publications have appeared on this country in different languages. Nevertheless, their quality and information content have lagged behind those compiled in Ukraine, especially maps and atlases. This recognition had prompted the collectives of the Institute of Geography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv) and the Geographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest) to initiate cooperation, and the volume entitled "*Ukraine in Maps*" is a result of their joint effort. The book is basically intended to make the results of investigations conducted by Ukrainian geographers available to the English-speaking public, through Hungarian contribution. The atlas follows the traditions of the Geographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (similar to the publication of *South Eastern Europe in Maps* 2005, 2007) – it includes 50 maps, dozens of figures and tables accompanied by an explanatory text written in a popular scientific manner. The book is an attempt to outline the geographical setting and geopolitical context of Ukraine, as well as its history, natural environment, population, settlements and economy. The authors greatly hope that this joint venture will bring Ukraine closer to the reader and make this neighbor country of the EU more familiar, and consequently, more attractive.

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