

The Republic of Serbia is a democratic state of all of its citizens. Its history and achievements make it an integral part of modern civilisation and the international community.

Belgrade is the capital of Serbia. With a population of 1,576,124 million, it is the country's administrative, economic and cultural centre.

Serbia is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, on the most important route linking Europe and Asia, occupying an area of 88,361 square kilometres. The length of Serbia's border is 2,114.2 kilometres. Serbia borders Bulgaria to the east, Romania to the north-east, Hungary to the north, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the west, Montenegro to the south-west and Albania and Macedonia to the south.

Serbia is referred to as the cross-roads of Europe. The international roads and railways passing down its river valleys make up the shortest link between Western and Central Europe, on the one side, and the Middle East, Asia and Africa, on the other. Hence the geopolitical importance of its territory. These roads follow the course of the valley of the river Morava, splitting in two near the city of Nis. One route follows the valleys of the rivers Juzna Morava and Vardar to Thessaloniki; the other, the Nisava River to Sofia and Istanbul.

Serbia is in the Central European Time zone (one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time). Its climate is temperate continental, with a gradual transition between the four seasons of the year.

It is divided into two provinces, 29 administrative districts, with 194 municipalities, 6,169 settlements, 207 city settlements and 5,962 other settlements. Belgrade and Nis enjoy the status of a special district in Serbia.

The ethnic composition of the population of the Republic of Serbia is very diverse, which is a result of the country's turbulent past. The majority of the population of Serbia are Serbs, but another 37 ethnicities also live on its territory. All citizens have equal rights and responsibilities and enjoy full ethnic equality.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia guarantees rights to minorities, in accordance with the highest international standards. The latest 2002 census puts the population of Serbia (excluding Kosovo-Metohija) at 7,498,001, which made up 92.3% of the population of the former State Union of Serbia-Montenegro. Serbs make up 82.86% of the population, Hungarians 3.91%, Bosniaks 1.81%, Roma 1.44%, Yugoslavs 1.08%, Croats 0.94%, Montenegrins 0.92%,

Albanians 0.82%, Slovaks 0.79%, Vlachs 0.53%, Romanians 0.46%, Macedonians 0.34%, Bulgarians and Vojvodina Croats 0.27% each, Muslims 0.26%, Ruthenians 0.21%, Slovaks and Ukrainians 0.07% each, Gorani 0.06%, Germans 0.05%, and Russians and Czechs 0.03% each.

The official language in Serbia is Serbian and the script in official use is Cyrillic, while Latin script is also used. In the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, the languages and scripts of the minorities are in official use, as provided by law.

The largest number of ethnic Albanians live in the southern Serbian province of Kosovo-Metohija. However, it is difficult to establish their exact number in the province due to a number of reasons, including the fact that the ethnic Albanian minority last took part in the 1981 census, boycotting the one carried out in 1991. Also, armed conflicts, the migration of a high number of Serbs and members of other minorities in the province, as well as the arrival of tens of thousands of Albanians from Albania have largely altered Kosovo-Metohija's ethnic composition.

The wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina led to huge migrations of people of Serbian nationality, who found refuge also in the Republic of Serbia.

Depending on the source of data, estimates on the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have varied from 350,000 to 800,000. Terrorist attacks by the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, the 1999 air campaign of the NATO alliance and the arrival of KFOR troops have forced the non-Albanian population to flee the territory of Kosovo-Metohija.

According to a June 2010 UNHCR report, Serbia, with 86,000 refugees and 21,000 internally displaced persons, is still at the top of the list of countries in Europe in terms of forced migration.

Serbia in 2010 still has 60 collective centres with more than 4,700 refugees and internally displaced persons.

The main religion of Serbia is Christian Orthodox, the faith of the Serbian people. The Serbian Orthodox Church, which has been autonomous since 1219, has played an important role in the development and preservation of the Serbian national identity. Beside the Christian Orthodox population, there are also other religious communities in Serbia: Islamic, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and others.

