

Eurasia

Eurasia (/ˈjʊərəˈreɪʒə/, also UK: /-ʃə/) is the largest continental area on Earth, comprising all of Europe and Asia.^{[3][4]} According to some geographers, physiographically, Eurasia is a single continent.^[4] The concepts of Europe and Asia as distinct continents date back to antiquity, but their borders are arbitrary and have historically been subject to change. Eurasia is connected to Africa at the Suez Canal, and the two are sometimes combined to describe the largest contiguous landmass on Earth, Afro-Eurasia.^[5]

Geography

Primarily in the Northern and Eastern Hemispheres, Eurasia spans from Iceland and the Iberian Peninsula in the west to the Russian Far East, and from the Russian Far North to Maritime Southeast Asia in the south. Eurasia is bordered by Africa to the southwest, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Arctic Ocean to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the east, and the Indian Ocean to the south. The division between Europe and Asia as two continents is a historical social construct, as neither fits the usual definition; thus, in some parts of the world, Eurasia is recognized as the largest of the six, five, or four continents on Earth.^[4]

Eurasia covers around 55 million square kilometres (21 million square miles), or around 36.2% of the Earth's total land area. The landmass contains well over 5 billion people, equating to approximately 70% of the human population. Humans first settled in Eurasia from Africa 125,000 years ago.

Due to its vast size and differences in latitude, Eurasia exhibits all types of climates under the Köppen classification, including the harshest types of hot and cold temperatures, high and low precipitation, and various types of ecosystems.

Geology

Eurasia



Area	55,000,000 km ² (21,000,000 sq mi)
Population	5.4 billion (As of 2023) ^{[1][2]}
Population density	93/km ² (240/sq mi)
Demonym	Eurasian
Countries	~93 countries
Dependencies	9 dependencies
Time zones	<u>UTC−1</u> to <u>UTC+12</u>

In geology, Eurasia is often considered as a single rigid megablock, but this is debated.^{[6][7]} Eurasia formed between 375 and 325 million years ago with the merging of Siberia, Kazakhstania, and Baltica, which was joined to Laurentia (now North America), to form Euramerica.

Rivers

This is a list of the longest rivers in Eurasia. Included are all rivers over 3,000 km (1,900 mi).

	River	Countries	Length	
			km	mi
1	<u>Yangtze</u> (Cháng Jiāng 长江) ^[8]	<u>China</u>	6,300	3,915
2	<u>Yellow River</u> (Huáng Hé 黄河) ^[8]	<u>China</u>	5,464	3,395
3	<u>Mekong</u> ^[8]	<u>China</u> , <u>Myanmar</u> , <u>Laos</u> , <u>Thailand</u> , <u>Cambodia</u> , <u>Vietnam</u>	4,909	3,050
4	<u>Lena</u> (Лена) ^[9]	<u>Russia</u>	4,294	2,668
5	<u>Irtysh</u> (Иртыш) ^[10]	<u>Mongolia</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Russia</u>	4,248	2,640
6	<u>Brahmaputra</u> (ব্রহ্মপুত্র) ^[8]	<u>China</u> , <u>India</u> , <u>Bangladesh</u>	3,969	2,466
7	<u>Ob</u> (Обь) ^[11]	<u>Russia</u>	3,700	2,299
8	<u>Volga</u> (Волга)	<u>Russia</u>	3,531	2,194
9	<u>Yenisey</u> (Енисей) ^[12]	<u>Mongolia</u> , <u>Russia</u>	3,487	2,167
10	<u>Indus</u> (सिन्धु/Síndhu/سندھ/سندھ/سندھ) ^[8]	<u>China</u> , <u>India</u> , <u>Pakistan</u>	3,150	1,957

Mountains

All of the 100 highest mountains on Earth are in Eurasia, in the Himalaya, Karakoram, Hindu Kush, Pamir, Hengduan, and Tian Shan mountain ranges, and all peaks above 7,000 metres are in these ranges and the Transhimalaya. Other high ranges include the Kunlun, Hindu Raj, and Caucasus Mountains. The Alpide belt stretches 15,000 km across southern Eurasia, from Java in Maritime Southeast Asia to the Iberian Peninsula in Western Europe, including the ranges of the Himalayas, Karakoram, Hindu Kush, Alborz, Caucasus, and the Alps. Long ranges outside the Alpide Belt include the East Siberian, Altai, Scandinavian, Qinling, Western Ghats, Vindhya, Byrranga, and Annamite Ranges.

Islands

The largest Eurasian islands by area are Borneo, Sumatra, Honshu, Great Britain, Sulawesi, Java, Luzon, Iceland, Mindanao, Ireland, Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and Sri Lanka. The five most-populated islands in the world are Java, Honshu, Great Britain, Luzon, and Sumatra. Other Eurasian islands with large populations include Mindanao, Taiwan, Salsette, Borneo, Sri Lanka, Sulawesi, Kyushu, and Hainan. The most densely-populated islands in Eurasia are Caubian Gamay Island, Ap Lei Chau, and

Navotas Island. In the Arctic Ocean, Severny Island, Nordautlandet, October Revolution Island, and Bolshevik Island are Eurasia's largest uninhabited islands, and Kotelny Island, Alexandra Land, and Spitsbergen are the least-densely populated.

History

Eurasia has been the host of many ancient civilizations, including those based in Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley and China. In the Axial Age (mid-first millennium BCE), a continuous belt of civilizations stretched through the Eurasian subtropical zone from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This belt became the mainstream of world history for two millennia.

Russian geopolitical ideology

Originally, "Eurasia" is a geographical notion: in this sense, it is simply the biggest continent; the combined landmass of Europe and Asia. However, geopolitically, the word has several meanings, reflecting specific geopolitical interests.^[13] "Eurasia" is one of the most important geopolitical concepts and it figures prominently in the commentaries on the ideas of Halford Mackinder. As Zbigniew Brzezinski observed on Eurasia:

"... how America 'manages' Eurasia is critical. A power that dominates 'Eurasia' would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions. A mere glance at the map also suggests that control over 'Eurasia' would almost automatically entail Africa's subordination, rendering the Western Hemisphere and Oceania geopolitically peripheral to the world's central continent. About 75 per cent of the world's people live in 'Eurasia', and most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. 'Eurasia' accounts for about three-fourths of the world's known energy resources."^[14]

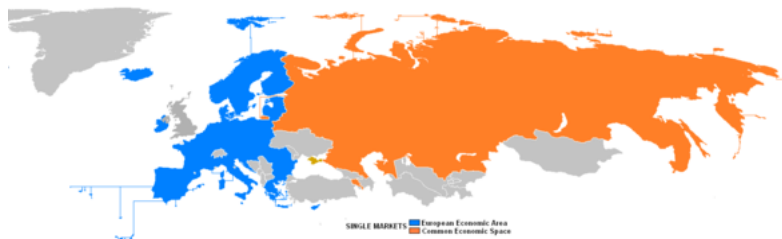
— Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The grand chessboard : American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*

The Russian "Eurasianism" corresponded initially more or less to the land area of Imperial Russia in 1914, including parts of Eastern Europe.^[15] One of Russia's main geopolitical interests lies in ever closer integration with those countries that it considers part of "Eurasia."^[16]

The term *Eurasia* gained geopolitical reputation as one of the three superstates in 1984,^[17] George Orwell's^[18] novel where constant surveillance and propaganda are strategic elements (introduced as reflexive antagonists) of the heterogeneous dispositif such metapolitical constructs used to control and exercise power.^[19]

Regional organisations and alliances

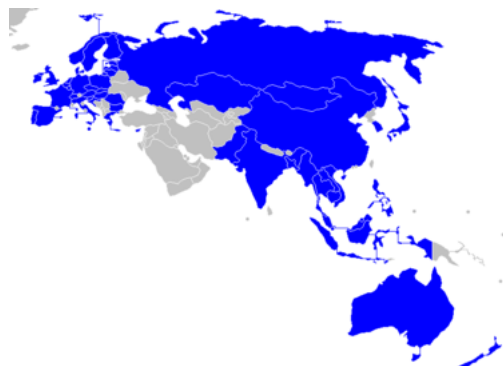
Across Eurasia, several single markets have emerged, including the Eurasian Economic Space, European Single Market, ASEAN Economic Community, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. There are also several international organizations and initiatives which seek to promote integration throughout Eurasia, including:



Single markets in European and post-Soviet countries; European Economic Area and Common Economic Space

Asia-Europe Meeting

- Every two years since 1996 a meeting of most Asian and European countries is organised as the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM).



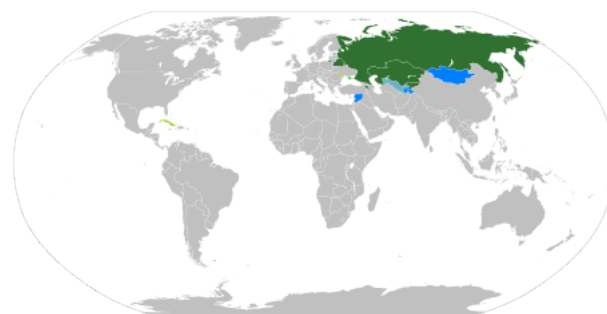
ASEM Partners

Commonwealth of Independent States

- The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a political and economic association of 10 post-Soviet republics in Eurasia formed following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It has an estimated population of 239,796,010. The CIS encourages cooperation in economic, political, and military affairs and has certain powers to coordinate trade, finance, lawmaking and security. In addition, six members of the CIS have joined the Collective Security Treaty Organization, an intergovernmental military alliance that was founded in 1992.

Eurasian Union

- Similar in concept to the European Union, the Eurasian Union is an economic union established in 2015 including Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and observer members Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Cuba. It is headquartered in Moscow, Russia and Minsk, Belarus. The union promotes economic integration among members and is theoretically open to enlargement to include any country in Europe or Asia.



■ Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union
■ Observer states
■ Other candidate states

Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges

- The Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges (FEAS) is an international organization headquartered in Yerevan, comprising the main stock exchanges in Eastern Europe, the Middle

East and Central Asia. The purpose of the Federation is to contribute to the cooperation, development, support and promotion of capital markets in the Eurasian region.

Russia-EU Common Spaces

- The Russia – EU Four Common Spaces Initiative, is a joint European Union and Russian agreement to closer integrate Russia and the EU, remove barriers to trade and investment and promote reforms and competitiveness. In 2010, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin called for common economic space, free-trade area or more advanced economic integration, stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok. However, no significant progress was made and the project was put on hold after Russia-EU relations deteriorated following the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2014.



Area from Lisbon to Vladivostok with all European and CIS countries

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China. It is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and nearly half of the human population.

Use of term

History of the Europe–Asia division

In ancient times, the Greeks classified Europe (derived from the mythological Phoenician princess Europa) and Asia which to the Greeks originally included Africa^[20] (derived from Asia, a woman in Greek mythology) as separate "lands". Where to draw the dividing line between the two regions is still a matter of discussion. Especially whether the Kuma-Manych Depression or the Caucasus Mountains form the southeast boundary is disputed, since Mount Elbrus would be part of Europe in the latter case, making it (and not Mont Blanc) Europe's highest mountain. Most accepted is probably the boundary as defined by Philip Johan von Strahlenberg in the 18th century. He defined the dividing line along the Aegean Sea, Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, Bosporus, Black Sea, Kuma–Manych Depression, Caspian Sea, Ural River, and the Ural Mountains. However, at least part of this definition has been subject to criticism by many modern analytical geographers like Halford Mackinder, who saw little validity in the Ural Mountains as a boundary between continents.^[21]



Physical map of Asia

Geography

In modern usage, the term "Eurasian" is a demonym usually meaning "of or relating to Eurasia" or "a native or inhabitant of Eurasia".^[22] It is also used to describe people of combined "Asian" and "European" descent.

Located primarily in the eastern and northern hemispheres, Eurasia is considered a supercontinent, part of the supercontinent of Afro-Eurasia or simply a continent in its own right.^[23] In plate tectonics, the Eurasian Plate includes Europe and most of Asia but not the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula or the area of the Russian Far East east of the Chersky Range.

From the point of view of history and culture, Eurasia can be loosely subdivided into Western and Eastern Eurasia.^[24]

Soviet states after decentralization

Nineteenth-century Russian philosopher Nikolai Danilevsky defined Eurasia as an entity separate from Europe and Asia, bounded by the Himalayas, the Caucasus, the Alps, the Arctic, the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, a definition that has been influential in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union.^[25] Nowadays, partly inspired by this usage, the term Eurasia is sometimes used to refer to the post-Soviet space – in particular Russia, the Central Asian republics, and the Transcaucasus republics – and sometimes also adjacent regions such as Turkey and Mongolia.



Changes in national boundaries after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc

The word "Eurasia" is often used in Kazakhstan to describe its location. Numerous Kazakh institutions have the term in their names, like the L. N. Gumilev Eurasian National University (Kazakh: Л. Н. Гумилёв атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық университеті; Russian: Евразийский Национальный университет имени Л. Н. Гумилёва)^[26] (Lev Gumilev's Eurasianism ideas having been popularized in Kazakhstan by Olzhas Suleimenov), the Eurasian Media Forum,^[27] the Eurasian Cultural Foundation (Russian: Евразийский фонд культуры), the Eurasian Development Bank (Russian: Евразийский банк развития),^[28] and the Eurasian Bank.^[29] In 2007 Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, proposed building a "Eurasia Canal" to connect the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea via Russia's Kuma-Manych Depression to provide Kazakhstan and other Caspian-basin countries with a more efficient path to the ocean than the existing Volga-Don Canal.^[30]

This usage can also be seen in the names of Eurasianet,^[31] The Journal of Eurasian Studies,^[32] and the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies,^[33] as well as the titles of numerous academic programmes at US universities.^{[34][35][36][37][38]}

This usage is comparable to how Americans use "Western Hemisphere" to describe concepts and organizations dealing with the Americas (e.g., Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

See also





- [Asia-Europe Foundation](#)
- [Asia–Europe Meeting](#)
- [Afro-Eurasia](#)
- [Borders of the continents](#)
- [Council of Europe](#)
- [Community for Democracy and Rights of Nations](#)
- [Eastern European Group](#)
- [Eastern Partnership](#)
- [Eurasia \(Nineteen Eighty-Four\)](#)
- [Eurasian \(disambiguation\)](#)
- [Eurasian Economic Community](#)
- [Eurasia Tunnel](#)
- [Eurasia Canal](#)
- [Eurasian Union](#)
- [Eurasianism](#)
- [European Union](#)
- [Euronest Parliamentary Assembly](#)
- [Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges](#)
- [Intermediate Region](#)
- [Laurasia](#), a geological supercontinent joining Eurasia and North America.
- [List of Eurasian countries by population](#)
- [Marmaray](#), railway tunnel links Europe to Asia.
- [Neo-Eurasianism](#)
- [Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation](#)
- [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#)
- [Palearctic](#)
- [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#)
- [Silk Road](#)
- [United States of Eurasia](#)
- [Vega expedition](#), the first voyage to circumnavigate Eurasia

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Further reading

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- D. Lane, V. Samokhvalov, The Eurasian Project and Europe Regional Discontinuities and Geopolitics, Palgrave: Basingstoke (2015)
- V. Samokhvalov, The new Eurasia: post-Soviet space between Russia, Europe and China, European Politics and Society, Volume 17, 2016 – Issue sup1: The Eurasian Project in Global Perspective (Journal homepage)
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