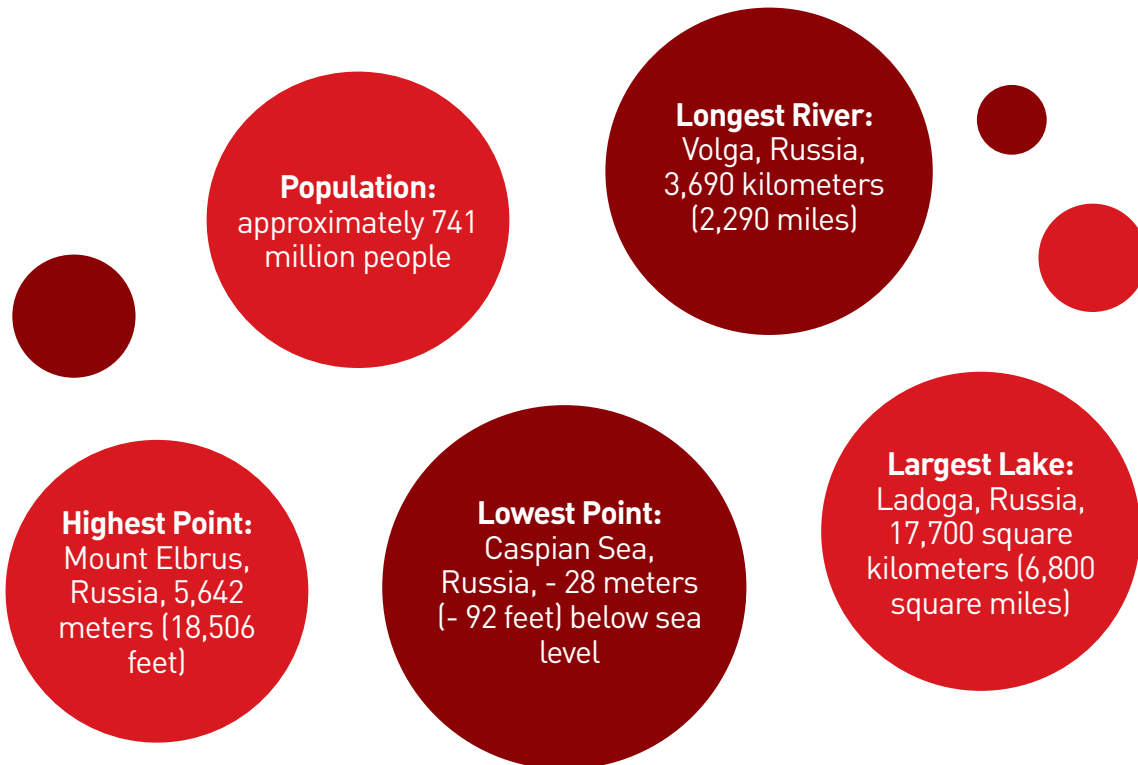


# Welcome to **EUROPE**

## EUROPE FACTS & FIGURES

Even though it's the second smallest continent after Australia, you will find that Europe boasts bountiful landscapes. A collection of peninsulas and islands reaching west from Asia, Europe is ringed by two ocean basins and more than a dozen seas. Russia's Ural Mountains bound its eastern edge. Rugged uplands form its western coasts, while glacial lakes dot Scandinavia. The fertile Northern European Plain sweeps west from Russia to France, and the Alps arc across southern Europe, blocking Mediterranean lands from cold northern winds. Navigable rivers like the Rhine, Rhone, and Danube flow from these heights, linking inland areas to the oceans and seas.

Today's Europe proudly connects to peoples and ideas of the past. Greek and Roman civilizations built cultural foundations, and many of their ideas—and even buildings—live on today. Amazingly, a brand-new skyscraper or an Internet cafe might be located right next to ancient walls in a modern city center. Europe's 47 countries are home to approximately 741 million people. More than half of these countries have joined together in the European Union, with an aim to unite differences and solve problems together. It is a noble goal yet a challenge, with changing economies and an overall slowing of population growth presenting many difficulties. But Europe continues a long tradition of success, linking its rich past with new ideas for the future.



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