

44. Western Europe 2

Germany

Capital: Berlin

Population: 83 million

GDP/capita (2001): 26,000 USD

= located in the heart of Europe, 1 of the wealthiest countries

Since the end of WWII this country was divided into 2 separate countries.

October 3, 1990: former Western Germany (democratic) and Eastern Germany (communist) were reunited ⇔ protests in East Germany + collapse of communism in the USSR => the *Berlin Wall* was demolished and Berlin regained its status as the capital of Germany.

Which of these regions is less developed nowadays?

- 16 states (Länder) with a federal system of government, strong sense of regional identity, e.g. firstly Bavarians, secondly Germans
- extremely varied landscape – from the north fertile plains to the snow-capped peaks of the Bavarian Alps + Black Forest
- industries were rebuilt after the WWII → strong manufacturing industry, e.g. car manufacturing, shipbuilding, electrical goods
- Ruhr valley: the most heavily industrialized region => the most densely populated ⇔ huge coal + lignite reserves + iron and steel industry
- network of *canals and rivers* = importance for transportation, e.g. Rhine, Elbe, Oder
- excellent highways and efficient railroad system
- *Protestants* (Northern Germany) + *Roman Catholics* (Southern Germany)
- very strict controls on pollution (separate trash cans, recycling)
- Munich's *Oktoberfest* = the biggest of the beer festivals + famous German gastronomy (wursts – sausages, beer, wine, pastries, cheese)
- other large cities: Frankfurt am Main, Köln am Rhein, Leipzig, Dresden, Stuttgart, Hannover, Hamburg, Bremen



France

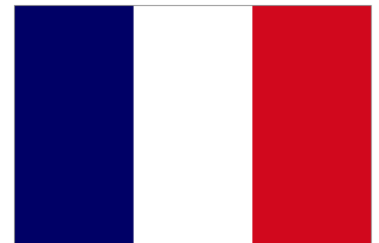
Capital: Paris

Population: 60 million

GDP/capita (2001): 24,250 USD

= the largest country in Western Europe + Corsica, Monaco + Andorra

- Pyrenees (S) + Alps (E) + Massif Central and the Rhône, Seine, Loire rivers
- climate varies from north (cool, humid climate) to central part (determined by) to south (Mediterranean climate in Provence)
- 1792: France became a republic, *castles* along the Loire river
- plays important role in world affairs, famous for *culture, fashion and food*
- European major *agricultural producer and exporter* of wheat, sugar beets, sunflowers, fruit and vegetables + wine
- large manufacturing, steel and chemical, aircraft industry (Airbus), 1/5 of wine supplies
- large nuclear industry (75% of all the electricity is produced by nuclear power plants)
- very developed transportation infrastructure (TGV)
- about 4 million of immigrants (mainly Muslims from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) => problems with housing, unemployment, discrimination
- Paris: the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre museum (palace), the cathedral of Notre Dame, centre of fashion and culture
- Monaco: (principality) Monte Carlo = casinos, car racing Grand Prix => tourism
- Andorra: = Catalan language, tourism, duty-free area
- other large cities: Lyon, Strasbourg, Marseille, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Orléans, Dijon



Switzerland

Capital: Bern

Population: 7 million

GDP/capita (2001): 37,100 USD

= neutral country since 1815, mountain communities speaking several languages (F, D, I, Romansch) in *cantons*

= major financial centre of Europe besides London, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.

- alpine vegetation ⇔ interaction between altitude and vegetation cover. **Explain!**
- almost no raw materials but very skilled workforce specializing in production of high-value, lightweight products (watches, pharmaceutical industry, banking, insurances, etc.)
- fertile valleys are used extensively (dairy farming of cattle, sheep and goats) => cheeses
- very developed infrastructure, Swiss engineering firms are experts in *tunnel construction*
- *tourism* (alpine hiking, winter sports, mountain climbing, ...)
- other large cities: Genève, Zurich, Luzern, Lugano, Basel



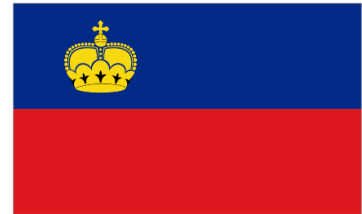
Liechtenstein

Capital: Vaduz

Population: 30,000

GDP/capita (2001): 36,700 USD

- German-speaking principality, very similar to Switzerland (postal services, currency)
- tourism is very important



Keywords

Berlin Wall, Oktoberfest, regional identity, Ruhr valley, TGV, canton, Monaco, Andorra, nuclear industry, Massif Central, Pyrenees, Alps