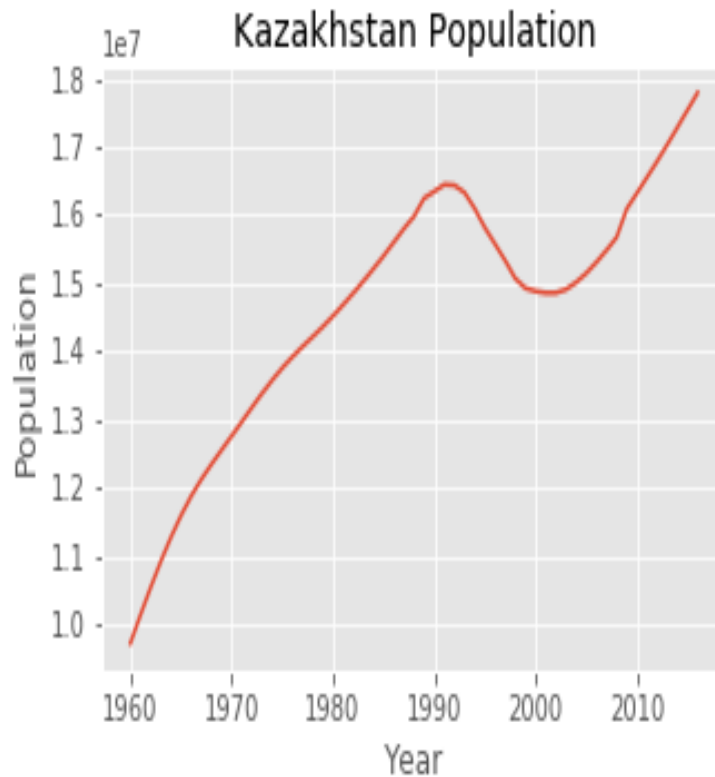


Kazakhstan



Kazakhstan[b] (Kazakh: Қазақстан, translit. Qazaqstan, IPA: [qɑzɑqˈstɑn] (listen); Russian: Казахстан, IPA: [kɑzˈxɑstan]), officially the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakh: Қазақстан Республикасы, translit. Qazaqstan Respýblıkasy; Russian: Республика Казахстан, tr. Respublika Kazakhstan), is the world's largest landlocked country, and the ninth largest in the world, with an area of 2,724,900 square kilometres (1,052,100 sq mi). Kazakhstan is the dominant nation of Central Asia economically, generating 60% of the region's GDP, primarily through its oil/gas industry. It also has vast mineral resources. Some argue that Kazakhstan may be considered a European country because Kazakhstan's Western region is on the European continent and meets the Council of Europe's criteria for European inclusion. Kazakhstan is officially a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic with a diverse cultural heritage. Kazakhstan shares borders with Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, and also adjoins a large part of the Caspian Sea. The terrain of Kazakhstan includes flatlands, steppe, taiga, rock canyons, hills, deltas, snow-capped mountains, and deserts. Kazakhstan has an estimated 18 million people as of 2014[update]. Given its large land area, its population density is among the lowest, at less than 6 people per square kilometre (15 people per sq. mi.). The capital is Astana, where it was moved in 1997 from Almaty, the country's largest city.