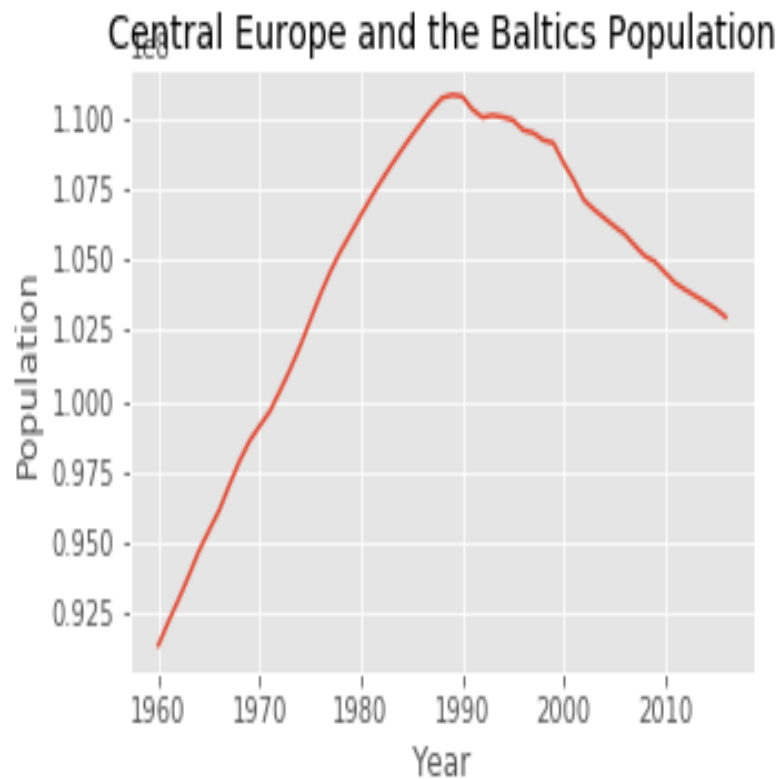


## Central Europe and the Baltics



Central Europe is the region comprising the central part of Europe. It is said to occupy continuous territory that are otherwise conventionally Eastern Europe and Western Europe. The concept of Central Europe is based on a common historical, social and cultural identity. Central Europe is going through a phase of "strategic awakening", with initiatives such as the CEI, Centroepe and the Visegrád Four. While the region's economy shows high disparities with regard to income, all Central European countries are listed by the Human Development Index as very highly developed. Elements of unity for Western and Central Europe were Roman Catholicism and Latin. However Eastern Europe, which remained Eastern Orthodox Christian, was the area of Graeco-Byzantine cultural influence; after the schism (1054), Eastern Europe developed cultural unity and resistance to the Western world (Catholic and Protestant) within the framework of Church Slavonic language and the Cyrillic alphabet.