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Today's Russia is as diverse as it is large. Covering an area of some 17.1 million sq.km and 9 time zones, it is by far the world's largest country. Although its population of 143 million, is both ethnically and religiously mixed, Russians make up some 80% and Russian Orthodoxy 73% respectively. Literacy among adults runs at 99.5% and Russia has the highest graduate levels in the world at 54% of the adult population, between 25 and 64 years old. Generally speaking the winters, in most of Russia are harsh, however the climate ranges from the Arctic to Sub-tropical and summers can be, and often are, hot anywhere in the country.

This latest incarnation of the Russian State, came into being following the dissolution of the USSR at midnight on 25th December 1991, and since then has seen remarkable change, moving it from the failed ideology of communism to one of the world's most dynamic capitalist economies. Russia now has a bicameral political system with upper and lower legislative seats of government. It has both a President (Head of State) and a Prime Minister, which can be seen to reflect a system similar to France, the President

controlling national matters, with the daily business of implementing the federal dictates and laws being the responsibility of the Prime Minister.

The President, since 2012 is elected every 6 years and under the constitution cannot serve more than 2 consecutive terms, although they can return to office after a one term break. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President and has responsibility for running the internal daily affairs of the country, but excluding that of national security. Some ministers report to the President and some to the Prime Minister, depending on their particular brief. The Federal Assembly lays beneath these offices and is made up of the Duma (lower house) and the Federal Council (upper house) with the lower house, the Duma, having the law making authority. The Duma is made up of 450 directly elected deputies with the Federal Council having 2 senators from each of the 83 Federal Subjects (states and regions). Both serve a five year term. Each Federal Subject has a Governor appointed by the President with the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg having a Mayor and a Governor respectively, separate from the region in which they are located.



Notwithstanding the complete break from its immediate past, one of the principle tenants of the Soviet era, Education, remains fundamental to Russian society. With so many world class universities and the world's highest percentage of graduates per population, a majority of its youth choose to stay in Russia for their higher education, and most also now believe that Russia offers better prospects for their future than most countries in the West. Nor are they alone in this thinking, as a growing number of the world's largest corporations make Russia their country of choice Russia to launch their latest products.

Having quickly recognised the need for modernisation Russia's federal Government identified a number of key business sectors, and openly admits that in many areas it does not have sufficient technology, experience or expertise to bring each sector up to where they believe it needs to be. What they do have are the funds to make it happen, but unlike the Communist time of the old Soviet Union, when its population looked to the West with envy, modern day Russia understands Capitalism and economic growth, and now looks to the West as a vital trading partner, rather than seeking to emulate them.



With a national debt to GDP of only 12.6%, Russia is not burdened by the austerity measures now in place in many of Europe's economies and sees modernisation, of both industry and the infrastructure as a priority. Over the next 10 years the Federal Government will allocate over £1 trillion for Capital Projects within its key industries, creating huge opportunities for both domestic and foreign companies alike.

Being blessed with huge reserves of most natural resources, almost 85% of its revenue derives from the sale of oil, gas, minerals and ores. And whilst these reserves provide the financial security that allows its Federal Government to fund such projects, Russia's view of its future is as a more balanced economy.



Europe accounts for almost 50% of Russia's trade, with China now its largest individual trading partner, and yet non-oil based exports total less than 10% of its GDP. Therefore from Aerospace to Automotive, from Engineering to Energy and Telecoms to Transport, Russia is committed to raising its industry's technological and manufacturing base and bring up to up to world class standards.

Russia is an extraordinary country with huge market potential and immediate opportunities, its cities and regions are investing heavily in their own future whether that be Medicine, Finance, IT, Science or Technology. Where once it and its youth looked to the West for their future it is now within its own major cities that growth and development attract its next generation of doctors, entrepreneurs, engineers and scientists, which the government supports with inward investment, grants, loans and tax breaks.