

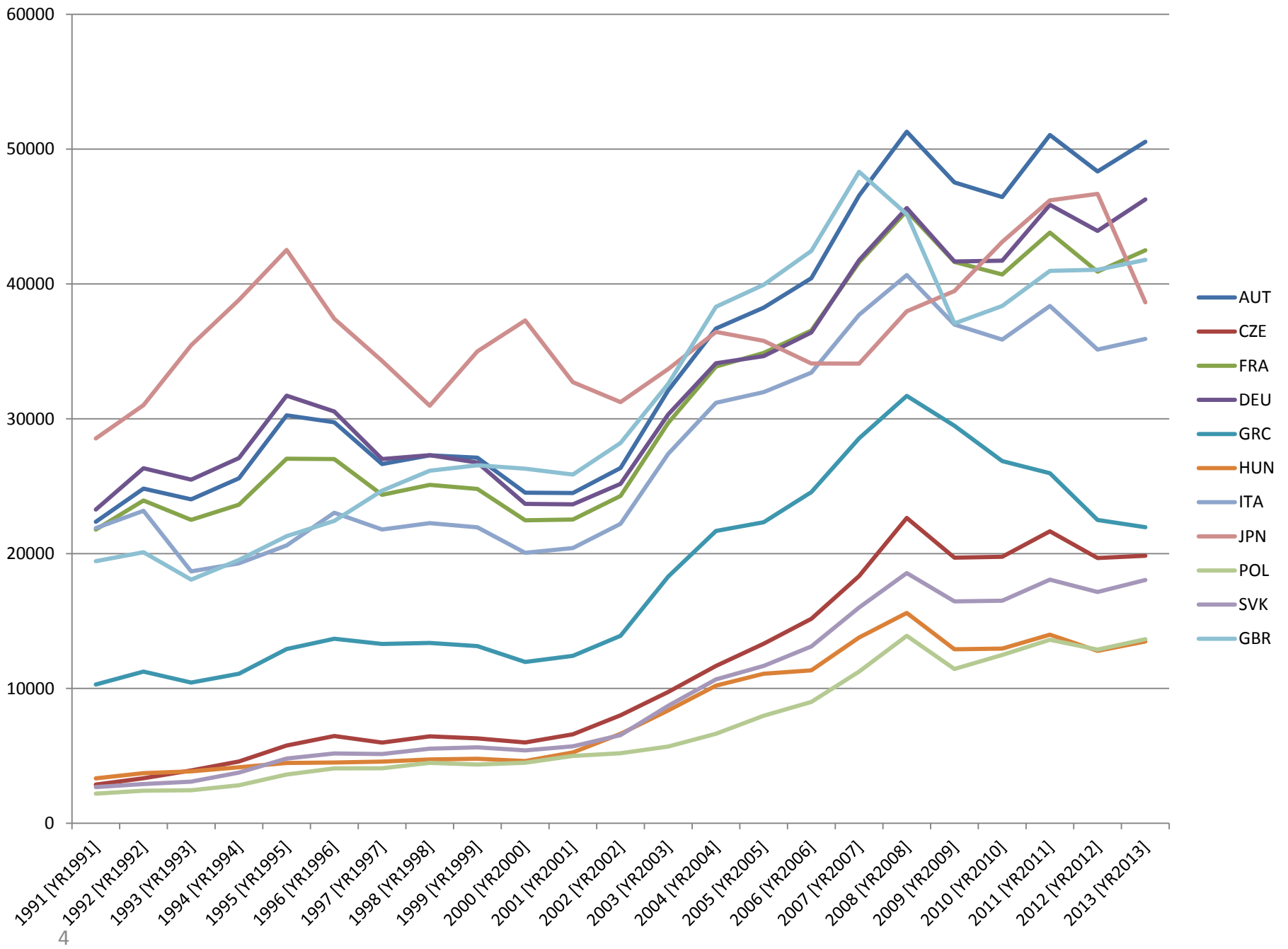


# PL + CZ + HU + SK = Visegrad Group (V4)

- Population: 64 million (~ UK)
- Area: 533 thousands sq. km (~ France)
- GDP (PPP): 1.6 trillion USD (~ Spain)
- GDP per capita: 25 thousands USD (~ Portugal or Greece)
- Membership in international organizations: UN, IMF, WB, WTO, OECD, EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO, V4
- Voting in the Council of the EU
  - 4 countries out of 16/28
  - 13 % of the EU population (need to be 65 %)
- Seats in European Parliament: 107 (more than Germany)

# Political freedom

- Before 1989:
  - Partly Free (Poland and Hungary in 1980s)
  - Not Free (Czechoslovakia)
- After 1990
  - Free
  - (Slovakia Partly Free in 1994-1998)
- Today
  - Free 1-1
  - (Hungary 2-1)





# What is Central Europe?

- Between West and East, North and South
- 1948 – 1989: “Culturally part of the West, politically part of the East” (Milan Kundera)
- The borderland of the Western Christian civilization
- Small countries, never played a significant role outside of the region, always at the receiving end of conflicts, always behind the West, yet ahead of the East.
- Internally very heterogeneous – major dividing lines in Europe
- A cultural and historical concept

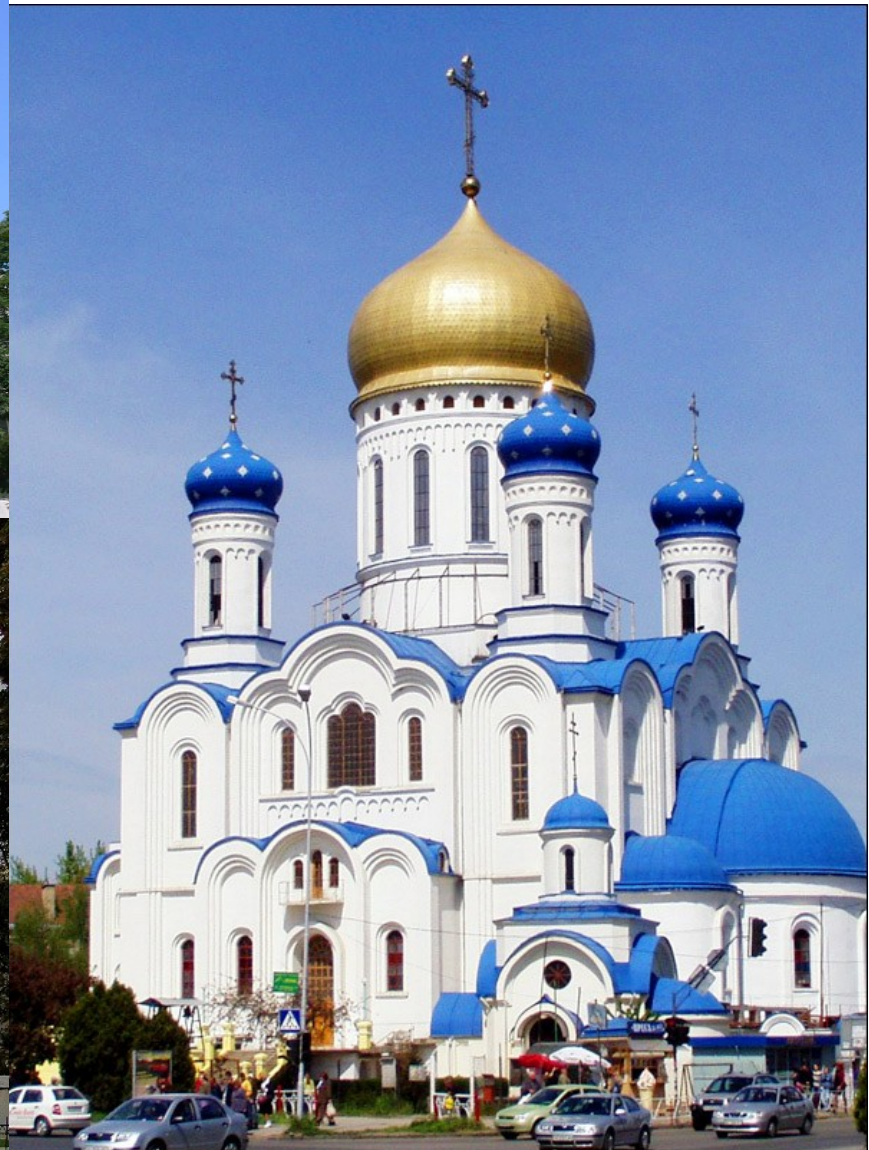




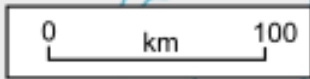












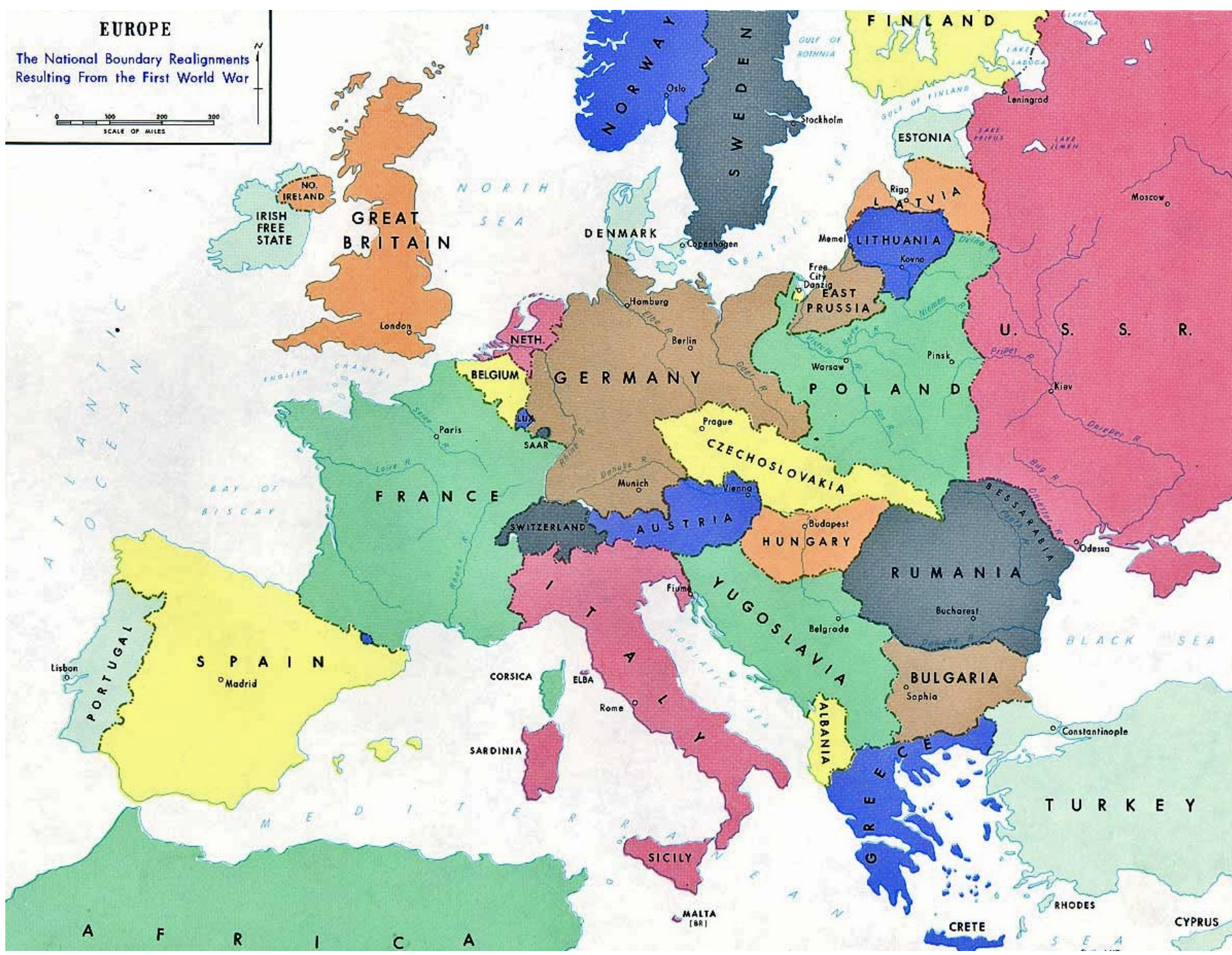
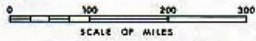
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Germans
<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span>	Hungarians
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span>	Czechs
<span style="color: brown;">■</span>	Slovaks
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Poles
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	Ukrainians
<span style="color: grey;">■</span>	Slovenes
<span style="color: tan;">■</span>	Croats, Serbs
<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Romanians
<span style="color: limegreen;">■</span>	Italians

**THE ETHNIC GROUPS OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY IN 1910**



# EUROPE

The National Boundary Realignments  
Resulting From the First World War





Communist States

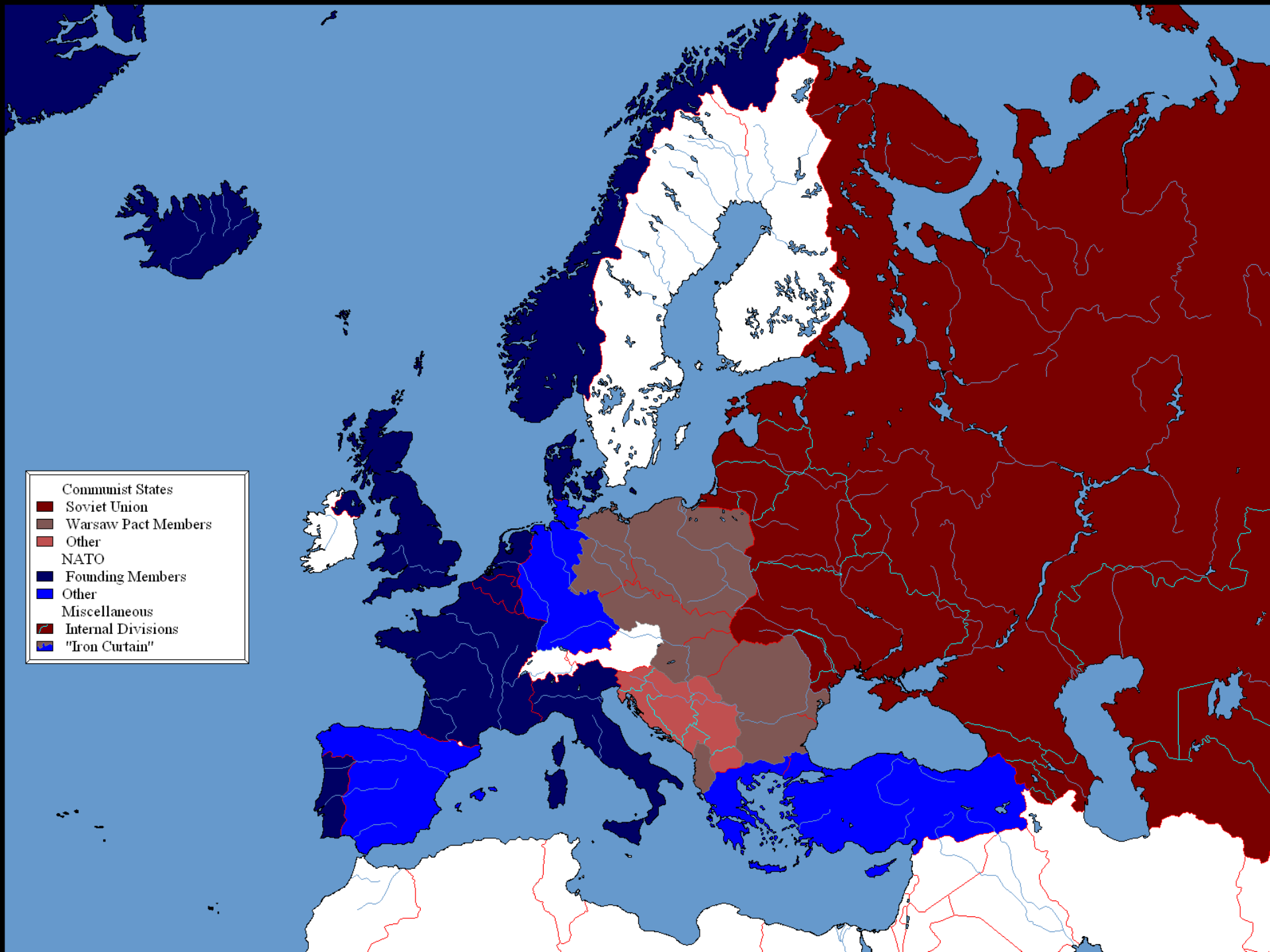
- Soviet Union
- Warsaw Pact Members
- Other

NATO

- Founding Members
- Other

Miscellaneous

- Internal Divisions
- "Iron Curtain"



# EUROPE

## EUROPEAN UNION

- EU Member States
- EU New Members 2004
- EU New Members 2007
- EU Candidates
- EFTA Member States

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# Why has Central Europe always lagged behind?

- Loss of national sovereignty at the end of Middle Age
- Parts of autocratic empires – Habsburg Austrian Empire, Russian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Prussian Empire
- Military conflicts – ... Tatars, Mongols, Ottomans, Thirty years war, Napoleon wars, WW I and WW II, possibly WW III, Balkan wars
- Limited/belated reach of colonialism, reformation, enlightenment, liberalization and industrialism
- Part of the Soviet Eastern Europe in 1948-1989



# Current issues in the region

- Economy
  - Growth slowed down after 2008
  - Investments from the Western Europe and the US were withdrawn
- Politics
  - Rise of populism
  - Corruption
- Security
  - Ukraine crisis and relations with Russia
  - Energy security