

Russia may recognise breakaway republics

Kosovo's declaration of independence has inspired separatists across the Caucasus, with several thought to receive tacit support from Moscow. The EU is now concerned that Russia is preparing to recognise the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia – a move that could spark further conflict



ABKHAZIA: *Population 190,000, ethnic Abkhaz.* Claimed independence in 1992, leading to war with Georgia.

Close ties with Russia include pensions and passports – Moscow lifted formal trade restrictions in February



Russia's problem republics: Although largely subdued, separatist movements remain active



SOUTH OSSETIA:

Pop. 70,000 ethnic Ossetian. After war which drove out 100,000 people, declared independence in 1991 – confirmed by 2006 referendum but unrecognised

NAGORNO-KARABAKH: *Pop. 138,000, ethnic Armenian.*

Under Armenian military control since 1994. Still formally at war with Azerbaijan, clashes again on increase

