



CCRE  
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Local & Regional  
Europe

# Local and Regional Government in Europe

## Structures and Competences



Council of European  
Municipalities and Regions



## About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 40 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its members associations and their elected officials and experts.

Moreover, CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

**[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)**

# Foreword

## The future of Europe relies on its territories

Over 60% of all decisions made at the European level have a direct impact on local and regional agendas and close to 70% of public investments in Europe are made by local and regional authorities. Those two figures alone are proof of the ever-increasing importance of local and regional governments in both Europe's economy and the life of our citizens.

The current financial, economic and social crisis affecting most European countries raises questions as to the model of development in place these past years. For us, the future of Europe lies more so than ever in the hands of local and regional authorities. Municipalities and regions are responsible, self-governing authorities whose debt has remained within reason. They have the capacity to undertake development projects in our territories in cooperation with national governments and European institutions in order to create the conditions necessary for sustainable and inclusive growth.

The present publication is the re-edition of a first study released in 2005. It serves to provide an overview and guide to these numerous European local and regional governments, their functioning, competences and more. We have however not included planning, statistical or administrative regions and districts, as these entities operate without an elected government and often exist for administrative and statistical purposes. These authorities represent the central government within the territory and do not have any form of self-government. Countries concerned include Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia.

The European Union motto "United in diversity" could not better reflect the territorial diversity of European countries and the ways in which the different spheres run and develop their communities and territories. Over the years, local and regional governments have proven and continue to prove that by interacting, working together and exchanging best practices, local and regional leaders are better able to tackle challenges and pave the way to a better future.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the oldest and most representative organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe, with its 55 national associations of local and regional governments in 40 European countries. We are proud to act as the voice of municipalities and regions in calling for a true recognition of their role in Europe, from the Atlantic coast to the Caspian Sea.

We would like to thank CEMR's member associations who contributed to this publication, which we are sure will, in turn, contribute to strengthening our understanding of local and regional structures in Europe. Thus, we hope to help establish a true partnership between all levels of government for a better European governance.



**Wolfgang Schuster**

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# Contents

Foreword	1
Albania	4
Austria	5
Belgium	6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8
Bulgaria	9
Croatia	10
Cyprus	12
Czech Republic	13
Denmark	14
Estonia	16
Finland	17
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18
France	19
Georgia	21
Germany	22
Greece	24
Hungary	25
Iceland	26
Ireland	27
Italy	28
Latvia	30
Lithuania	31
Luxembourg	32
Malta	33
Montenegro	34
Netherlands	35
Norway	36
Poland	37
Portugal	39
Romania	40
Serbia	41
Slovakia	42
Slovenia	43
Spain	44
Sweden	45
Switzerland	47
Turkey	49
Ukraine	51
United Kingdom	53



## Albania is a unitary state composed of communes (*komuna*) and municipalities (*bashkia*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 308 COMMUNES (*KOMUNA*) AND 65 MUNICIPALITIES (*BASHKIA*)

The **city council** (*Këshilli Bashkiak*) is the local authority's deliberative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. The city council is responsible for local taxes and adopting regulations.

The **mayor** (*Kryetari*) is the executive body of the municipality or commune and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. He/she approves and implements city council decisions, guarantees that all of the local authority's obligations are met, and represents the commune or municipality vis-à-vis third parties. The mayor has the right to ask the city council to reconsider a decision

once throughout his/her mandate should he deem it harmful to the community's interest. The mayor is also a member of the local authority's regional council, which coordinates local development policies at the regional level.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Sewage and drainage systems
- ▶ Local roads, sidewalks and squares
- ▶ Public lighting
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Land and urban development
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Local economic development
- ▶ Small business development
- ▶ Veterinary services
- ▶ Public order and civil security
- ▶ Cemeteries

#### ■ Competences shared with the national government:

- ▶ Pre-school and pre-university education
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Social affairs
- ▶ Protection of the environment



## Austria is a federal state composed of municipalities (*Gemeinden*) and regions (*Länder*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 2 357 MUNICIPALITIES (*GEMEINDEN*)

The **municipal council** (*Gemeinderat*) is the deliberative body of the municipality. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage based on the proportional representation system for a five or six-year term depending on the region. The municipal council appoints the members of the local administrative board.

The **local administrative board** (*Gemeindevorstand*) is the municipality's executive body. It is composed of the mayor, his deputies and members from the different political parties, proportionally to the electoral results of each party.

The **mayor** (*Bürgermeister*) is elected either by the municipal council or by direct universal suffrage, depending on the region, although the latter method is the most common. The mayor chairs the local administrative board and the municipal council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Urban planning and land development
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Sewage
- ▶ Roads and household refuse
- ▶ Urban transport
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Health

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 9 REGIONS (*LÄNDER*)

In Austria, regions have their own constitution as well as genuine legislative power in certain areas of relevance.

The **regional parliament** (*Landtag*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a five or six-year term, depending on the region. It appoints the regional governor and government. Some of the region's legislative competencies are exclusive to the regional level while others are shared with the national parliament.

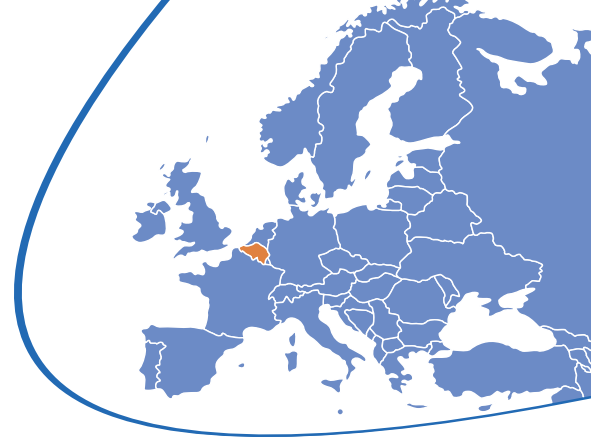
The **regional government** (*Landesregierung*) is the executive board of the region and is headed by the governor. There are two systems for the election of the regional government, depending on the region: the

proportional system (almost each party is represented within the regional government) and the majority system (not all parties are represented within the regional government).

The **regional governor** (*Landeshauptmann*) is elected by the regional parliament. He/she is in charge of the external representation of the region and chairs regional government sessions.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Energy distribution
- ▶ Law and order
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Sports and leisure
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Transport



**Belgium is a federal state composed of municipalities (*gemeenten*), provinces (*provincies*), regions (*gewesten*) and communities (*gemeenschappen*).**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 589 MUNICIPALITIES (*GEMEENTEN*)

The **municipal council** (*conseil communal* in French and *gemeenteraad* in Dutch) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. It is the municipality's legislative body and decides on local policy.

The **college of mayor and alderman** (*college des bourgmestre et échevins* in French and *college van burgemeester en schepenen* in Dutch) is composed of the mayor, his/her aldermen and the president of the public centre for social welfare (see note below). The mayor and aldermen are elected by and from within the municipal council and also sit in the council. The college is the municipality's executive body. It implements the decisions taken by the municipal council and is in charge of

the day-to-day management of the municipality.

The **mayor** (*bourgmestre* in French and *burgemeester* in Dutch) chairs the college of mayor and aldermen as well as the municipal council. In Flanders and in Brussels, he/she is appointed by the regional government at the recommendation of the municipal council for a six-year mandate. In Wallonia, the mayor is directly elected by the population (by "ear-marking": the best score on the list with the largest municipal majority), after which he/she is also appointed by the regional government. The mayor is in charge of the municipal administration and heads the municipal police.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Registry office
- ▶ Spatial and urban planning
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Water and sanitation
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Road management and mobility
- ▶ Culture, sports and youth
- ▶ Social policy
- ▶ Local economy
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Local finance and taxation

**Note:** Each municipality has a public centre for social welfare (CPAS in French, OCMW in Dutch), which has an autonomous status and provides social integration income and the right to social assistance, as well as being in charge of social services (elderly services and care, etc.).

### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 10 PROVINCES (*PROVINCIES*)

The **provincial council** (*conseil provincial* in French and *provincieraad* in Dutch) is the deliberative body of the province. It is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term, via the proportional representation system.

The **provincial authority** (*députation provinciale* in French, except in Wallonia where it is called *collège provincial*, and *deputatie* in Dutch) is the province's governmental body and holds legislative, executive and judicial powers. It is also responsible for the

province's daily administration.

The **governor of the province** (*gouverneur de la province* in French and *provinciegouverneur* in Dutch) is the federal government's commissioner (public order, civil security, emergency planning) as well as the regional and community commissioner. He/she is a civil servant nominated by the federal government. The governor participates in provincial authority and council sessions during which he/she has the right to speak.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Cultural infrastructures
- ▶ Social infrastructures and policies
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Economy
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Housing

**Note:** Brussels-Capital is not a province. It does however have special competences normally allocated to provinces and regions.



### REGIONAL LEVEL: 3 REGIONS (*GEWESTEN*) (BRUSSELS-CAPITAL, FLANDERS AND WALLONIA)

There is no hierarchy between the federal, regional and community governments: they each have their own specific competences allocated to them by the Belgian constitution. The regions' competencies are linked to the land (housing, agriculture, spatial planning, etc.), the communities' competencies are more linked to the individual (education, health, culture, etc.), and the competences of the federal government are those not explicitly attributed to the regions by the constitution.

The **regional parliament** is the region's legislative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. The parliament holds legislative powers, votes on

the regional budget and monitors the regional government's actions.

The **regional government** is the executive body and is composed of regional ministers elected by the regional parliament for a five-year mandate. It is in charge of the implementation and sanctioning of orders or laws voted by the regional parliament. The regional government also has legislative power (right of initiative).

The **minister-president** is appointed among members of the regional government for a period of five years. He/she is responsible for the coordination of policies led by the regional government, over which he/she presides.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Spatial and urban planning
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ International relations
- ▶ External trade
- ▶ Scientific research
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Transport

### COMMUNITY LEVEL: 3 COMMUNITIES (*GEMEENSCHAPPEN*) (FLEMISH-, FRENCH- AND GERMAN-SPEAKING)

The **community parliament** is the legislative body of the community. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. The community parliament has legislative powers, monitors the government of the community and votes the budget.

The **government of the community** is the executive body composed of ministers appointed by the parliament for five years. It also has legislative powers (right of initiative).

The **minister-president** is appointed for a five-year term among members of the government of the community over which he/she presides. He/she is responsible for the coordination of community policies led by the government of the community.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social affairs
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ International relations
- ▶ Health

**Note:** The Flemish community and the Flanders region have merged. Flanders has thus one parliament (*Vlaams parlement*) and one government (*Vlaamse regering*), presided over by the minister-president, all of which are competent for both community and regional matters.



**Bosnia and Herzegovina is a federal state divided into two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, composed of municipalities (*opštine*) and cantons (*kantoni*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 63 MUNICIPALITIES (*OPŠTINE*) IN THE REPUBLIKA SRPSKA AND 74 IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Municipalities and cities (*gradovi*), also called local self-government units, are both executive and legislative authorities.

The **municipal assembly** (*skupština opštine*) is the local authority's decision- and policy-making body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The municipal assembly notably adopts the municipal budget and can appoint or dismiss members of the municipality or city's permanent and temporary working bodies.

The **mayor** (*načelnik opština* in municipalities and *gradonačelnik* in cities) is the executive body of the local authority. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The mayor can put forward draft

legislative proposals to the municipal assembly. He/she also implements local policy, executes the municipal budget and enforces national laws and regulations to be implemented at the local level.

■ **Competences:**

- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Spatial and urban planning
- ▶ Social care
- ▶ Civil protection and defence
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Heating
- ▶ Local roads
- ▶ Sewage and solid waste disposal
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Culture and tourism
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Pre-school
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ School building maintenance
- ▶ School bus transportation
- ▶ Ambulance services
- ▶ Health care supplies

**Note:** Towns and municipalities are encouraged by existing local governance laws to establish companies, institutions and other organisations so as to help manage, finance and improve local infrastructures and services.

**REGIONAL LEVEL: 10 CANTONS (*KANTONI*)**

Cantons, which have their own regional government, are second-level local self-government units present only in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Some cantons are ethnically mixed and thus have special laws so as to ensure equality amongst all citizens.

The **premier** (*premijer*) is at the head of the canton. He/she is assisted in his duties by a number of cantonal ministries, agencies and services.



**Bulgaria is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*obshtina*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 264 MUNICIPALITIES (*OBSTINA*)

The municipality is Bulgaria's main administrative and territorial entity. It is an independent legal entity with its own property and budget. Most municipalities are divided into districts, the average number of districts being 26 and the highest number being 134.

The **municipal council** (*obchtinski savet*) is the municipality's deliberative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Members of the municipal council (between 11 and 61 councillors) elect their president among their peers. The president convenes and chairs the council and coordinates the commissions' work.

The **mayor** (*kmet*) is the municipality's executive body. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage based on a majority system for a four-year term. His/her role is to manage, coordinate, and implement policies adopted by the municipal council. The mayor also represents the municipality and is responsible for its administration.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Health (medical and social care, sanitation, hygiene, etc.)
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Public services
- ▶ Sports and leisure
- ▶ Water supply and sewage
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Household refuse
- ▶ Road, park and lighting maintenance
- ▶ Territorial development
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Building and maintenance of public buildings
- ▶ Environment

**Note:** Activities revolving around health care, education, social security and culture are shared between the municipalities and the national government.



**Croatia is a unitary state composed of municipalities, towns, cities (*grad*) and counties (*županija*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 429 MUNICIPALITIES, 106 TOWNS AND 21 CITIES (*GRAD*)**

### Municipalities

Municipalities in Croatia are local self-government units with less than 10 000 inhabitants.

The **municipal council** (*općinsko vijeće*) is the municipality's representative body. Members of the municipal council are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

The **mayor** (*gradonačelnik*) is the municipality's executive body. He/she notably directs the activities of the administrative bodies and ensures that existing legislation is enforced.

### Towns

Towns are local self-government units with more than 10 000 and less than 35 000 inhabitants.

The **town council** (*gradsko vijeće*) is the town's representative body. Members of the town council are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

The **mayor** (*gradonačelnik*) is the town's executive body. He/she notably directs the activities of the administrative bodies and ensures that existing legislation is enforced.

### Cities

Cities are local self-government units with more than 35 000 inhabitants. Due to the size of their population, cities can take over a part of the county's jurisdiction.

The **city assembly** (*gradska skupština*) is the city's representative body. Members of the city assembly are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

The **mayor** (*gradonačelnik*) is the city's executive body. He/she notably directs the activities of the administrative bodies and ensures that existing legislation and laws are enforced.

### Competences of cities:

(on top of those also held by municipalities and towns)

- ▶ Maintenance of public roads
- ▶ Building and renting permits

### Competences of municipalities and towns:

- ▶ Localities and housing
- ▶ Regional and town planning
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Primary health care
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Consumer protection
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Fire prevention
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Regional traffic

**Note:** The City of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, has the status of a city and of a county, which means its competencies are those of both local and regional authorities.

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 21 COUNTIES (ŽUPANIJA)

There are a total of 21 counties, including the City of Zagreb, which doubles as a county and as a city. However there are only 20 county seats in the county assembly.

Counties are the primary territorial subdivision of Croatia. These regional self-government units have a large degree of autonomy. Croatia is currently undergoing a process of decentralisation of power from the national level to the regional level. Thus, many administrative tasks are gradually being transmitted to the counties.

The **county assembly** (*županijska skupština*) is the county's representative body. The assembly is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The county assembly elects the county's executive leadership and decides on the yearly budget.

The **county prefect** (*župan*) is the county's executive body. He/she represents the county in external affairs and presides over its executive government.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Health services
- ▶ Regional and town planning
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Traffic and traffic infrastructure
- ▶ Maintenance of public roads
- ▶ Issuing of building and renting permits



**Cyprus is a unitary state composed of communities (*koinotites*) and municipalities (*dimoi*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 350 COMMUNITIES (*KOINOTITES*) AND 30 MUNICIPALITIES (*DIMOI*)

There are two different types of local authorities in Cyprus: communities in rural areas and municipalities in urban and touristic areas.

##### Communities

The **community council** (*koinotiko sumvoulío*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. This legislative board is also composed of a president and a vice-president.

The **president** (*proedros*) of the community is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years. He/she chairs the community council.

##### Municipalities

The **municipal council** (*dimotiko sumvoulío*) is the municipality's deliberative assembly and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. It is

responsible for providing assistance and advice to the mayor with regard to the execution of his duties. The municipal council also sets up different committees within the municipality, including the management committee responsible for the preparation of the budget and other ad-hoc committees that provide technical, cultural, environmental and personnel assistance.

The **mayor** (*dimarchos*) is the municipality's executive authority and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. He/she represents the municipality in a court of law and before any state authority. The mayor also supervises the municipality's administration and chairs the municipal council.

##### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Protection of the environment
- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Household refuse

**Note:** A community may become a municipality by local referendum provided it has a population of more than 5 000 or has the economic resources to function as a municipality.

The voluntary conglomeration of local authorities is under discussion at state level and should be adopted by 2012. This measure would notably allow for municipalities and communities to jointly promote various policies, projects and services.

There are nine municipalities and 135 communities in the occupied part of Cyprus, bringing the total on the island to 524 local authorities.



**The Czech Republic is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*obec*) and regions (*kraje*).**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 6 250 MUNICIPALITIES (*OBEC*)

The **municipal council** (*zastupitelstvo obce*) is the municipality's deliberative assembly and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It appoints the members of the municipal committee.

The **municipal committee** (*rada obce*) is the executive body of the municipality and is composed of members elected by and from within the municipal council for a four-year term. The mayor and vice-mayors are also members of the committee, which can form specific commissions, such as a financial commission, cultural commission and commission for minorities.

The **mayor** (*starosta* for smaller municipalities or towns and *primátor* for larger towns or cities) is elected by and from within the municipal council for a four-year mandate. He/she heads the municipal committee and administration, and represents the municipality. In municipalities with fewer than fifteen municipal council members, the executive authority is carried out by the mayor.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Municipal budget
- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Agriculture and forest management
- ▶ Municipal police
- ▶ Water supply and sewage
- ▶ Household refuse
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Spatial planning
- ▶ Cooperation with other municipalities and regions
- ▶ Public transport

**Note:** The City of Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, is divided into metropolitan districts, each made up of its own elected local council. The city's local council is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Council members elect the mayor of the city as well as the members of the city's executive body, the municipal committee.

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 14 REGIONS (*KRAJE*)

The **regional assembly** (*zastupitelstvo kraje*) is the region's deliberative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It controls the regional budget and the subsidies granted to municipalities. It can also submit draft legislation to the national chamber of deputies.

The **regional committee** (*rada kraje*) is the executive body of the region and is composed of the president, vice-presidents and other members elected by and from within the

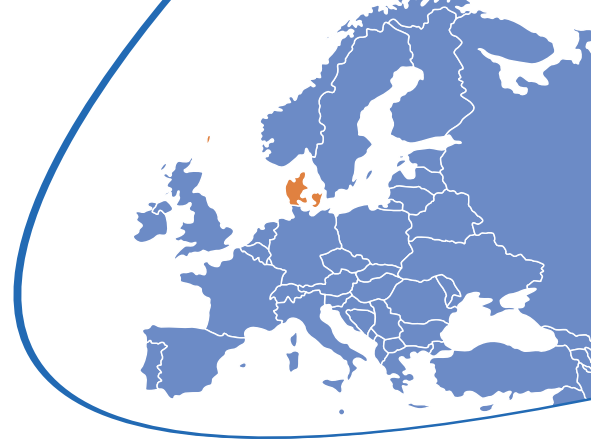
regional assembly for four years. It is assisted by a regional authority (*krajský úrad*), which is headed by a director and divided into several departments in charge of specific fields, such as social affairs, transport, spatial planning and environment.

The **president** (*hejtman*) is elected by and from within the regional assembly for a period of four years. He/she represents the region at the local, national and international levels.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Road network
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Health

**Note:** The City of Prague is both a municipality and region with only one assembly and one committee.



**Denmark is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*kommuner*) and regions (*regioner*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 98 MUNICIPALITIES (*KOMMUNER*)

The **municipal council** is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years and by a system of proportional representation. It is in charge of the municipal budget, the running of local institutions and the adoption of local policies.

The **executive committees** are in charge of local administration. Their members are appointed by the municipal council for a period of four years. Permanent committees assist the municipal council in the preparation of its decisions. The council is obliged to set up a financial committee but may also set up special committees, such as the education committee, the employment committee and

the health and social affairs committee.

The **mayor** is elected for four years by the municipal council. He/she heads the municipality's administration as well as the municipal council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Care for the elderly
- ▶ Integration of refugees and migrants
- ▶ Environmental protection and waste management
- ▶ Assistance to the unemployed
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Culture and sports

**Note:** A new municipal structure came into force in January 2007, based on which the number of municipalities was reduced while their overall sizes were increased. This model now requires municipalities to have a minimum of 20 000 inhabitants, although those with a population of less than 20 000 are accepted as long as they establish a legally binding cooperation with a larger municipality.



## REGIONAL LEVEL: 5 REGIONS (*REGIONER*)

The **regional council** is the region's deliberative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years by a system of proportional representation. It can establish special committees, such as the hospitals committee, the regional development committee and the sustainability committee, which can be assisted by dedicated secretariats. The regional council also appoints its chairman.

The **executive committees** are composed of members elected by and from within the regional council for four years. They oversee the administration of the region and assist the regional council in the preparation and implementation of its decisions.

**Note:** Danish regions and the Island of Bornholm are also in charge of a regional growth forum, composed of representatives from the region, municipalities, local trade and industry, knowledge institutions and the labour market. Their mission is to create optimal conditions for trade and industry in order to generate growth and development.

Since January 2007, a new regional structure was adopted replacing the pre-existing 14 counties with today's five regions. The Danish regions now have between 0.6 and 1.6 million inhabitants.

The regions cannot levy taxes directly, but are financed through contributions from the state and the municipalities. The region's economy is divided into three separate parts: health, social services, special education and regional development.

Greenland and the Faeroe Islands have an autonomous status. They both have their own government and legislative assembly. The Faroese Municipal Organisation ([www.ksf.fo](http://www.ksf.fo)) has the status of observer to the work of CEMR.

The **chairman** of the regional council heads the council and administration. He/she is elected by the regional council from amongst its members and is assisted by deputies also elected by the council.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Hospital
- ▶ Health insurance
- ▶ Mental health treatment
- ▶ Social services and special education
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Business promotion
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Nature and environment
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Soil pollution



**Estonia is a unitary state composed of rural municipalities (*vald*) and cities (*linn*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL : 193 RURAL MUNICIPALITIES (*VALD*) AND 33 CITIES (*LINN*)**

The **municipal council** (*volikogu*) is the municipality's legislative body and is composed of members, whose number varies according to the demographic size of the local authority, elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. The municipal council appoints and may dismiss the council chair as well as the mayor. It is assisted in its work by sector-based commissions.

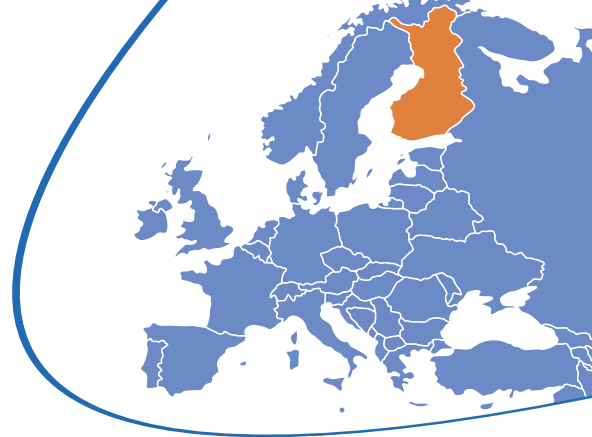
The **local government** (*valitsus*) is the municipality's executive body. It is composed of the mayor and of members appointed by the mayor, following the council's approval.

Members of the local government cannot sit on the municipal council.

The **mayor** (*vallavanem* in rural municipalities and *linnapea* in cities) is appointed by the municipal council for a four-year term. He/she is the representative of the local government but cannot be the municipal council chair.

■ **Competences:**

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Health services
- ▶ Culture, leisure and sports
- ▶ Social housing
- ▶ Urban and rural planning
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Water supply, sewage, public lighting and central heating
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Waste collection and disposal
- ▶ Road and cemetery maintenance
- ▶ Local taxes



## Finland is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*kunta*) and regions (*maakunnan liitto*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 336 MUNICIPALITIES (*KUNTA*)

The **municipal council** (*kunnanvaltuusto*) is composed of members elected via a proportional representation system for a period of four years. This deliberative body appoints the executive board and elects the mayor.

The **executive board** (*kunnanhallitus*) is composed of members appointed by the municipal council. It is responsible for running the municipal administration and its finances. The executive board is assisted in its work by sector-based committees.

The **mayor** (*kunnanjohtaja*) is elected by the municipal council for a fixed or indefinite term

of office, as decided upon by the municipal council. He/she is at the head of the municipality's administration and prepares the decisions to be adopted by the executive board.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Health care (primary, secondary, and dental services)
- ▶ Social services (child day care, services for the elderly and the disabled)
- ▶ Education (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational training, adult education and libraries)
- ▶ Culture and leisure
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Territorial planning
- ▶ Building and maintenance of technical infrastructure and environment (roads, energy, water and sewage, waste, harbours and public transport)
- ▶ Business and employment
- ▶ Independent taxation rights and finances

### REGIONAL LEVEL: THE REGION OF KAINUU AND THE ÅLAND ISLANDS

#### Region of Kainuu

In 2005, the experimental region of Kainuu was established in order to deal with challenges such as emigration, unemployment and the ageing of the population. The experimental period will come to an end by the end of 2012.

The **regional council** (*maakuntaliitto*) is the region's executive body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

The **president/chair** of the region is elected by the regional council for a four-year mandate.

#### Åland Islands

The Åland Islands is an autonomous province. The **autonomous government** (*landskapssstyrelse*) is the province's executive body, presided over by a **president** (*maaherra*). This provincial authority also has a **legislative assembly** (*lagting*), whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage.

#### ■ Competences of the Region of Kainuu:

- ▶ Social and welfare services
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Education (shared with municipalities)

#### ■ Competences of the Åland Islands:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Social affairs
- ▶ Employment



## The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*opstina*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 84 MUNICIPALITIES (*OPSTINA*) AND THE CITY OF SKOPJE

The **local council** (*sovet na opstinata*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The number of municipal councillors is determined by law and depends on the demographic size of the municipality.

The **mayor** (*gradonacalnik*) is the municipality's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. He/she executes decisions made by the local council and submits draft municipal acts to the council. The mayor represents the municipality, acts on its behalf and is responsible

for the organisation, performance and quality of services of its administration. He/she cannot be a local councillor at the same time as mayor.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Urban and spatial planning
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Local economic development
- ▶ Water supply and treatment
- ▶ Road maintenance
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Sports and leisure
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Elementary and secondary education
- ▶ Fire services
- ▶ Disaster protection and assistance

**Note:** The country's capital, the City of Skopje, is a special unit of local self-government made up of ten independent municipalities. The capital's independent municipalities have individual competences, some of which are shared with Skopje, and which set them apart from the country's remaining 74 municipalities. Examples of these shared competences include property tax, road maintenance, urban planning and building permits.



**France is a unitary state composed of municipalities, departments and regions.**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 36 700 MUNICIPALITIES

The **municipal council** is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. This deliberative assembly is headed by the mayor.

The **mayor** and his/her deputies represent the municipality's executive branch. The mayor is elected by and from within the municipal council for a six-year mandate. He/she is in charge of the municipal administration and is assisted by his/her deputies.

#### ■ Traditional competences:

- ▶ Registry office functions
- ▶ Electoral functions
- ▶ Social work
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Maintenance of municipal roads
- ▶ Land development and planning
- ▶ Local public order

#### ■ Decentralised competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Social work
- ▶ Culture

**Note:** Municipalities benefit from a general competence clause: they can intervene over and above their competences in all fields of local interest.

It is foreseen for 2014 that all municipalities will be a part of an inter-municipal structure. These structures will have limited competences allocated to them by the municipalities.

The City of Paris is both a department and a municipality.

### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: 96 DEPARTMENTS AND 5 OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS

The **general council** is the department's deliberative body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term and half of it is renewed every three years. The council elects its president among its members and is composed of specialised committees. Since August 2004, general councils can manage European structural funds on an experimental basis.

The **president** of the general council is the department's executive authority. He/she is

elected by and from within the council for three years and is assisted by a permanent committee composed of vice-presidents.

The **prefect** represents the country's prime minister and the ministers within the department. He/she is in charge of maintaining public order and holds police powers, providing him/her with the status of administrative police authority. The prefect is also in charge of monitoring the legality of the local authorities' actions.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Social and health action
- ▶ Urban and equipment planning
- ▶ Education, culture and heritage
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Environment

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 22 REGIONS AND 5 OVERSEAS REGIONS

The **regional council**, called territorial assembly in Corsica, is the deliberative body of the region. It is composed of regional councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The regional council elects its president from among its members. Since August 2004, regional councils can, on an experimental basis, manage European structural funds.

The **permanent committee** is the region's deliberative body, which assists the council in the execution of some of its competences. The vice-presidents are members of the permanent committee.

The **president** is elected by the regional council for six years. He/she is the region's executive body and is at the head of the regional administration. The president's functions are similar to those of the department's president.

The **prefect** of the region is also the prefect of the department in which the main city of the region is located. He/she is responsible for the services devolved to the regions by the state. Other competences include relaying the government's policy on major projects, monitoring the legality and compliance of the region's budgetary acts, and preparing policies for the region's economic, social and territorial development.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Territorial development and planning
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Education and job training programmes
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Construction and maintenance of secondary schools
- ▶ Health

**Note:** Corsica has a specific status and represents a self-governing authority with specific institutions (Corsican assembly, executive council).

The act adopted on 16 December 2010 modifies the general organisation of local, departmental and regional authorities starting in 2014. They notably plan for the creation of a territorial councillor: a single elected representative to preside over the regional and general councils.

There are three types of overseas communities:

- Overseas departments and regions (DOM and ROM)
- Overseas communities
- New Caledonia and the Territory of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF)



**Georgia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*minucipaliteti*) and self-governing cities (*tvitmmartveli qalaqebi*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 64 MUNICIPALITIES (*MINUCIPALITETI*) AND 5 SELF-GOVERNING CITIES (*TVITMMARTVELI QALAQEBI*)**

The **municipal** or **city assembly** (*sakrebulo*) is the local authority's legislative body and is composed of members elected for a four-year term, via a party-list system and from single mandate constituencies. This assembly controls the activities of the municipal or city board and elects the board's chief executive officer. It also reviews and approves the local budget, approves local socio-economic development plans and introduces taxes and fees as well as any other measures defined by law. The assembly can set up committees such as the legal affairs, the social affairs or the finance and budget committees.

The **municipal** or **city board** (*gamgeoba*) is composed of the heads of several structural and territorial units, present in each local au-

thority, and implements decisions taken by the municipal or city council. The board is headed by a **chief executive officer** (*gamgebeli*) appointed by the municipal or city assembly for a period of four years.

The **chairman of the municipal** or **city assembly** (*sakrebulo's tavmjdomare*), also known as the mayor, is the local authority's supreme official. He/she is elected by and from within the municipal or city assembly for a period of four years. The chairman represents the local authority.

#### ■ **Competences:**

- ▶ Municipal property
- ▶ Municipal service provision
- ▶ Land resources
- ▶ Local taxes
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Spatial planning
- ▶ Pre-school education
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Fire safety

**Note:** Self-governing cities also exercise competences delegated by central government agencies, including military recruitment, emergency response and state of emergency, environment and legalisation of property.

The capital city, Tbilisi, has broader functions than the other four self-governing cities in Georgia, such as the organisation of local business support programmes and social protection. The mayor of Tbilisi is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. He/she is at the head of the municipal cabinet, which is composed of the mayor, three vice-mayors and the heads of the sectoral departments, which can include transport, social affairs and architecture. Each department has its own head and staff.

The City of Tbilisi is divided into ten administrative districts. Each district has its own executive branch headed by a chief executive officer nominated by the mayor.

There are two autonomous provinces in Georgia, the autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Adjara.



**Germany is a federal state composed of the federal and the regional level. Municipalities (*Gemeinden*), cities (*Städte*) and counties (*Kreise*) are a constitutional part of the regions (*Länder*).**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 11 481 MUNICIPALITIES (*GEMEINDEN*) AND CITIES (*STÄDTE*)

There are two types of local structures in Germany, depending on the region's legal status: the magistrate system (*Magistratsverfassung*) and the council system (*Süd-deutsche Ratsverfassung*).

The **council system** exists in all German regions except for Hessen. According to the council system, the local council is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years.

The **mayor** (*Bürgermeister*) is also elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that can vary from four to nine years, which also applies to Hessen. The mayor chairs the local council and heads the municipal administration.

The **local council** (*Gemeinderat*) is the municipality's central body. It is elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that can vary from four to six years. The local council is the legislative organ and makes most of the decisions, all the while holding a monitoring and controlling function vis-à-vis the mayor and local administration.

The **magistrate system** only exists in one region (Hessen). In this system, the executive branch is composed of the mayor and his deputies. These are civil servants appointed by the local council for a mandate that generally lasts four years. The magistrate represents the municipality, is in charge of the daily local administration and implements local council decisions.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Municipal taxation
- ▶ Public security and order
- ▶ Municipal roads
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Water supply and waste water management
- ▶ Flood control and management
- ▶ Fire fighting
- ▶ Social aid and youth
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ School building and maintenance
- ▶ Cemeteries

**Note:** The aforementioned competences are examples of the mandatory competences of local authorities in Germany. There also exist a number of optional competences, notably in the fields of energy, economic development, infrastructures, culture, sports, migration and integration.

### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 295 COUNTIES (*KREISE*)

The **county assembly** (*Kreistag*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that can vary from four to six years depending on the region. It is the county's legislative body.

The **county president** (*Landrat*) is elected either by the county assembly or by direct universal suffrage, depending on the region. He/she is a civil servant elected for a period that varies from five to eight years and chairs the county assembly.

The **county office** (*Landratsamt*) is the county's executive body and is composed of civil servants recruited by the county or by the region.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Construction and maintenance of intermediary roads
- ▶ Social services and youth
- ▶ Collecting and managing household refuse
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Food safety
- ▶ Protection of nature and environment
- ▶ Foreign affairs
- ▶ Disaster management
- ▶ Public transport

**Note:** The aforementioned competences are examples of the mandatory competences of county authorities. There also exist a number of optional competences, notably in the fields of culture, economy, tourism, as well as building and managing libraries.



## REGIONAL LEVEL: 16 REGIONS (LÄNDER)

The **parliament** (*Landtag*) is the region's legislative body. It consists of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. It elects the minister-president of the region.

The **government** (*Landesregierung*) is the executive body of the region. It is elected by the parliament for a four-year mandate. It elects the minister-president.

The **minister-president** (*Ministerpräsident*) chairs the government. He/she has the exclusive power to designate and dismiss the ministers of the region.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Public administration
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Homeland security
- ▶ Taxation
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ University education
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Legal supervision of local self-government

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**Note:** Regional competences are shared with the central government in the fields of justice, social policy, civil law, criminal law and labour law.



## Greece is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*dimos*) and self-governed regions (*periphéria*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 325 MUNICIPALITIES (*DIMOS*)

The **municipal council** (*dimotiko simvoulío*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This deliberative assembly, headed by the mayor, is the decision-making body of the municipality. The municipal council is composed of a number of committees including the financial committee, the quality of life committee and the board of immigrant integration.

The **executive committee** (*ektelestiki epitropi dimou*) is the municipality's executive

body. It is composed of the mayor and deputy mayors and monitors the implementation of municipal policy, as adopted by the municipal council.

The **mayor** (*dimarchos*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she defends local interests, heads all local development actions and represents the municipality. The mayor also presides over the executive committee and coordinates the implementation of its decisions.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Building permits and urban planning applications
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Issuing of professional licenses
- ▶ Agriculture, livestock and fisheries
- ▶ Transport infrastructure
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Education

**Note:** Insular and mountainous municipalities have a wider set of competences, which include development, environment, quality of life, health and welfare. They can also set up special committees for the promotion of tourism.

Metropolitan areas also have their own extra set of competences, such as transport, communication, environment, quality of life, spatial planning, urban regeneration and civil protection and security.

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 13 SELF-GOVERNED REGIONS (*PERIPHERIA*)

The **regional council** (*peripheriako simvoulío*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. This deliberative assembly, presided over by the head of the region, is the regional authority's decision-making body. The regional council is composed of a number of committees, including the financial and the regional committees.

The **executive committee** (*ektelestiki epitropi periferias*) is the region's executive body and is composed of the head of the region and the deputy heads. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation of regional policy.

The **head of the region** (*perifereiarchis*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. He/she directs the implementation of regional development plans, issues all non-regulatory acts, and implements the decisions made by the regional council, the executive committee and the financial committee. The head of the region convenes and presides over the regional council and the executive committee and represents the region.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Regional development planning
- ▶ "Green" development



**Hungary is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*települések*), cities (*városok*), cities with county rank (*megyei jogú városok*), capital city districts (*fővárosi kerületek*) and counties (*megyék*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 3 177 MUNICIPALITIES (*TELEPÜLÉSEK*), CITIES (*VÁROSOK*), CITIES WITH COUNTY RANK (*MEGYEI JOGÚ VÁROSOK*), CAPITAL CITY DISTRICTS (*FŐVÁROSI KERÜLETEK*) AND THE CITY OF BUDAPEST**

The **body of representatives** (*képviselő-testület*) is the municipality's legislative body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years and is responsible for the management and control of the municipality. Its decisions are presented in the form of resolutions and decrees.

The **mayor** (*polgármester*) is the municipality's executive body and presides over the body of representatives. He/she is a member of the body of representatives and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. On the mayor's proposal, the body of representatives may elect deputy mayors

from within its ranks, via secret ballot. Municipalities of more than 3 000 inhabitants have a full-time mayor, while in municipalities of less than 3 000 inhabitants, the body of representatives can determine whether the mayor holds a part-time or full-time position.

The **notary** (*jegyző*) is appointed by the body of representatives, usually for an undetermined period of time. He/she is at the head of the local administration. The notary prepares and supports the work of the body of representatives and mayor, and executes their decisions.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Protection of the environment
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Primary schools
- ▶ Maintenance of roads, public areas, cemeteries and sewage
- ▶ Water resources
- ▶ Fire services
- ▶ Culture

**Note:** The capital city of Budapest is composed of two levels: the city's local government and 23 districts. These two levels are managed by autonomous local entities, which have the status of a municipality. A municipality can become a city at the initiative of its body of representatives, depending on its level of development and its impact at the regional level. Cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants can gain the rank of a county. However, this process is quite rare in Hungary, as the last municipality to have gained county rank was Érd in 1994.

#### **INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 19 COUNTIES (*MEGYÉK*)**

The **county council** (*megyei közgyűlés*) is the county's deliberative body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The county council provides the public services that municipalities are unable to provide. However, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, county authorities cannot take over the competences that municipalities wish to handle themselves.

The **county chair** (*községi elnöke*) is elected for a four-year mandate by and from within the county council. He/she is the county's executive branch and represents the county council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Secondary schools
- ▶ Cultural infrastructures (libraries, museums, etc.)
- ▶ Maintenance of retirement homes and hospitals
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Tourism

**Note:** The Hungarian Constitution and Local Government Act are currently under revision. Thus, a new local government structure will be introduced between 2012 and 2014. The revised Constitution and Act will lean more towards the centralisation of certain local competences, such as primary education, due to current budget restrictions in Hungary.



**Iceland is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*sveitarfélag*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 76 MUNICIPALITIES (*SVEITARFÉLAG*)

The **municipal council** (called *sveitarstjórn*, *bæjarstjórn* or *borgarstjórn* depending on the size of the municipality) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage, usually for a four-year term. These councillors are responsible for the management of the municipality and appoint permanent committees to assist the council in its work. These committees work on specific issues wholly or partly related to local life and make recommendations to the council.

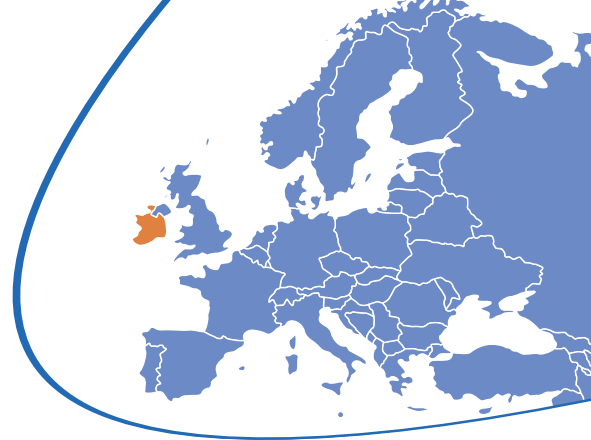
The **executive committee** (called *byggðaráð*, *bæjarráð* or *borgarráð* depending on the size of the municipality) is the municipality's executive body and is composed of municipal council members designated by the council. It is in charge of the financial and administrative management of the municipality.

The **mayor** (called *oddviti* or *forseti*) depending on the size of the municipality) is elected for one year by municipal council majority. He/she presides over the council. Following elections, the municipal council may decide to appoint one of its members as mayor or may designate a non-political person to take on this role.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Services for persons with disabilities
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Culture, sports and leisure
- ▶ Public utilities (sewage, water and electricity)
- ▶ Spatial planning and building inspection
- ▶ Public parks and open areas
- ▶ Monitoring of public and environmental health
- ▶ Fire services
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Waste management and collection
- ▶ Harbours

**Note:** In the capital city of Reykjavík, the municipal council is called *borgarstjórn* and the executive committee *borgarráð*.



**Ireland is a unitary state composed of boroughs, towns, cities and counties.**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 5 BOROUGHs AND 75 TOWNS

The **borough council** or **town council** is the local authority's deliberative body in certain areas, such as setting the rate for commercial rate payers. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The council appoints the mayor and is responsible for making the municipality's development plans.

The **borough clerk** or **town clerk** is the executive head of the borough or town council. He/she is a civil servant and is appointed by the national government. The

clerk is responsible for the local administration and for overseeing a number of executive functions, including staff management, public agreements, revenue collection, planning permissions and housing allocation.

The **mayor** is elected every year by borough or town council members and presides over the council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Road construction and maintenance
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Leisure facilities
- ▶ Urban planning

### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 5 CITIES AND 29 COUNTIES

The **city council** or **county council** is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years, via proportional representation. The number of councillors varies and is set by national legislation. The city or county council is assisted by local policy committees, made up of both local elected council members and representatives from local interest groups, such as business and environmental groups, as well as from the community and voluntary sector.

The council exercises what are known as reserved functions, such as the adoption of local main policies. These include major policy documents, council plans and strategies, as well as local laws and the annual budget. The city or county council also oversees the administration of these policies.

The **city manager** or **county manager** heads the administration, generally for a period of seven years, and has a number of responsibilities related to the internal management of the local authority and to the implementation of policy. In particular, he/she exercises and oversees executive functions such as staff management, public agreements, revenue collection, planning permissions and housing allocations.

The **mayor** or **chairperson of the council** is the ceremonial head of the local authority. He/she is elected each year by and among council members. The mayor or chairperson presides over council meetings and represents the city or county.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Road infrastructure
- ▶ Water supply and treatment
- ▶ Waste management and environment
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Fire services and civil defence
- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ Local arts, culture and leisure facilities
- ▶ Coordination of public services across different agencies operating locally

**Note:** The city and county councils are considered as the primary units of local government in Ireland and, between them, cover the entire area and population of the country. Each county has a least one council, although Dublin County, for example, has a total of three councils, on top of a city council.



**Italy is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*comuni*), provinces (*provincia*) and regions (*regione*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 8 094 MUNICIPALITIES (*COMUNI*)

The **local council** (*consiglio comunale*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years. It is the municipality's main legislative and decision-making body. The council notably votes the municipal budget.

The **local executive committee** (*giunta comunale*) is the municipality's executive branch. It implements decisions made by the local council and its members, called deputies (*assessori*), are designated by the mayor.

The **mayor** (*sindaco*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a total of five years. He/she delegates some of his/her competences to the executive committee, whose members he/she designates. The mayor is also at the head of the local civil service.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Public services
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Culture

**Note:** Each municipality is linked to a province but can directly deal with its region and/or the national government. Municipalities can only gain the status of a city if the president of Italy grants them this title.

#### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 110 PROVINCES (*PROVINCIA*)

The **provincial council** (*consiglio provinciale*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years. It decides on the province's broad policy lines and votes the budget.

The **provincial executive committee** (*giunta provinciale*) implements the provincial council's decisions. Its members, who are designated by the province's president, cannot be members of the council.

The **president** (*presidente*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. He/she designates the members of the provincial executive committee.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Waste collection
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Hunting and fisheries
- ▶ Maintenance and enhancement of water resources and energy

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 20 REGIONS (*REGIONE*)

The **regional council** (*consiglio regionale*) is the region's legislative body. The council can present bills to the national parliament and can dismiss the president of the regional executive committee.

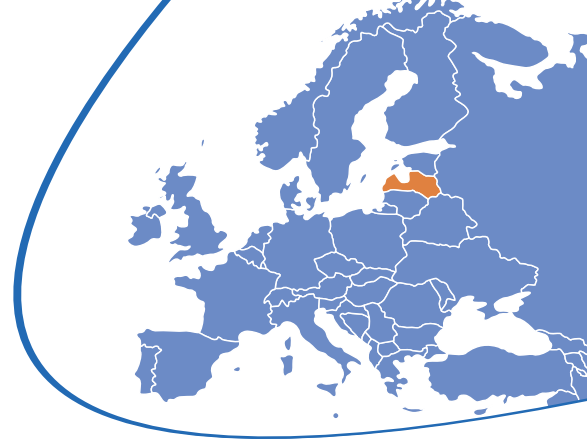
The **regional executive committee** (*giunta regionale*) is the region's executive body. It is composed of a president and regional councillors. The councillors are designated by the regional council or by the president for a period of five years. The executive committee has general administrative competences and can put forward regional bills. It also prepares and implements the regional budget and implements regional council decisions.

The **president** (*presidente*) is elected by and from within the council for a total of five years. He/she presides over the regional council and also either designates or dismisses members of the regional executive committee. The president represents the region, directs its policies and executes regional laws and regulations. He/she undertakes the administrative functions delegated by the state to the regions, but must follow the national government's directions in this regard. The president has the same legislative powers as the president of the national parliament (*camera dei deputati*) and as the president of the senate (*senato*).

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ International relations with other regions and with the EU
- ▶ External trade
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Production and delivery of energy
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Agriculture

**Note:** Five of Italy's 20 regions have a special status (Aosta Valley, Trentino-Alto Adige/South Tyrol, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia and Sicily) for historic, linguistic and minority-related reasons. The regions of Trento and Bolzano have the status of autonomous province, with their own legislation and their own budget.



**Latvia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*novads*) and cities (*pilseta*).**

#### **LOCAL LEVEL: 110 MUNICIPALITIES (*NOVADS*) AND 9 CITIES (*PILSETA*)**

The **local council** (*dome*) is the local authority's legislative body. Its members are councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The council elects the chairman of the local council and the members of the standing committees from among its councillors. Both the finance committee and social, education and culture committee are mandatory. However, local authorities are free to set up other standing committees, all of which are composed of politicians and local experts. Standing committees prepare draft decisions for the local council.

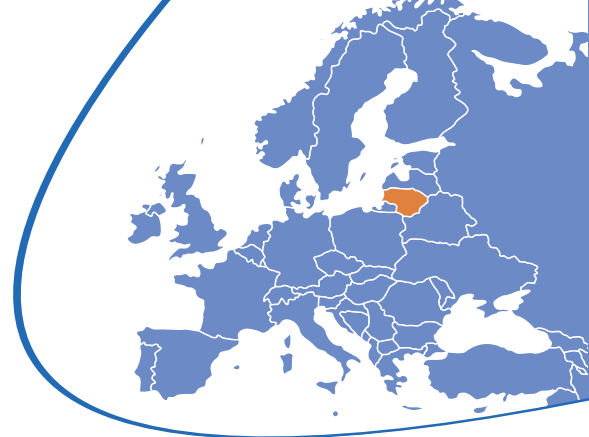
The **chairman of the local council** (*priekšdēdētājs*) is elected by and from within the council for a four-year term. He/she chairs the local council and the financial committee.

#### **Competences:**

The competences of local authorities can either be autonomous, delegated by the state or voluntary. The competences listed below are autonomous.

- ▶ Water and heating supply
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Public services and infrastructure
- ▶ Public management of forests and water
- ▶ Primary and secondary education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Child welfare
- ▶ Social housing
- ▶ Licencing for commercial activities
- ▶ Public order and civil protection
- ▶ Urban development
- ▶ Collection of statistical information
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Training for teachers





## Lithuania is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*savivaldybė*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 60 MUNICIPALITIES (*SAVIVALDYBĖ*)

The **local council** (*savivaldybės taryba*) is the municipality's legislative and decision-making body and is made up of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. It adopts the budget, enacts local legislation, and has the power to establish smaller territorial units (*seniūnija*). The local council also elects the mayor and deputy-mayors.

The **director of administration** (*administracijos direktorius*) is in charge of all executive tasks. He/she is nominated by the local council for four years. The director is directly and personally responsible for the implementation of national and local legislation in the municipality. He/she can be dismissed by local council decision at the proposal of the mayor and resigns when the new council meets for the first time.

The **mayor** (*meras*) is elected by and from within the local council for four years. He/she is the head of the municipality and local civil service, and chairs local council meetings. The mayor can be dismissed by council decision and resigns when the new council meets for the first time.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Budget
- ▶ Pre-school, primary and secondary education
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Sanitation
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Labour market measures and promotion of entrepreneurship
- ▶ Primary health care
- ▶ Public services and municipal property management
- ▶ Spatial planning
- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Tourism

**Note:** By local council decision, each municipality can be administratively divided into smaller territorial units called *seniūnija*. These units are generally responsible for the provision of daily local services to citizens in a given municipal area. Each territorial unit is headed by a civil servant (*seniūnas*) appointed by the municipal council.

An advisory council composed of citizens can be established within these smaller territorial units, so as to provide their respective local administrations with advice on how to better provide municipal services or on how to draft and implement local policies.



## Luxembourg is a unitary state composed of municipalities.

### LOCAL LEVEL: 106 MUNICIPALITIES

The **municipal council** is the municipality's legislative body and is composed of councillors elected for a period of six years using a proportional or first-past-the-post system, depending on the demographic size of the municipality. The council represents the municipality and is presided over by the mayor.

The **college of the mayor and aldermen** (*collège des bourgmestre et échevins*) is the municipality's executive and daily administrative body. It is composed of the mayor and the aldermen, whose number varies according to the demographic size of the municipality, and who are nominated by the national government from among the members of the municipal council. The college is both a municipal body (local government management) and a state body (implementation of laws, Grand-Duke and ministerial regulations and decrees, with the exception of the police).

The **mayor** (*bourgmestre*) is designated by the national government from among the municipal council members for a six-year mandate. He/she chairs the college of the mayor and aldermen and the municipal council. The mayor can act both as a municipal body and as a state body. He/she is notably in charge of implementing laws and police regulations.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Local land development
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Culture and sports
- ▶ Preschool and primary education
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Water management and sanitation
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Funerals
- ▶ Regulatory and police force
- ▶ Fire and rescue services
- ▶ Road maintenance and traffic management



**Malta is a unitary state composed of local councils (*kunsill lokali*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 68 LOCAL COUNCILS (*KUNSILL LOKALI*)

The **local council** is the local authority's deliberative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage via a system of proportional representation for a period of four years. The number of councillors varies according to the demographic size of the local authority.

The **mayor** (*sindku*) is the political representative of the local council. He/she is the local council member to have received the highest number of votes within the political party that got the overall majority during the local election. The mayor holds a three-year mandate and chairs local council meetings.

The **executive secretary** (*segretarju eżekutiv*) is designated by the local council for three years. He/she is the executive, administrative and financial head of the council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Maintenance of public areas (parks, sports centres, leisure centres, etc.)
- ▶ Maintenance of road infrastructure
- ▶ Public libraries
- ▶ Waste collection
- ▶ Local enforcement system
- ▶ Street lighting
- ▶ Management of devolved properties



**Montenegro is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*opština*).**

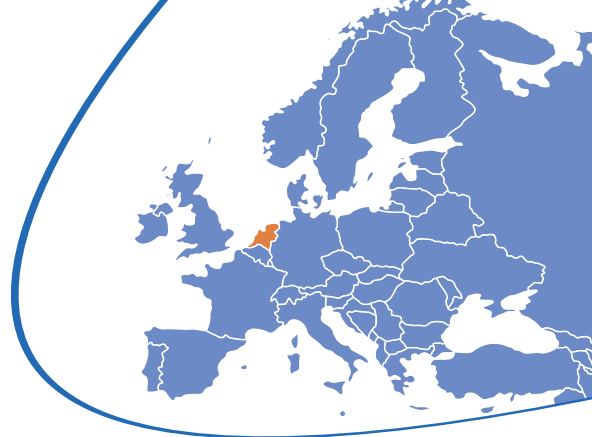
#### LOCAL LEVEL: 21 MUNICIPALITIES (*OPŠTINA*)

The **municipal assembly** (*Skupština opštine*) is the municipality's legislative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. Each assembly is made up of 30 councillors plus an additional councillor for every 5 000 voters. The municipal assembly adopts regulations and the budget, and also establishes the level of local taxes. It can establish internal commissions and boards and is chaired by a speaker elected among the councillors.

The **mayor** (*Predsjednik opštine* in municipalities and *gradonačelnik* in cities) is elected by the municipal assembly for a four-year mandate. He/she is the executive body of the municipality. The mayor proposes regulations to be adopted by the assembly and is responsible for their implementation. He/she also supervises the work of the municipal administration and can appoint or dismiss deputy mayors.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Urban and spatial planning
- ▶ Environmental protection
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Culture and sports



## The Netherlands is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*gemeenten*) and provinces (*provincies*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 418 MUNICIPALITIES (*GEMEENTEN*)

The **local council** (*gemeenteraad*) is the municipality's deliberative body. Its members are councillors elected for a total of four years via the proportional representation system. The local council is in charge of the college of mayor and aldermen, makes all main municipal decisions and has the power to pass by-laws. It is chaired by the mayor, who cannot take part in any of the council votes.

The **college of mayor and aldermen** (*burgemeester en wethouders*) is the municipality's executive body. The college prepares and implements local council decisions and is responsible for executing national policies at the local level. Aldermen, whose number varies

depending on the municipality, are elected from within the council for a four-year mandate.

The **mayor** (*burgemeester*) chairs the local council and the college of mayor and aldermen. He/she is formally appointed for a six-year mandate by the national government at the proposal of the local council. The mayor has the power to vote within the college of mayor and aldermen and his/her vote can be decisive.

#### ■ **Competences:** (mostly shared with the national government)

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Civil engineering
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Childcare
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Law and order
- ▶ Culture and sports

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 12 PROVINCES (*PROVINCIES*)

The **provincial states** (*provinciale staten*) are the provinces' legislative body. Their members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. The provincial states have the power to pass by-laws and are chaired by the Queen's commissioner, who cannot take part in any provincial state votes.

The **provincial executive board** (*gedeputeerde staten*) is the province's executive body. It prepares and implements decisions taken by the provincial states and is responsible for executing national policies at the provincial level. The provincial executive board is composed of the Queen's commissioner and

of three to nine members designated by the provincial states.

The **Queen's commissioner** (*commissaris van de Koningin*) chairs the provincial executive board and is appointed for a six-year term by the national government at the proposal of the provincial states.

#### ■ **Competences:**

- ▶ Regional planning
- ▶ Social housing
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Leisure and sports
- ▶ Public transport, road maintenance and traffic
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Regional broadcasting



## Norway is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*kommune*) and counties (*fylkeskommune*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 430 MUNICIPALITIES (*KOMMUNE*)

The **local council** (*kommunestyret*) is the municipality's deliberative body and is composed of councillors elected for four years from party lists via a system of proportional representation. The local council is the highest decision-making body of the municipality and is in charge of local budgetary, financial and planning issues.

The **executive committee** (*formannskap*) is composed of members coming from the different political parties, based on the results obtained in the last local election. The

committee prepares decisions concerning the local budget, annual accounts and local taxes for the local council. It also makes decisions when it comes to less important or more urgent matters and monitors the administration's implementation of political decisions.

The **mayor** (*ordfører*) is elected for a period of four years by and from within the local council. He/she heads the council, chairs its meetings and represents the municipality.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Child welfare
- ▶ Primary and secondary education
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Culture and leisure
- ▶ Technical infrastructure
- ▶ Local planning

**Note:** The two biggest cities of Norway, Oslo and Bergen, have a parliamentary system, whereby the local council elects a city government supported by a majority of councillors. The city government heads the local administration, makes recommendations to the city council, and is responsible for carrying out its decisions. The capital city of Oslo is divided into fifteen boroughs, each of which has a borough council, whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage.

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 19 COUNTIES (*FYLKESKOMMUNE*)

The **county council** (*fylkestinget*) is composed of councillors elected by proportional representation for a period of four years. It is the county's legislative body and is in charge of budgetary, financial and planning issues.

The **executive committee** (*fylkesutvalget*) is composed of members designated by and from within the county council and meets at least once a month. Much like the municipality's executive committee, it prepares decisions on the county's budget, annual accounts

and taxes. The executive committee also makes decisions on less important or more urgent matters and monitors the administration's implementation of political decisions.

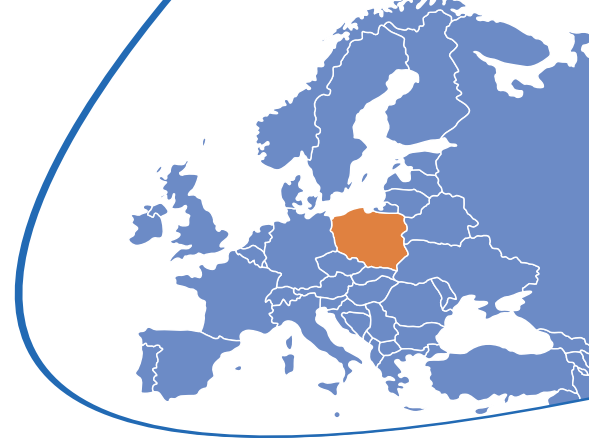
The **county mayor** (*fylkesordfører*) is elected by the county council among the members of the executive committee for a four-year mandate. He/she heads both the county council and the executive committee and represents the county.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Higher education
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Transport and environment
- ▶ Trade and industrial policy

**Note:** Five out of the 19 counties have a parliamentary system, whereby the county council elects a county government supported by the majority of the councillors.

Both municipalities and counties can themselves choose to implement a parliamentary system. The proposal simply has to be put forward in one election period, although it does not require a majority vote, and can be implemented after the next election. The City of Oslo has the status of a municipality and of a county, and thus has both the local and regional competences listed above.



**Poland is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*gminy*), counties (*powiaty*) and regions (*voivodship-województwo*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 2 479 MUNICIPALITIES (*GMINY*)

The **municipal council** (*rada gminy*) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. In addition to its legislative powers, the council votes the municipal budget and determines local taxes. The council is sub-divided into commissions responsible for the preparation and execution of decisions taken by the municipal council. Members of the commissions are elected by and from among the municipal councillors.

The **mayor** (*wójt* in rural municipalities, *burmistrz* in urban ones and *prezydent miasta*

in cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants) is the local authority's executive body. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term and officially represents the municipality.

The **head of the municipal administration** (*sekretarz gminy*) is appointed by the mayor. He/she can act on the mayor's behalf, particularly when it comes to the organisation of the city hall's work and to the management of human resources.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Pre-school and primary education

**Note:** In Poland, 65 urban municipalities have a special status (see below) whereby they are responsible for competences usually exercised by counties. The capital city of Warsaw, which is divided into 18 districts, also has this special status and thus exercises the competences of both a municipality and a county.

#### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 379 COUNTIES (*POWIATY*), WHICH INCLUDES THE 65 MUNICIPALITIES WITH SPECIAL STATUS

The **county council** (*rada powiatu*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This deliberative assembly appoints members of the executive committee as well as the head of the county.

The **executive board** (*zarząd powiatu*) is composed of the head of the county and deputies elected by and from within the county council for a period of four years. This body is in charge of implementing council decisions.

The **head of the county** (*starosta*) is elected for a four-year term by the county council. He/she officially represents the county and is assisted by his/her deputies.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Road building and maintenance
- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Health

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 16 REGIONS (VOIVODSHIP-WOJEWÓDZTWO)

The **regional council** (*sejmik województwa*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This deliberative assembly elects the marshal.

The **regional executive board** (*zarząd województwa*) is composed of members and the marshal, elected by the regional council for a period of four years. The board implements decisions made by the regional council.

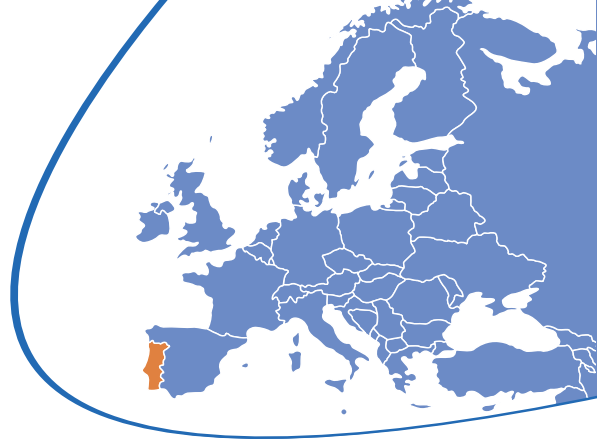
The **marshal** (*marszałek*) is elected by the regional council for a period of four years. He/she officially represents the region vis-à-vis the national and international levels.

The **governor** (*wojewoda*) represents the prime minister as well as the national Polish government at the regional level. He/she is appointed by the country's prime minister upon proposal by the minister responsible for public administration. The governor is responsible for the implementation of national government policy in the region.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Higher education
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Social policy
- ▶ Regional road management





## Portugal is a unitary state composed of parishes (*freguesias*), municipalities (*municípios*) and autonomous regions.

### LOCAL LEVEL: 4 259 PARISHES (*FREGUESIAS*) AND 308 MUNICIPALITIES (*MUNICÍPIOS*)

#### Parish

The **parish assembly** (*assembleia de freguesia*) is the deliberative body of the parish and is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term via a system of proportional representation.

The **executive committee** (*junta de freguesia*) is the parish's executive body and members are elected for four years by and from within the parish assembly. It is responsible for the preparation and implementation of parish assembly decisions.

The **president** (*presidente da junta de freguesia*) is elected for a four-year mandate and is selected as the electoral candidate having headed the list with the most votes. He/she chairs the executive committee.

parishes located in each municipality's jurisdiction and of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It is the municipality's deliberative body and monitors the activities of the executive council.

The **executive council** (*câmara municipal*) is the municipality's executive branch and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. Its members can intervene in the municipal assembly where they, however, cannot vote. The executive council organises and implements municipal services, more specifically in the fields of municipal planning and public works.

The **mayor** (*presidente da câmara municipal*) is elected for a four-year mandate and is selected as the electoral candidate having headed the list with the most votes during the election of the executive council. He/she presides over the executive council.

#### ■ Competences of parishes:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Road and park maintenance
- ▶ Social facilities for children and the elderly
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Residence permits
- ▶ Pet licences

#### ■ Competences of municipalities:

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Management of municipal assets
- ▶ Public works
- ▶ Urban planning

#### Municipalities

The **municipal assembly** (*assembleia municipal*) is composed of the presidents of the

**Note:** Alongside the municipalities and parishes, Portuguese local self-government units include other types of authorities, such as inter-municipal communities, associations of municipalities, big metropolitan areas and urban communities. These authorities principally aim at coordinating the municipal investments of supra-municipal interest and at coordinating relations between municipalities and national administration services. Also in their competences are strategic, economic, social and territorial management.

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 16 REGIONS (*VOIVODSHIP-WOJEWÓDZTWO*)

The **legislative assembly** (*assembleia legislativa*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage.

The **president** (*presidente do governo regional*)

co-presides over the regional government for a period of four years.

The **minister of the republic** (*ministro da república*) co-presides over the regional gover-

ment and represents the national government within the region. The minister has the right to veto legislative assembly decrees and appoints the president.



**Romania is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*comune*), towns (*orase*), cities (*municipii*) and counties (*judete*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 2 861 MUNICIPALITIES (*COMUNE*), 217 TOWNS (*ORASE*) AND 103 CITIES (*MUNICIPII*)**

The **local council** (*consiliul local*) is the local authority's deliberative assembly. It is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The number of councillors is determined by order of the prefect based on the demographic size of the local authority. The local council's work revolves around economic, social and environmental development, public and private property and the management of public services.

The **mayor** (*primarul*) is the local authority's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is responsible for the local budget and

public services. The mayor also represents the local authority vis-à-vis other authorities, represents the national government within the municipality, town or city, and cooperates with the decentralised departments of national government ministries and specialised units present within its jurisdiction.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Local police
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Transport infrastructure and urban transport planning
- ▶ Water supply and sewage system
- ▶ District heating
- ▶ Pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational and technical education
- ▶ Local heritage administration
- ▶ Administration of parks and open green public areas

#### REGIONAL LEVEL: 41 COUNTIES (*JUDETE*)

The **county council** (*consiliul judetean*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It monitors the implementation of provisions outlined in public administration-related legislation. The council is also responsible for the distribution of public funds, for the economic, social and environmental development of the county, for managing county property and for managing certain public services.

The **president** (*presedinte*) heads the county council and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is in charge of the legal representation of the council vis-à-vis third parties. The president

can delegate responsibilities to the two vice-presidents, appointed by the members of the county council.

The **prefect** (*prefect*) is appointed by the national government. The prefect is the guarantor of law and order at the local level and ensures the legality of the administrative acts adopted by local public administration authorities. He/she represents the national government within the county and ensures that national government strategies and programmes are implemented at the regional level.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Economic, environmental and social development
- ▶ Management of public services
- ▶ Urban planning and landscaping
- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Sewage
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Transport infrastructure
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Cooperation between local and national authorities

**Note:** There are 42 prefects in total: one for each county and one for the capital city of Bucharest. There is no subordination between local councils and county councils.



**Serbia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*opstina*), cities (*grad*) and autonomous provinces (*autonomne pokrajine*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 174 MUNICIPALITIES (*OPSTINA*) AND CITIES (*GRAD*)

The **municipal** or **city assembly** (*skupstina opštine* or *skupstina grada*) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The assembly enacts municipal or city statutes, rules of procedure, development programmes, the municipal budget, urban planning and other municipal regulations. It also appoints and dismisses members of the municipal or city council and the president of the assembly, who organises the assembly's work and chairs its sessions.

The **municipal** or **city council** (*opštinsko* or *gradsko veće*) is composed of members elected by the municipal or city assembly by secret ballot for a period of four years. It monitors the work of the municipality's

administration and is chaired by the mayor. The council draws-up the draft local budget, monitors the work of the municipal or city assembly, makes decisions on appeal in relation to administrative procedures and assists the mayor in his work.

The **mayor** (*predsednik opštine* in municipalities or *gradonačelnik* in cities) is the municipality's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The mayor represents the municipality, chairs the municipal council, implements municipal assembly decisions, and dictates the work of the local administration. He/she appoints his deputy-mayor with the assembly's consent.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Water supply and electricity
- ▶ Social services

**Note:** The capital city of Belgrade and 23 other local authorities have city status and therefore have a number of additional competences, including health care, local police and environmental protection.

#### REGIONAL LEVEL: 2 AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES (*AUTONOMNA POKRAJINA VOJVODINA* AND *AUTONOMNA POKRAJINA KOSOVO-METOHIIJA*)

The **assembly of the autonomous province** (*skupstina autonomne pokrajine*) is composed of deputies elected by direct universal suffrage and is chaired by the president, who represents the assembly at the national level and abroad. This deliberative body enacts programmes relative to economic, regional and social development and adopts the provincial budget.

The **provincial government** (*pokrajinska vlada*) is the province's executive body. It is composed of a president, vice-presidents and members, all of which are responsible before the autonomous province's assembly.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Economic and financial development
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Agriculture and fisheries
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Road and railway maintenance
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture and tourism
- ▶ Human and minority rights

**Note:** The autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija generate their own revenue and thus provide their municipalities with the financial resources usually provided by the national government.



## Slovakia is unitary state composed of communities (*obce*), towns (*mestá*) and self-governing regions (*samosprávne kraje*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 2 792 COMMUNITIES (*OBCE*) 138 TOWNS (*MESTÁ*)

The **local council** (*obecné zastupiteľstvo* in communities and *mestské zastupiteľstvo* in towns) is the local authority's deliberative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

The **local board** (*obecná rada* in communities and *mestská rada* in towns) is the mayor's consultative body and the local council's executive body. Its formation is optional and its members are elected by and from within the local council. The municipal board has the power of initiative and of

control and carries out tasks according to local council decisions.

The **mayor** (*starosta* in communities and *primátor* in towns) is the community's highest executive body and statutory representative. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate and chairs both the local council and the municipal board.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Road maintenance
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Sewage and municipal waste
- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Pre-school and primary school
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Culture and sports
- ▶ Participation in regional planning

**Note:** Communities can gain town status upon request and as long as they meet the criteria specified within municipal law.

Bratislava and Košice have two levels of self-government: the town magistrate (*magistrát*), which represents the town as a whole, and boroughs (*mestské časti*). These boroughs each have their own mayor (*starosta*), local council (*miestne zastupiteľstvo*) and local board (*miestna rada*), and are responsible for issues of local significance such as urban planning, local road maintenance, budget, local ordinances, park maintenance and public safety.

Communities may perform certain duties in the name of the state, mainly regarding register offices, construction permits and some aspects relative to education, though the state remains responsible for the quality and funding of such duties.

### REGIONAL LEVEL: 8 SELF-GOVERNING REGIONS (*SAMOSPRÁVNE KRAJE*)

The **regional council** (*zastupiteľstvo samosprávneho kraja*) is the region's legislative and decision-making body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term.

The **president** (*predseda*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. He/she is the self-governing region's representative and statutory body and chairs regional council meetings.

The **commissions** (*komisie*) may be established by the regional council and act as its consultative body with the power of initiative and control. Commission members are elected by and from within the regional council.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Regional road network
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Hospitals
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Participation in civil defence
- ▶ Licences for pharmacies and private physicians

**Note:** Self-governing regions may perform certain duties in the name of the state, mainly regarding education, healthcare and transport.



## Slovenia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*občin*).

### LOCAL LEVEL: 211 MUNICIPALITIES (*OBČIN*)

The **municipal council** (*občinski svet*) is the municipality's deliberative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four year-term. Deputy-mayors are appointed by and from within council members, upon the mayor's proposal. The council is responsible for making the municipality's main decisions, such as adopting local land and development plans and the municipal budget as well as deciding on the acquisition or selling of municipal property.

The **mayor** (*zupan*) is the municipality's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage with a four-year mandate. He/she represents the municipality and is at the head of the local administration.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Public safety and protection
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Trade and industry
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Road networks
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Pre-school and primary education
- ▶ Social security
- ▶ Water treatment and waste collection

**Note:** All Slovenian municipalities are divided into local, village or neighbourhood communities (*krajevne, vaške or četrtne skupnosti*), which each have a council whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage. These councils have the power to enact municipal council decisions.

The capital city of Slovenia, Ljubljana, and ten other municipalities have the status of urban municipality (*mestna občina*). A municipality can acquire the status of urban municipality if it has a minimum of 20 000 inhabitants and 15 000 jobs, of which at least half must be in the tertiary or quaternary sectors. Urban municipalities have more competences than the other municipalities, including urban transport, hospitals, public services, culture, radio, television, press, sports and recreation.



**Spain is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*municipios*), county councils (*diputaciones*), Canary Island county councils (*cabildos*), Balearic Island county councils (*consejos insulares*), autonomous cities (*ciudades autónomas*) and autonomous communities (*comunidades autónomas*).**

**LOCAL LEVEL: 8 117 MUNICIPALITIES (*MUNICIPIOS*), 52 COUNTY COUNCILS (*DIPUTACIONES*), THE CANARY ISLAND COUNTY COUNCILS (*CABILDOS*) AND THE BALEARIC ISLAND COUNTY COUNCILS (*CONSEJOS INSULARES*)**

The **local council** (*pleno*) is the local authority's deliberative body and is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly approves the local budget, urban planning, by-laws and municipal rules.

The **local government council** (*junta de gobierno local*) is the local authority's executive body. It is composed of local councillors appointed by the mayor to assist him in his work and to exercise a number of executive functions.

The **mayor** (*alcalde*) or president (*presidente*) is the head of the executive body. He/she is appointed by and from within the local

council and is assisted by a number of councillors which he/she nominates and can dismiss. The mayor also chairs the local council.

#### ■ Competences:

In every local authority

- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Street lighting
- ▶ Urban traffic
- ▶ Food security
- ▶ Road maintenance
- ▶ Sewage and waste management

In local authorities of over 5 000 inhabitants (in addition to the aforementioned)

- ▶ Public libraries
- ▶ Green areas
- ▶ Local police

In local authorities of over 20 000 inhabitants (in addition to the aforementioned)

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Fire prevention
- ▶ Sporting facilities

In local authorities of over 50 000 inhabitants (in addition to the aforementioned)

- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Protection of the environment

**REGIONAL LEVEL: 17 AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES (*COMUNIDADES AUTÓNOMAS*) AND 2 AUTONOMOUS CITIES (*CIUDADES AUTÓNOMAS*)**

The **regional assembly** (*asamblea regional*) is the deliberative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It exercises devolved legislative power.

The **regional government council** (*consejo de gobierno*) is the executive body and is headed by the president who appoints its members. It regulates and initiates legislation.

The **president** is elected by the regional assembly for a four-year mandate. The president manages and coordinates the work of the regional government council and represents the autonomous community vis-à-vis the national government.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Territorial development
- ▶ Civil engineering
- ▶ Economy
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social policies
- ▶ Environmental management
- ▶ Development of economic activities
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education

**Note:** The autonomous communities can create their own police force. The two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla) are special administrative units, halfway between a municipality and an autonomous community. Unlike the independent communities, they do not have their own legislative assembly but do have deliberative powers.





**Sweden is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*kommuner*), county councils (*landsting*) and regions (*regioner*).**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 290 MUNICIPALITIES (*KOMMUNER*)

The **municipal assembly** (*kommunfullmäktige*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly is the municipality's decision-making body but can delegate important decision-making powers to the municipal executive committee and to the specialised committees. It also levies taxes and adopts the municipal budget.

The **municipal executive committee** (*kommunstyrelsen*) is composed of members appointed for a period of four years by the municipal assembly based on the share of seats obtained by each party within the municipal assembly. The municipal executive committee heads and coordinates the municipal administration, supervises the activities of the specialised committees, drafts the municipal budget as well as prepares and implements municipal council decisions. It is presided over by a chair, the

highest political representative of the municipality, which can be referred to in other countries as the "mayor". However, in some Swedish municipalities, the "mayor" is the chair of the municipal assembly.

The **specialised committees** (*nämnder*) are composed of members appointed for a four-year mandate by the municipal assembly. The committees are responsible for assisting the municipal executive committee in the preparation and implementation of decisions made by the municipal assembly.

#### ■ Competences:

##### Mandatory competences

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Childcare and pre-school
- ▶ Primary and secondary education
- ▶ Care for the elderly
- ▶ Support for the physically and intellectually disabled
- ▶ Primary healthcare
- ▶ Environmental protection
- ▶ Spatial planning
- ▶ Refuse collection and waste disposal
- ▶ Rescue and emergency services
- ▶ Water supply and sewage
- ▶ Road maintenance

##### Optional competences

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Industrial and commercial services

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 17 COUNTY COUNCILS (LANDSTING) AND 3 REGIONS (REGIONER)

The **county council** or **regional council assembly** (*landstingsfullmäktige* for county councils and *regionfullmäktige* for regions) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. This assembly is the decision-making body of the county or region, approves the budget and levies taxes. The assembly can delegate important decision-making powers to the executive committee and to the specialised committees.

The **executive committee** (*landstingsstyrelsen* for county councils and *regionstyrelsen* for regional councils) is appointed for four years by the county or regional council assembly based on the share of seats obtained by each party within the assembly. This executive body is

responsible for the preparation and implementation of county or regional council assembly decisions. It also supervises the activities of the specialised committees, which are chaired by what can be considered in English as the “president” of the county council or region.

The **specialised committees** (*nämnder*) are composed of members either appointed or elected by the assembly depending on its political composition. The committees are responsible for assisting the executive committee in the preparation and implementation of decisions made by the county or regional council assembly.

### ■ Competences:

#### Mandatory competences

- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Dental care
- ▶ Public transport  
(via a regional public transport authority)

#### Optional competences

- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Tourism

**Note:** The four regions of Skåne, Västra Götaland, Halland and Gotland have retained the status and functioning of the county councils but have assumed greater responsibility in terms of regional development. Gotland, an island in the Baltic Sea, has the status of a municipality but also has competences normally attributed to regions, which is why it is also referred to as a region.





**Switzerland is a federal state composed of municipalities, cantons and half-cantons.**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 2 551 MUNICIPALITIES

There is no single municipal system in Switzerland.

There are two types of municipal parliaments: the municipal assembly (system of direct democracy) and the general or municipal council (parliament composed of elected representatives; its name can vary from one canton to another). Furthermore and depending on the canton, municipalities of up to 1 000 inhabitants can either have a municipal assembly or a general or municipal council. Over and above this number of inhabitants, it must be a municipal council, a deliberative body composed of elected officials representing the citizens.

The **municipal assembly** is composed of citizens who participate directly in the municipality's legislative branch by ruling on municipal affairs. This people's parliament is present in a number of Swiss municipalities.

The **general** or **municipal council** is composed of members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that varies depending on the canton. This legislative assembly can elect members of the municipal or local council (its name varies from one canton to another) and members of the committees (finance, schools, management, etc.) It also adopts the budget.

The **municipal** or **local council** is composed of members either elected by direct universal suffrage or by the general or municipal council for a mandate varying from four to five years, depending on the canton. The municipal or local council is presided over by a mayor, syndic or president, also depending on the canton, and executes the decisions of the general or municipal council, implements the municipal decisions and budget, and represents the municipality.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Municipal heritage
- ▶ Local taxation
- ▶ Primary and secondary education
- ▶ Local police
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Local territorial development
- ▶ Road networks
- ▶ Water and sewage networks
- ▶ Protection of the environment
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Taxes
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Public education

**Note:** In Switzerland, municipalities have extremely varied competencies and autonomy, depending on the canton's legislation.

## REGIONAL LEVEL: 6 HALF-CANTONS AND 20 CANTONS

In reality there are no differences between semi-cantons and cantons, but rather exists a historical separation of cantons, in particular due to religious reasons, following the reform in 1536 which affected a part of Switzerland.

The **great council** is the canton's legislative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage, their mandate varying from one canton to another. The great council elects its president, usually for a one-year term, and adopts laws and decrees. However, five cantons have an assembly rather than a council, whose members are elected by the registered voters.

The **state council** (called executive council in the canton of Berne) is the executive body of the canton and is composed of members elected by the great council or by citizens, with differing mandate durations depending

on the canton. The state council is divided into different departments and is headed by a president.

The **president** executes the decisions made by the great council. Currently, only the canton of Vaud has a president elected by peers for the entire legislative period (five years). In the other cantons, he/she is elected by peers for a one-year period, according to a traditional rotation which takes into account the length of service and the number of votes submitted during the election process.

The **cantonal court** is composed of judges and substitutes elected by the great council for the duration of the legislative period. It is the supreme judiciary authority of the canton.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social policy
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Road maintenance
- ▶ Spatial planning
- ▶ Environment

**Note:** Cantons are sovereign local and regional authorities with legislative, executive and judicial autonomy and a constitution.



## Turkey is a unitary state composed of villages (*köy*), municipalities (*belediye*) and special provincial administrations (*il özel idaresi*).

**LOCAL LEVEL: 34 305 VILLAGES (*köy*), 2 950 MUNICIPALITIES (*BELEDİYE*) AND 81 SPECIAL PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS (*İL ÖZEL IDARESİ*)**

### Villages

Villages are the traditional local administration in rural areas and usually have a population of 150 to 5 000 inhabitants.

The **village association** (*köy meclisi*) is one of the decision-making bodies of the village. It is composed of citizens of 18 years or more.

The **council of elders** (*ihtiyar heyeti*), also known as the village council, is the main executive and decision-making body of the village.

The **headman** (*muhtar*) is elected by the villagers for a total of five years. He/she represents the village and carries out the services provided to its inhabitants.

### Municipalities

The **municipal council** (*belediye meclisi*) is the local authority's main decision-making body. It is composed of members, whose number varies from nine to 55 depending on the demographic size of the municipality, elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years.

The **municipal executive committee** (*belediye encümeni*) is both the executive and decision-making body of the municipality. A part of its members are bureaucrats appointed by the mayor from among the local administration's heads of unit, while the rest are elected from within the municipal council for a one-year term. Local authorities with a population of less than 100 000 have five executive committee members while those with more than 100 000 inhabitants have seven members.

The **mayor** (*belediye başkanı*) is the executive body of the municipality. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. The mayor heads the municipal administration and represents the local authority.

### Competences of villages and municipalities:

- ▶ Town planning
- ▶ Water supply and sewage
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Environment and environmental health
- ▶ Hygiene
- ▶ Police, fire fighting, emergency, rescue and ambulance services
- ▶ Urban traffic
- ▶ Funerals and cemeteries
- ▶ Parks and green areas
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Culture and tourism
- ▶ Youth and sports
- ▶ Social services and assistance
- ▶ Weddings
- ▶ Vocational and skills training
- ▶ Services for economic and commercial development

**Note:** Municipalities with more than 50 000 inhabitants can also open shelters for women and children.

## Special provincial administrations

The **provincial council** (*il genel meclisi*) is the special provincial administration's legislative body and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. It is headed by a president, elected by and from among the members of the council.

The **provincial executive committee** (*il encümeni*) is composed of five members

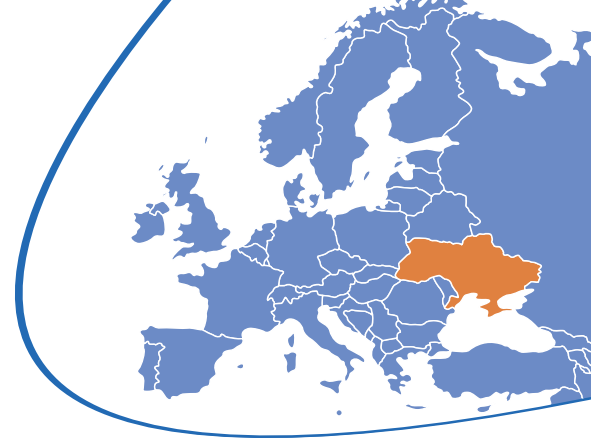
elected each year by the provincial council from among its own members via secret ballot and of five other members appointed for one year by the governor of the special provincial administration among the administration's heads of unit. The head of the financial services unit is among the latter five members.

The **governor** (*vali*) is the head of the special provincial administration. He/she is appointed by the national government and represents the administration.

## Competences of special provincial administrations:

- ▶ Health and social assistance
- ▶ Public works
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Agriculture and animal husbandry
- ▶ Economic and commercial matters

**Note:** The 81 Turkish special provincial administrations are divided into 957 districts. Moreover, 16 of the special provincial administrations have the status of metropolitan municipality (*büyükşehir belediyesi*). This extra administrative unit is headed by a mayor elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years. Metropolitan municipalities notably coordinate the work of the municipalities under its jurisdiction. They are each administered by an executive committee and by a metropolitan council and enjoy full administrative and financial autonomy.



**Ukraine is a unitary state composed of villages (*sela*), towns (*selyshcha*), cities (*mista*), districts (*raions*) and regions (*oblasti*).**

### LOCAL LEVEL: 10 278 VILLAGES (*SELA*), 782 TOWNS (*SELYSHCHA*) AND 457 CITIES (*MISTA*)

The **municipal council** (*rada*) is the local authority's deliberative assembly and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Council members exercise their power through council sessions or standing commissions.

The **executive committee** (*vykonavchyy komitet*) implements council decisions and is responsible for development programmes, the municipal budget and for the coordination of departments and services within the committee. The mayor puts forward a list of potential executive committee members, which is in turn approved by the municipal council.

The **mayor** (*silskyi golova* in villages, *selyshchynny golova* in towns and *miskyy golova* in cities) is the main executive body of the municipality and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of five years. He/she chairs municipal council meetings and represents the municipality vis-à-vis third parties.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Maintenance of technical infrastructure
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Water, heating and sewage
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Promotion of local commerce and employment
- ▶ Development programmes
- ▶ Local budget
- ▶ Urban development
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Culture

**Note:** The cities of Kiev and Sevastopol have a special status as their respective system of local self-government coexists with their system of state administration.

### INTERMEDIARY LEVEL: 488 DISTRICTS (*RAIONS*)

The **district council** (*rayonna rada*) is the district's decision-making body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. The district council represents the common interests of the municipalities in its jurisdiction. It does not have a separate executive committee like municipalities, as its executive functions are performed by a district state administration created by the national government.

The **head of the district council** (*golova rayonnoyi rady*) is elected for five years by and from within the district council. He/she heads the council and delegates his executive powers to the state administration.

#### ■ Competences:

- ▶ District planning
- ▶ District development programmes
- ▶ Distribution of state budget funds
- ▶ Natural resources
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Agriculture

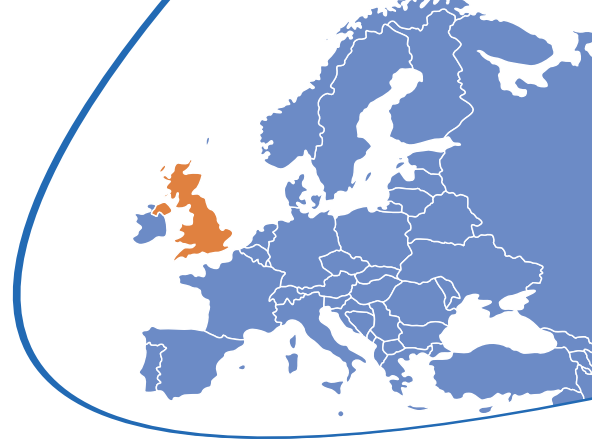
## REGIONAL LEVEL: 24 REGIONS (*OBLASTI*) AND 1 AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC (*CRIMEA*)

The **regional council** (*oblasna rada*) is the region's decision-making body. Its members are councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. The regional council represents the common interests of its municipalities. It does not have a separate executive committee like municipalities, as its executive functions are performed by a regional state administration set up by the national government.

The **head of the regional council** (*golova oblasnoyi rady*) is elected by and from within the district council for a period of five years. He/she heads the regional council.

### ■ Competences:

- ▶ Regional development programmes
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Distribution of state budget funds
- ▶ Regional planning
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Agriculture



**The United Kingdom is a unitary state with certain characteristics of a federal state, following the implementation of the 1997 devolution agenda in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.**

#### LOCAL LEVEL: 433 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In general, councillors are elected for a four year term, based on either a first-past-the-post voting system or a proportional system.

**England** has 27 county councils, 36 metropolitan district councils, 201 non-metropolitan district councils (local authorities outside of big cities) and 55 unitary authorities (a one tier local authority). In the United Kingdom's capital city of London, there are 33 boroughs, including the Corporation of the City of London, which is the city's financial district. The Isles of Scilly also have the status of county council.

**Wales** has 22 single tier unitary authorities (county and county borough councils). These authorities deliver a wide range of services, such as housing, social services, transport and highways, environmental health, libraries, leisure and tourism. The 22 existing single-tier unitary authorities were established in 1996.

**Scotland** has 32 single tier unitary authorities.

**Northern Ireland** has 26 district councils whose competences are more limited than elsewhere in the UK, mainly covering local services such as leisure and environmental health.

Local competences are not uniform throughout the United Kingdom as they are wholly transferred (devolved) to Scotland, while other arrangements are applied to Wales and Northern Ireland. English local governments remain directly accountable to the UK government and parliament.

There are two tiers of local government in parts of England (counties and districts) and a single tier in other parts of England and all of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (councils).

#### ■ Competences of counties:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Highways and transport
- ▶ Strategic planning advice
- ▶ Fire
- ▶ Waste disposal
- ▶ Libraries

#### ■ Competences of districts:

- ▶ Local planning
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Licensing
- ▶ Building control
- ▶ Environmental health
- ▶ Waste collection
- ▶ Park and leisure services

**Note:** In addition to the local authorities referred to above, there are over 12 000 other smaller authorities at the local level (parishes, community councils, town councils). Most of these have small elected bodies to look after local interests.

The Greater London Authority, set up in 2000, is considered a regional authority.

## NATIONS AND REGIONS: ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

In **England**, the only directly elected regional authority is the Greater London Authority, which has an assembly of 25 elected members, with an executive mayor, elected by direct universal suffrage. Its main competences include public transport, sustainable development planning, fire and emergency planning and metropolitan police.

In the rest of England, legislation could allow for the setting-up of elected regional assemblies, but only if there is a positive popular vote by referendum. At present, no regional assembly has been set up and there are no plans to do so.

The **National Assembly for Wales** came into existence in 1999. It has a more limited range of legislative powers than the Scottish Parliament (mainly on secondary legislation, giving more detailed effect to UK parliament mea-

sures). However, its primary law-making powers were enhanced following a referendum held in March 2011, making it possible for it to legislate without having to consult the UK parliament in devolved areas. Its competences include policy development and implementation in agriculture, culture, economic development, education, environmental health, highways and transport, social services, housing, planning and local government.

Since 1999, the **Scottish Parliament**, with a Scottish executive government has had full legislative powers over a wide range of matters – effectively, all issues except those reserved to the UK parliament. Its exclusive competences include education, health, environment, agriculture, justice, social work, planning and local government. A further transfer of powers to the Scottish Parliament is currently being discussed in the UK parliament.

The **Northern Ireland Assembly** also came fully into being in 1999. Its main competences include education, health and agriculture, with the possibility of further powers being transferred to it at a later date.



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