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Conseil des Communes  
et Régions d'Europe  
Council of European  
Municipalities and Regions

[ Local and regional  
structures in Europe ]



# FOREWORD



Europe is made of states with a variety of internal structures.

More often than not, the internal organisation of a country can be explained by its history. In some cases, the origins of its local and regional structures date back to the middle ages, while in others the most important aspects of the internal political and administrative architecture have been in place a mere few years.

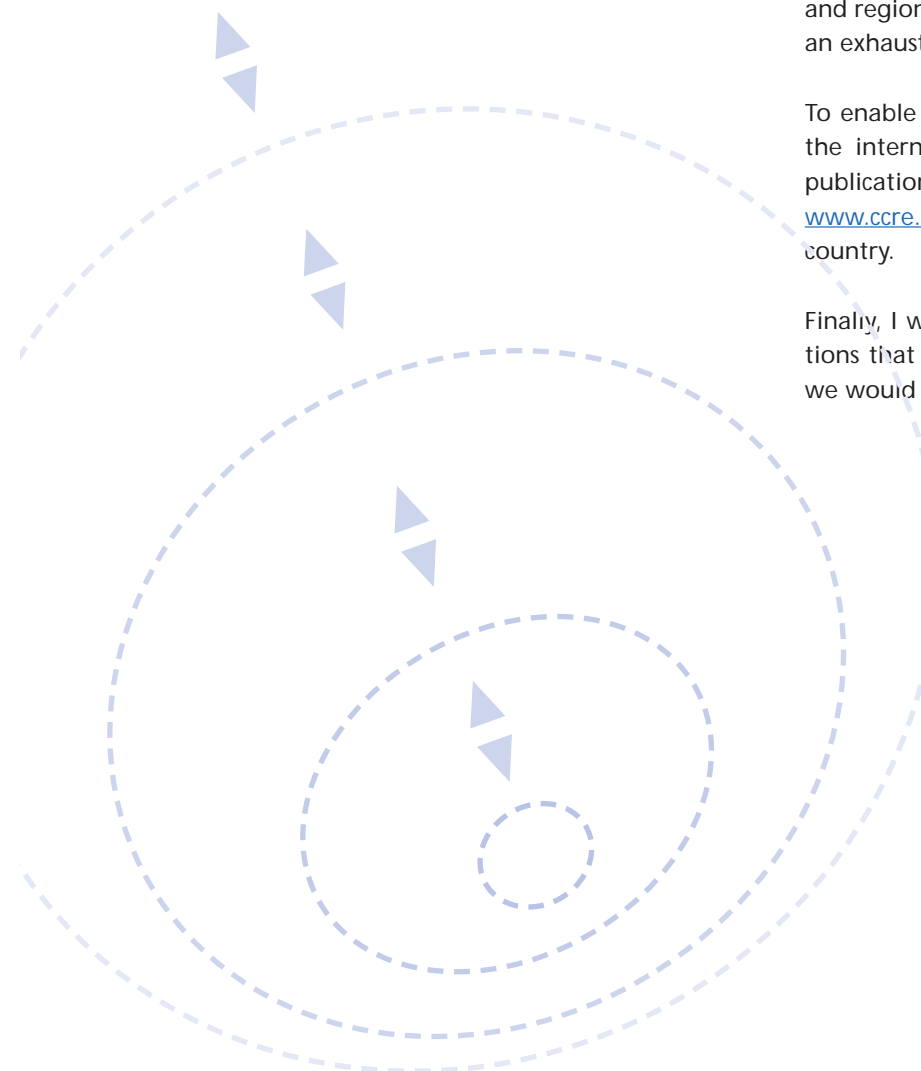
Either way, it is impossible to find identical local and regional structures in two or more European states; similarly the range of competences varies from one country to another.

In the age of the principle of subsidiarity, as the European Union is looking at the future role and functioning of its institutions, and as in most states the type of relations between local, regional and central government are evolving, CEMR tapped into the expertise of its some 45 national associations from over 30 European countries to produce a brief guide of Europe's local and regional structures, to present a summarised snapshot of Europe's local and regional government. This should thus not be seen as an exhaustive study or as an academic essay.

To enable as many Europeans as possible to learn about the internal structures of any country featured in this publication, we have also put them on CEMR website [www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org), on the « Members » page, under each country.

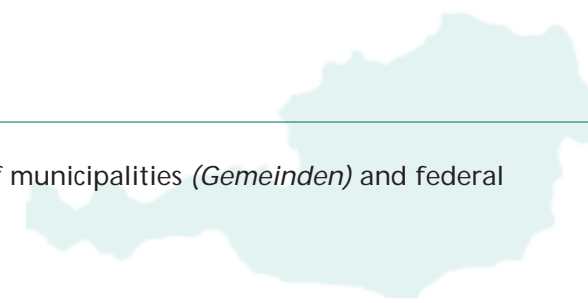
Finally, I would like to thank all CEMR's member associations that contributed to this publication; without them, we would not have been able to produce it

Jeremy Smith  
CEMR Secretary General





Austria is a federal republic composed of municipalities (*Gemeinden*) and federal states (*Bundesländer*).



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## Local level: about 2400 municipalities (*Gemeinden*)

### Local authorities:

The **Municipal Council** is the legislative body of the municipality. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage on the proportional representation system for a 5 or 6-year term depending on the Länder. The Municipal Council elects the members of the *Gemeindevorstand*.

The **Mayor** and his Deputies form the executive body of the municipality (*Gemeindevorstand*). It is composed of members from different political parties, proportionally to the electoral result of each party. The Mayor heads this body.

The **Mayor** is the head of the municipal administration. Depending on the Länder, he can be elected by direct universal suffrage or by the Municipal Council. The Mayor manages the municipality and chairs 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 federal states (*Länder*)

### Regional authorities:

The **provinces** have their own constitution as well as legislative power in areas not reserved to the federal legislator.

The **Provincial Parliament** (*Landtag*) is composed of members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a 5 or 6-year term. It elects the Provincial Governor as well as his Government. It has legislative power that is shared with the National Parliament as well as exclusive legislative power.

The **Provincial Government** (*Landesregierung*) is the executive board and is presided by a Governor. There are two systems for the election of the Provincial Government: the proportional system (each party is represented within the Provincial Government) and the majority system (in the process of standardisation).

The **Provincial Governor** (*Landeshauptmann*) is elected by the Provincial Parliament. He is in charge of the external representation of the Land and heads the sessions of his government.

### Competences:

- ▶ Energy distribution
- ▶ Law and order
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Sport and leisure



Belgium is a federal state composed of municipalities, provinces, regions and communities.

## Local level: about 600 municipalities

### Municipal authorities:

The **Municipal Council** is elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The Council constitutes the legislative body and makes decisions for municipal by-laws.

The **College of Mayors and Aldermen** is composed of the Mayor and Aldermen. They are elected by the municipal councillors. This executive body is responsible for the application of decisions made by the Municipal Council and for the day-to-day management of the municipality.

The **Mayor** chairs the College of Mayors and Aldermen as well as the Municipal Council. Appointed by the King of Belgium at the recommendation of the Municipal Council, the Mayor has a six-year mandate. He is in charge of the municipal administration and heads the municipal police.

### Competences:

- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Registry office
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Water, sewage
- ▶ Household refuse

## Intermediary level: 10 provinces

### Provincial authorities:

The **Provincial Council** is the legislative body of the province. The Council is composed of deputies elected by universal suffrage for a six-year term via the proportional representation system.

The **Permanent Representation** is the provincial government. This body holds concurrently normative, executive and juridical functions. In addition, the Permanent Representation is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the province.

The **Governor of the Province** chairs the Permanent Representation. He can also assist and participate in sessions of the Provincial Council where he has the right to speak.

### Competences:

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

*Note:* Brussels is both a city and a region. It is not part of any province either, which gives Brussels special competences normally allocated to provinces.

## Regional level: 3 regions (Flanders, Walloon, Brussels-Capital)

### Regional authorities:

The **Regional Council** is the regional legislative body. It is composed of deputies elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The Council is also responsible for financial matters including the vote of the budget and for the control of the Government.

The **Government of the Region** is the regional executive body and is composed of regional ministers. It is in charge of the application and the sanction of ordinances and orders voted by the Regional Parliaments. The Government of the Region also has legislative power (right of initiative).

The **Minister-President** is appointed by and within the members of the Government. He is responsible, in particular, for the coordination of government policy.

### Competences:

- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Employment policy
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ International relations
- ▶ Scientific research
- ▶ Energy policy
- ▶ Foreign trade
- ▶ Public transport

## Community level: 3 communities (French, Flemish and German)

### Community authorities:

The **Council of the Community** is the deliberative body of the community. It is composed of members who are elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term. In addition to its legislative competences, the Council controls the Government and votes the budget.

The **Government of the Community** is an executive body composed of ministers appointed by the Council for a five-year term. The Government of the Community also has legislative power (right of initiative).

The **Minister-President** is appointed by and within the members of the government. He is responsible, in particular, for the coordination of government policy.

### Competences:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Cultural affairs
- ▶ Social affairs
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Sport
- ▶ International relations
- ▶ Health

*Note:* The Flemish community and the Flanders region have merged. This gives Flanders one Flemish Parliament and one Flemish Government competent for community and regional matters.

Bulgaria is a unitary state with local self-government. The country is divided into 28 regions (*oblasti*) and 264 municipalities (*obshtini*).



## Local level: 264 municipalities (*obshtina*)

### Municipal authorities:

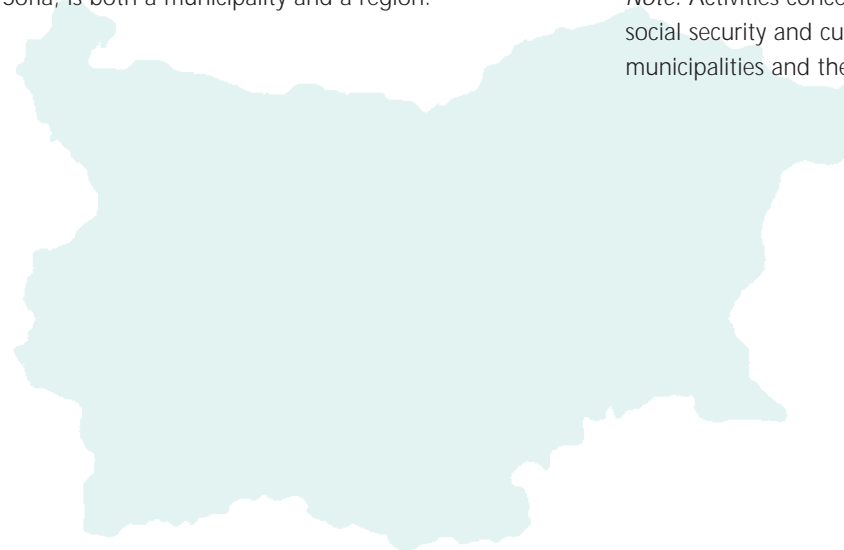
The **Municipal Council** (*obchtinski savet*) is the deliberative body of the municipality. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Members of the Municipal Council (between 11 and 51 councillors) elect their President among themselves. The President convenes and chairs the Council and coordinates the commissions' work.

The **Mayor** (*Kmet*) is the executive body of the municipality. He/She is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. His/her role is to manage, coordinate, and implement policies adopted by the Municipal Council. The Mayor is also responsible for the administration and represents the municipality.

The **municipality** can be:

- ▶ A hamlet: less than 250 inhabitants
- ▶ A town hall: a village with more than 250 inhabitants with a mayor elected by majority for a four-year term
- ▶ A district: in towns of more than 100,000 inhabitants - Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna

The capital, Sofia, is both a municipality and a region.



### Competences:

- ▶ Collecting and treatment of household refuse
- ▶ Urban development and maintenance of roads, parks and lighting
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Land development and urban planning
- ▶ Development of sports, tourist and leisure activities
- ▶ Building and maintenance of public buildings (municipal hospitals, schools, social institutions, social security centres, cultural, historical and architectural monuments, etc)
- ▶ Cultural activities in theatres, orchestras and municipal museums
- ▶ Management of municipal companies
- ▶ ...

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

## Regional level: administrative regions and planning regions

There are 28 administrative regions and 6 planning regions.

### 6 planning regions

#### Regional authorities:

The **Commissions for Economic and Social Cohesion** are instruments for the approval of regional development plans and programmes. They are composed of representatives of central institutions (most Ministries), district governors, representatives of local and regional authorities, regional structures of business organisations, trade unions, NGOs and other organisations.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Participation in the strategy for economic and social development

### 28 administrative regions (*oblast*)

The administrative region represents a state administrative district.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Coordination and partnership at regional level
- ▶ Harmonisation of local and national interests
- ▶ Participation in the regional development plan

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

## Local level: about 2900 municipalities (or *Gemeinden*)

### Local Authorities:

The organisation of the municipalities in Switzerland is not uniform. There are two types of municipal parliaments: the municipal assembly (direct democracy) and the general council (parliament made up of elected representatives).

The **Municipal Assembly** is made up of citizens who directly participate in the legislative authority by deciding on municipal affairs. This people's parliament is established in most municipalities.

The **General Council** (in the most populated municipalities) is composed of members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate determined by the municipality. This legislative assembly can elect members of the Municipal Council as well as members of the Commissions (financial, schooling, management). It also adopts the budget.

The **Municipal Council** is composed of members elected by the municipality by direct universal suffrage or by the General Council for a determined mandate. It is presided by the Mayor and executes the decisions of the General Council and adopts the municipal budget. It also represents the municipality.

The **Commissions** are composed of members who are appointed by the General Council for a mandate determined by the municipality. There are various Commissions in particular the Financial Commission, Schooling Commission and Management Commission.

### Competences:

- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Road infrastructure
- ▶ Land planning
- ▶ Taxes
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social assistance

*Note:* The competences and degree of autonomy of Swiss municipalities greatly vary depending on the cantonal law that governs them..

## Regional level: 26 semi-cantons and cantons (or *(Halb)-Kantone*)

### Local Authorities:

The **Grand Council** is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a variable mandate depending on the canton. The Grand Council elects its President generally for one year and adopts laws and decrees. Five Swiss cantons possess however an Assembly directly made up of citizens who have the right to vote.

The **State Council** or **Executive Council** is composed of members elected by the Council or by the population for a variable mandate depending on the cantons. The cantonal government is divided into departments and overseen by a President for executing decisions by the Grand Council. The President's mandate usually lasts one year.

The **Supreme Tribunal** or **Cantonal Tribunal** is composed of judges and substitute members who are elected by the Grand Council for the duration of the legislature. The Cantonal Tribunal represents the canton's higher legal authority.

### Competences:

- ▶ Police
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Justice
- ▶ Land planning
- ▶ Roads
- ▶ Environment

*Note:* The cantons have legislative autonomy and a constitution.



Cyprus is a unitarian presidential state composed of municipalities, communities and administrative districts.

## Local level: 33 municipalities

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

### Local authorities:

The **Municipal Council** is composed of members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The Council appoints, within the municipality, members of the Administrative Commission. Its main responsibilities are to provide assistance and advice to the Mayor in the execution of his duties as well as to coordinate the work of other commissions.

The **Mayor** is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The Mayor manages the executive board, chairs the Municipal Council and the Administrative Commission. The Mayor represents the municipality in a Court of Law and before any state authority.

### Competences:

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

## Local level: more than 350 communities

### Community Authorities:

The **Council of the Community** is elected by the population of the community for a five-year term. This legislative board is composed of a President, a Vice President and three other members, also elected for five years. The national government provides, via its districts, the main assistance for administrative and technical work.

The **President of the Community** is elected by the population of the community for a five-year term. He chairs the Council of the Community.

## Regional level: 6 districts

### District Authorities:

The **District Commissioner** heads the District. (S)he is the chief coordinator for the activities of all Ministries in the District and is accountable to the Ministry of Interior. The District Commissioner is appointed by the Government as its local representative.



The Czech Republic is a unitary state composed of municipalities and regions.

## Local level: about 6200 municipalities (*obec*)

### Municipal Authorities:

The **Municipal Council** (*obecní zastupitelstvo*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. This deliberative assembly elects the Municipal Committee members.

The **Municipal Committee** (*obecní rada*) is composed of members elected by the council from among its members for four years. Among the members are the Mayor and Deputy Mayors. This executive body can form commissions.

The **Mayor** (*starosta or primátor*) is elected by and among the council for four years. He presides the Municipal Committee, heads the administration and represents the municipality. In municipalities where the Municipal Committee has less than 15 members, the executive authority is ensured only by the Mayor.

### Competences:

- ▶ Municipal budget
- ▶ Local development
- ▶ Municipal police
- ▶ Water distribution
- ▶ Household refuse
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Urban planning

**Note:** The capital of the Czech Republic, Prague, is divided into districts made up of elected local councils. The central assembly of the city is made up of members elected by direct universal suffrage. The councillors of the assembly elect the Mayor of the City and the members of the Executive Committee of the City.

## Regional level: 14 regions (*kraje*)

### Regional Authorities:

The **Regional Assembly** (*zastupitelstvo*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This deliberative body controls the budget and the subsidies granted to the municipalities. It can also propose bills to the Chamber of Deputies.

The **Regional Committee** (*rada*) is composed of a President (*hejtman*), Vice-Presidents and other members elected by the Regional Assembly for four years. This committee represents the executive body of the region and can be assisted by the Regional Services (*krajský úrad*) overseen by a Director.

### Competences:

- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Road network
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Public health



Germany is a federal republic made up of municipalities (*Gemeinden*), districts (*Kreise*) and federated states (*Länder*).



## Local level: about 14,000 municipalities and towns (*Gemeinden und Städte*)

### Local authorities:

There are two types of municipal organisations depending on the legal status adopted by the Land: the Magistrat system and the Council system (Süddeutsche Ratsverfassung).

The **Council system** exists in all German regions (Länder) except for Hessen. In this system, the municipal council is elected by direct universal suffrage in general for a five-year mandate.

The **mayor** (*Bürgermeister*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that varies between four and nine years. This also applies to Hessen. The mayor presides the municipal council and heads the administration of the municipality.

The **municipal council** (*Gemeinderat*) is the central body of the municipality. It is elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that can vary between four and six years. It is the legislative body that makes most decisions and has a supervisory function.

In the **Magistrat system**, the executive body is made up of the mayor and his deputies (*Magistrate*). They are civil servants appointed by the municipal council for a mandate that usually last four years. The Magistrat represents the municipality and runs the daily administration. It implements the local council's decisions. This system only exists in one Land (Hessen).

### Compulsory competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Water management
- ▶ Social aid and youth
- ▶ Building and maintenance of schools

#### Note :

Further to the compulsory competences, there is facultative jurisdiction in the sectors of energy, economic development, public infrastructures, culture and sports.

## Intermediate level: more than 300 districts (*Kreise*)

### District Authorities:

The **district council** (*Kreistag*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that varies between one and four years depending on the Land. It is the legislative body.

The **district president** (*Landrat*) is elected either by the assembly or by direct universal suffrage for a mandate of five to eight years which depends on the Land. As an elected civil servant, he chairs the district assembly.

The **district office** (*Landratsamt*) is the executive body made up of civil servants recruited by the district itself or by the Land.

### Compulsory competences:

- ▶ Construction and maintenance of roads
- ▶ Youth and social assistance
- ▶ Collecting and managing household refuse

*Note:* Besides compulsory competences, there are facultative competences in the sectors of culture, promoting the economy and tourism, building and managing libraries and managing universities.

## Regional level: 16 federal states (*Länder*)

### Regional Authorities:

The **parliament** (*Landtag*) is the legislative body. It is made up of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. It elects the Minister-President of the Land.

The **government** (*Landsregierung*) is the executive body. It is elected by the Parliament for a four-year mandate. It elects the Minister-President.

The **Minister-President** (*Ministerpräsident*) heads the government. He has the exclusive power to designate and dismiss the Ministers of the Land.

### Exclusive jurisdiction:

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Police

#### Note:

Certain competences are shared with the central government concerning justice, social policy, civil law, penal law and labour law.



Denmark is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*kommune*) and counties (*amtskommune*).

## Local level: 269 municipalities (*Kommuner*)

### Local authorities:

The **municipal council** is composed of members elected for four years by a system of proportional representation, with vote splitting (the voters can compose their own list by choosing candidates from different lists). This deliberative body appoints members of the executive commissions.

The **executive committees** are in charge of local administration. Permanent committees assist the municipal council in the preparation of council decisions. The municipal council is obliged to set up a financial committee but may also set up special committees.

The **mayor** is elected by the council for four years. (S)he heads the whole administration and the municipal council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Primary schools
- ▶ Taxation
- ▶ Waste
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Sport
- ▶ Public services

## Regional level: 14 counties (*Amtskommuner*)

### Regional authorities:

The **county council** is the deliberative body of the county. It is composed of members elected for four years by a system of proportional representation. The council may establish special committees and be assisted by several offices. The council appoints the president of the county.

The **executive committees** are elected by the council; they oversee the local administration of the county and assist the council in the preparation and implementation of its decisions.

The **mayor** of the county heads the council and the county administration. (S)he is elected by the members of the council. The mayor is assisted by deputies also elected by the council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Health care
- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Economic development

Greenland and the Faeroe Islands have an autonomous status. They both have their own government and legislative assembly.

Following a referendum in 2001, the population of the isle of Bornholm decided to merge the five counties of the island into a single one.

Spain is a Unitarian state composed of municipalities (*Municipios*), provinces (*Provincias*) and autonomous communities (*Comunidades Autónomas*).

## Local level: 8109 municipalities (*Municipios*), diputaciones, cabildos, consejos insulares

### Local authorities:

The **municipal council** (*Pleno*) is the deliberative assembly of the municipality. It is composed of councillors (*concejales*) elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly approves the budgets, urban planning, by-laws and municipal rules.

The **local government council** (*Junta de gobierno local*) is the main executive body. It is composed of elected municipal councillors appointed by the mayor. Their main duties are to assist the mayor but include some executive functions as well.

The **mayor** (*Alcalde*) is the head of the executive body. (S)he is appointed by and within the councillors, is assisted by councillors which he nominates and can dismiss. The mayor chairs the municipal Council.

### Competences:

- ▶ In every municipality: household refuse, water supply, street lighting, urban traffic control, food and drinks control
- ▶ In municipalities of over 5.000 inhabitants: (in addition to the above-mentioned) public libraries, green areas, household refuse and markets.
- ▶ In municipalities of over 20.000 inhabitants: (in addition to the above-mentioned) social services, fire prevention, sporting facilities.
- ▶ In municipalities of over 50.000 inhabitants: (in addition to the above-mentioned) public transport and protection of the environment.

## Intermediary level: 50 Provinces (*Provincias*)

### Provincial authorities:

The **Provincial Council** (*Diputación Provincial*) is composed of members elected by indirect universal suffrage, by and from among the province municipal councillors (*Concejales*), for a four-year term. The Provincial Councils elect the President.

The **Provincial Government Council** (*Comisión de Gobierno*) is the provincial government. This body is composed of the President and deputies designated by him. Its duties consist of assisting the President in his functions.

The **President**, who is elected by the Provincial Council, holds the executive power. He heads the government and the administration. The President appoints the Vice Presidents within the Provincial Council. He is supported by a government commission.

### Competences:

- ▶ Coordination of municipal services
- ▶ Legal, economic and technical aid to municipalities
- ▶ Provision of supra-municipal services
- ▶ Development and administration of the province

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



## Regional level: 17 Autonomous Communities (*Comunidades autónomas*) and 2 autonomous cities (*Ciudades autónomas*)

### Regional authorities:

The **Assembly** (*Parlamento, Juntas, Cortes, Asamblea regional, Deputies, Procuradores...*) is the deliberative body of the community. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. They exercise devolved legislative power.

The **Regional Government Council** (*Consejo de Gobierno*), headed and composed by the President, is the executive body of the Community. It can also regulate and initiate legislation.

The **President** is elected by the Legislative Assembly and confirmed by the King. The President manages and coordinates the work of the Council. (S)he also represents the autonomous Community to the State.

### Competences:

- ▶ Organisation of the institutions
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Public works
- ▶ Economy
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social policies
- ▶ Environmental management
- ▶ Development of economical activities
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Etc

*Note* : Some autonomous Communities can create their own police.

There are in Spain two autonomous cities: Ceuta and Melilla. These cities are special administrative divisions, halfway between a municipality and an autonomous community. Unlike the Independent Communities, they do not have an own independent legislative assembly.



## Local level: 202 rural municipalities and 39 cities

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*vollkogu*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. The council can appoint and dismiss the chairperson of the as well as the mayor. This deliberative board of the municipality is composed of a variable number of councillors, depending on the municipality demographic size. The Council is assisted by sector-based Commissions. The mayor can not be the chair of the council.

The **government** (*valitsus*) represents the executive board of the municipality. The government is composed of the mayor and of members appointed by her/him, after approval by the council. The members of the municipal government cannot sit on the municipal council.

The **mayor** (*linnapea* in cities and *vallavanem* in rural municipalities) is appointed by the municipal Council for a four-year term. (S)he is the representative of the municipal executive board. The mayor cannot hold concurrently the position of chairperson of the council. The mayor and the chairperson of the Council may be removed from office by the council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Municipal budget
- ▶ Education (preschool, primary, secondary)
- ▶ Social welfare
- ▶ Culture, leisure, sports
- ▶ Social Housing
- ▶ Urban/rural planning, tourism
- ▶ Health services
- ▶ Public transports
- ▶ Public utilities (water supply, sewage, public lighting and central heating)
- ▶ Refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning, cemeteries
- ▶ Local taxes

## Regional level: 15 counties

### Regional authorities:

The **governor** is appointed by the central government, on the Minister for Regional Affairs' recommendation and after consultation with the representatives of local authorities. The governor is appointed for a five-year term and is in charge of the administration of the county.

### Competences:

- ▶ Management and administration of the county

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



## Local level: about 37.000 municipalities

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*Conseil municipal*) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The mayor heads this deliberative assembly.

The **mayor** (*maire*) and his deputies represent the executive power of the municipality. The mayor is elected by and within the council. Deputies assist him. (S)he is in charge of the municipal administration.

*Notes:* Municipalities may create inter-communal structures. These have limited competences but can exercise certain responsibilities allocated to the regional and general councils for these communities.

Paris is both a department and a municipality.

### Competences:

- ▶ Registry office
- ▶ Electoral functions
- ▶ Town planning
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Maintenance of the municipal roads
- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Social action
- ▶ Culture

## Regional level: 22 regions and 4 overseas regions

### Authorities of the region:

The **regional council** (*Conseil régional*) (*Assemblée territoriale in Corsica*) is the deliberative body of the regions. The Council is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The Council appoints the president of the region.

The **permanent committee** (*Commission permanente*) is a deliberative board that assists the Council in the execution of delegate competences. The Commission is composed of vice-presidents.

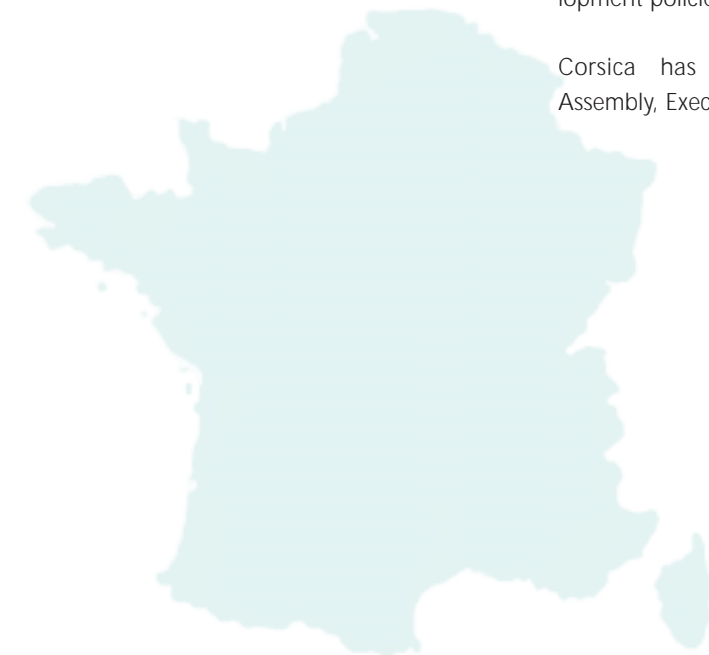
The **president** (*Président*) is elected by the regional council for a six-year term. (S)he is the executive body and the head of the regional administration. The president has similar functions as the president of a general council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Land planning
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Education, job training programmes and culture
- ▶ Secondary schools construction and maintenance
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Management of European Structural Funds

*Note :* The Préfet de région is the central government's representative for big projects. The préfet ensures the region's budgetary acts are legal; he/she also prepares economic and social development policies as well as land planning policies.

Corsica has specific institutions (Corsican Assembly, Executive Council).



## Intermediary level: 96 departments and 4 overseas departments

### Authorities of the department:

The **general council** (*Conseil général*) is the deliberative body of the department. The Council is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term and is renewed by the half every three years. The council appoints the president from among its members. The general council is composed of specialised committees.

The **president of the department council** (*Président du conseil général*) heads the executive board of the department. (S)he is elected by the council for 3 years, and is assisted by a permanent committee made of deputy presidents.

### Competences:

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

Since 2004, the general councils can manage the European Structural Funds.

The Chief Administrator of the department (Préfet) heads the civil service and is the representative of the Prime minister and of other ministers in the department. The Chief Administrator is in charge of the police and public order.



Finland is a parliamentary republic divided into municipalities (*kunta*), provinces (*Lääni*) and regions (*maakunnan liito*).

## Local level: 446 municipalities (*kunta*)

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*kunnanvaltuusto*) is composed of members elected for four years by the proportional representation system. This deliberative body of the municipality appoints the executive board as well as the mayor.

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

The **mayor** (*or municipal manager*) is elected by the municipal council. (S)he can be elected for an indefinite or fixed term of office. This civil servant heads the administration and prepares the decisions to be adopted by the executive board.

### Competences:

- ▶ Health care (primary and secondary, dental services)
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Education (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational training, adult education, libraries)
- ▶ Land use planning and supervision of building
- ▶ Maintenance of the technical infrastructure and the environment, (streets, energy management, water and sewage works, waste management, harbours, public transport)
- ▶ Taxation right
- ▶ Culture, leisure, sports



## Intermediary level: 5 provinces (*läänit*)

### Provincial authorities:

The **provincial state office** (*lääninhallitus*) is headed by the **governor** (*maaherra or Landshövding*). It is part of the central government's executive branch. The governor is appointed by the president of the Republic under proposal of the cabinet, and is in charge of the management of the administrative offices of the province.

*Note:* The only autonomous province, Åland, has an autonomous government (*Landskapsstyrelse*), its own administration as well as a legislative assembly (*Lagting*) elected by universal suffrage.

### Competences:

- ▶ Administrative competences exclusively

### Competences:

- ▶ Education and culture
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Local administration
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Social affairs
- ▶ Postal services
- ▶ Employment

## Regional level: 20 regions (*Maakunnan Liito*)

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council** is a statutory joint local authority. It is composed of members elected by the municipalities of the region and is supported in its tasks by an administration.

### Competences:

- ▶ Regional development and policies
- ▶ Regional planning
- ▶ Preparation and execution of programmes co-financed by the Structural Funds



Greece is a federal State composed of rural municipalities (*Kinotites*), urban municipalities (*Dimoi*), departments-prefectures (*Nomoi*) and regions (*Periphéria*).



## Local level: 900 urban municipalities (*dimoi*) and 131 rural municipalities (*Kinotites*)

### Municipalities (in urban areas)

#### Municipal authorities :

The **municipal council** (*Dimotiko Simvoulio*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. 3/5 of the seats are from the majority list and the remaining 2/5 are shared proportionally between the other lists. This deliberative assembly is the decision making body of the municipality.

The **municipal committee** (*Dimarchiaki Epitropi*) is composed of members elected for two years by the Council. It is responsible for establishing the budget and for auditing the accounts.

The **mayor** (*dimarchos*) is the leader of the list that won the elections. (S)he is assisted by the Municipal Committee and is responsible for implementing the council's and the committee's decisions. The mayor attends the council meetings but has no vote. (S)he also heads the municipal committee.

### Municipalities (in rural area)

#### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*Simvoulio*) is composed of members who are elected for a four-year term by direct universal suffrage (under the same conditions as for the municipalities). This deliberative assembly is headed by the president of the council, and is the decision making body of the municipality.

The **president of the municipal council** (*proedros kinotitas*), the majority list leader, heads the administration. (S)he is responsible for implementing the council's decisions and represents the municipality.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Public transports
- ▶ Socio-economic promotion
- ▶ Gas and water supply
- ▶ School buildings maintenance

## Intermediary level: 54 departments (*Nomoi*)

### Departmental authorities :

The **council of the department** (*nomarchiako simvoulio*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term (under the same conditions as for the municipalities). This deliberative assembly can establish up to six departmental committees.

The **departmental committees** (*nomarchiakes epitropes*) are elected from among the council. The department president heads the committees and may be assisted by a vice president.

The **department president** (*nomarchis*) is the leader of the list that won the elections. (S)he is responsible for implementing the council's and the committees' decisions, and represents the department.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Development of the department
- ▶ Managing the local authorities' services
- ▶ Urbanism
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Green areas
- ▶ School buildings construction

## Regional level: 13 regions (*Periphéria*)

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council** is composed of the department presidents (see intermediary level), of the secretary general, of a representative of each urban municipality and rural municipality in the region, and of representatives of socio-professional interested organisations. The council is headed by the secretary general.

The **secretary general** is appointed by the central government and is assisted by the regional council. (S)he is the head of all the region's services and the executive body of the regional administration, as well as being the representative of the central government in the region.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Regional economic and social development
- ▶ Vertical coordination of economic polities

Hungary is a unitary State composed of municipalities (*települések*), counties (*megyék*) and regions (*régiók*).

## Local level: more than 3100 municipalities, communes, towns, towns with county rank, capital district municipalities, the capital

### Municipal authorities:

The **body of representatives** is the legislative board of the municipality. Elected through a mixed electoral system, it has a determining role within the electoral system. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage. It is the legislative board of the municipality and is responsible for the management and control of the municipality. Its decisions are presented in the form of resolutions and decrees.

The **mayor** (*polgarmester*) is the municipal executive body. He/She must be a member of the Body of representatives and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Under proposal of the mayor, the body of representatives may elect deputy mayors from within its ranks, through a secret ballot. Municipalities of more than 3,000 inhabitants have a full-time mayor.

The **Notary** is appointed by the body of representatives. The notary prepares and supports the work of the body of representatives and the 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, sewerage...
- ▶ Water resources
- ▶ Fire services
- ▶ Culture...

**Note:** The capital city, Budapest, benefits from a special status. The city is organised in two levels: the "capital local government" and 23 districts. These levels are managed by autonomous local entities, with municipal status.

Within the territorial organisation of Hungary, municipalities include rural municipalities, towns, cities and cities with provincial status. A municipality can become a city at the initiative of its body of representatives, depending on its level of development and its regional impact.

## Intermediary level: 19 provinces or counties (*megyék*)

### Provincial authorities:

The **County local government** (*megyei közgyűlés*) is the deliberative body of the county. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Counties provide public service tasks that municipalities are unable to provide. However, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, county local authorities are not allowed to handle tasks that communes and towns wish to keep control of.

The **Chairman** is elected for a four-year term from within and by the County Council. He is the executive body of the County.

**Note:** The county local government and the municipal local government are of equal rights, there is no hierarchy between them.

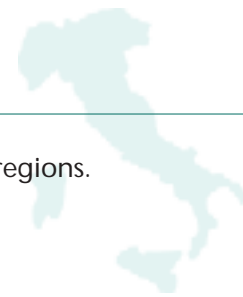
### Competences:

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

## Regional level: 7 administrative regions

The creation of 7 administrative regions, as defined in 1999, is under process. A clear distinction between regional and departmental competences is not yet defined. These regions are administered by Regional Development Council, composed by representatives of central and local governments.

Italy is a federal state made of communes, provinces and regions.



## Local level: Over 8,000 communes (*communi*)

Each commune is attached to a province but has direct access to its region and to the central state. Communes are called cities if the head of state grants them this title

### Local authorities:

The **local council** (*consiglio*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. It is the legislative and the main decision-making body; it votes the budget.

The **executive committee** (*giunta*) is the executive arm. It implements the decisions taken by the council. Its members are designated by the mayor who delegates some of his/her competences to it.

The **mayor** (*sindaco*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. (S)he designates the deputies (*assessori*) who are the members of the executive committee. The mayor is the head of the local civil service.

### Competences:

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Public services
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Culture

## Intermediate level : 101 provinces

### Provincial authorities:

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

The **executive committee** (*giunta*) is designated by the president of the province. Its members cannot be members of the council. The executive committee implements the council's decisions.

The **president** is elected by universal direct suffrage for five years. (S)he designates the members of the executive committee.

### Competences:

- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Waste collection
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Education

## Regional level : 20 regions – 5 of which with special statute (*Valle d'Aosta, Trentino Alto Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Sardegna, Sicilia*), and 2 autonomous provinces (*Trento, Bolzano*)

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council** (*consiglio regionale*) is the legislative body. It is composed of 30 to 80 councillors; some are elected by universal direct suffrage, others are drawn from "the president's list". The council elects the president from within its ranks. It can present bills to the national parliament and can dismiss the president of the executive committee.

The **executive committee** (*giunta*) is the executive body. It is made of the president and the regional councillors. The councillors are designated by the council or the president. They have a five-year mandate. The giunta must resign if it loses the confidence of the council. The executive committee has overall administrative competences; it can propose regional bills. It prepares and implements the regional budget, and implements the council's decisions.

The **president** is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. (S)he designates and dismisses the members of the giunta. The president represents the region and directs the region's policies. The president enacts regional laws and regulations; (s)he assumes the administrative functions that the state delegates to the regions and must, in this matter, follow the government's directions.

### Competences:

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



Ireland is a unitary State composed of municipalities (Towns and Boroughs), counties and cities, and of regions.



## Local level: 80 municipalities

### Town authorities:

The **Town Council** is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The Council appoints the Mayor and is responsible for making development plans of the municipality.

The **Town Clerk** (*Town or borough Clerk*) is the executive head of the Council. This functionary who is appointed by the central government heads the administration. He is responsible for the municipal administration and has similar functions to County Managers. (see intermediary level)

The **Mayor** (*Cathaoirleach*) is elected every year by councillors from among the Municipal Council. He chairs the Council.

### Competences:

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

*Note:* Town authorities comprise Borough Councils and Town Councils (formerly called Borough Corporations, Urban District Councils and Town Commissioners). The Town and Borough Councils do not cover the entire territory of the state. Only 80 towns in total have their own town/ borough council – these cover some 14% of the national population.

## Intermediary level: 34 county and 5 city Councils

### Local authorities:

The **County Council** (*or City Council*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years, using proportional representation. The number of councillors varies and is set by national legislation. The Council elects a *Mayor/ Chairperson* from amongst their members to serve for one year. The Council works alongside and with a County manager. It is assisted by policy committees for local policies, made up of both local elected members of the council and various local interests, such as business, environmental groups and the community and voluntary sector.

The **County or City Manager** heads the administration. The manager is also given by law a number of responsibilities related to the internal management of the local authority, and implementation of policy. In particular, the manager exercises and oversees executive functions (staff management, public agreements, revenue collection, planning permissions, and housing allocation).

The **Mayor/ Chairperson of the Council** is the ceremonial head of the local authority. He is elected each year by members of the Council. The Mayor/ Chairperson chairs meetings of the Council and represents the city or county.

### Competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Road infrastructures
- ▶ 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 :* There is at least one Council for each county. Dublin County has 3 Councils.

## Regional level: 8 regional authorities

### Regional authorities:

The **Regional Authority** is composed of nominated members from the County and City Councils composing the region. Each Regional Authority is headed by a Chairperson. The regional authority is assisted by an operational committee whose members are those of the Authority, as well as county and city managers, and other officials of public agencies operating locally.

The **Chairperson** is elected from among the Regional Assembly. The Chairperson presides over meetings of the regional authority.

### Competences:

- ▶ Coordination of public services
- ▶ Supervision and Monitoring of the European Union Structural and Cohesion Fund implementation

## Regional level: 2 regional assemblies

### Regional authorities:

The **regional assembly** is composed of nominated members from the regional authorities composing the assembly area. Each regional assembly is headed by a chairperson. The regional assembly is also assisted by an operational committee composed of the members, as well as county and city managers, and other officials of public agencies operating locally.

The **chairperson** is elected from among the regional assembly. The chairperson presides over meetings of the regional authority.

### Competences:

- ▶ Coordination of public services
- ▶ Supervision and Monitoring of the European Union Structural and Cohesion Fund implementation
- ▶ Advising on regional dimension of the National Development Plan
- ▶ Managing of regional operational programmes under the National Development Plan

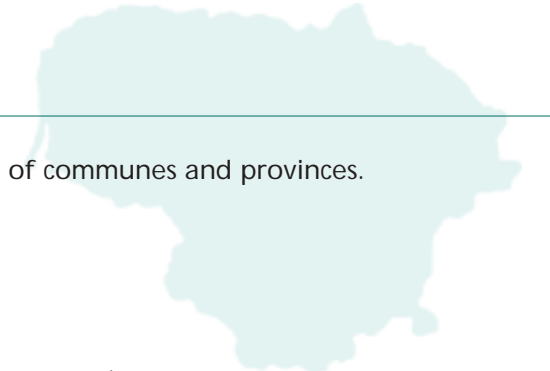




Iceland is a federal State composed of municipalities.



Lithuania is a unitary state composed of communes and provinces.



### Local level: more than 100 municipalities (*sveitarfélag*)

#### Municipal authorities:

The **Municipal Council** (*sveitarstjórn*) is elected by universal suffrage, usually for a four-year term. Councillors are responsible for the management of the municipality. The Council may further pass resolutions in respect of any matter which in its opinion concerns the locality. Permanent Committees, appointed by councillors, are created to assist the Council. These Committees work on specific issues and make recommendations to the Council.

The **Executive Committee** (*byggðaráð*) is composed of members of the municipal council designated by its members. The committee is the executive arm of the commune and is in charge of taxation and the administration of the municipality.

The **President of the Council** (*oddviti*), also named Mayor (*forseti*), is elected for one year by the majority of the members of the Council. The President chairs the meetings of the Council.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Education (primary schools), culture, sport and leisure
- ▶ Building, maintenance of and management of sewers, and of the water and electricity networks
- ▶ Spatial planning and public zones
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Fire service
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Waste collection and management
- ▶ Ports

Note: In Reykjavik, the Municipal Council is named *borgarstjórn* and the executive Committee *borgarráð*.

### Local level: Over 60 communes (*savivaldybe*)

#### Local authorities:

The **local council** (*savivaldybes taryba*) is made of members elected by universal direct suffrage for three years. The council elects the mayor and the deputy-mayors. It designates the members of the executive committee.

The **executive committee** acts under the responsibility of the local council. It is composed of the mayor, the deputy-mayors and the executive bureau (*valdyba*). It implements the laws and decisions of the government and of the council.

The **mayor** (*meras*) is elected by the local council. He/she chairs the executive committee and the council meetings, and is the head of the local civil service. The mayor and the deputies exercise the powers conferred to them by the Latvian state.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Local development
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Primary and secondary education.

### Regional level: 8 regional "local authority associations" (*landsvaed*)

Local authorities may "establish regional associations of local authorities to work for the interests of the inhabitants in each region." The regional associations are voluntary associations of their local authorities, each with a special manager and office.

#### Competences :

- ▶ Varies from one association of local authorities to another

### Provincial level : 10 provinces (*apskritis*)

#### Provincial authorities:

The **provincial council** is made of the governor of the province, deputy-governors and representatives of the communes. It approves the development broad policies, urban plans and the budgetary broad lines. It has a mainly consultative role.

The **governor** is designated by the national government. He heads the provincial civil service and council.

#### Competences:

- ▶ Approves development broad policies
- ▶ Approves urban plans
- ▶ Approves budgetary broad lines

Luxemburg is a unitary state made of communes

## Local level: some 120 communes

### Local authorities:

The **local council** is the commune's assembly. It is made of councillors elected for six years either at the absolute majority or proportional representation, depending on the size of the commune. The council is headed by the mayor.

The **college of mayor** and aldermen is the executive body. It is made of the mayor and aldermen whose number varies with the size of the commune. The mayor and the aldermen are designated by the central government from within the local council for a six-year mandate. The college's functions include running the local civil service.

The **mayor** is the head of the college of mayor and aldermen; he chairs the local council. The mayor is designated by the central government for 6 years.

### Competences:

- ▶ Sécurité
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Proximity services
- ▶ Maternal and primary education
- ▶ Culture and sport
- ▶ Urban planning



Latvia is a unitary state composed of local authorities (*pasvaldiba*) and provinces (*rajons*).



## Local level: 530 communes (*Novads*)

### Local authorities:

The **local council** (*dome*) is the legislative body. Its members are elected by universal direct suffrage for four years. The council elects the mayor and the executive committees from within its members.

The **executive committees** are the executive body. They head the administration and prepare the Council's decisions.

The **mayor** (*mers*) is elected by the council for four years. He/she chairs the executive committees and the local council. The mayor also chairs the Finance committee.

### Competences:

- ▶ Water and heating supply, waste management
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Primary and secondary education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Access to medical services
- ▶ Social housing
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Licensing for commercial activities
- ▶ Registry office
- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Education for teaching staff
- ▶ Child welfare

Note : the 530 communes are divided between 444 *pagasts* (rural communes), 53 *pilsetas* (towns), 7 republikas *pilsetas* ("republican towns") and 26 *novads* (cities with a dual commune/district statute as well as merged communes).

## Regional level : 26 regions (*rajons*)

### Regional authorities:

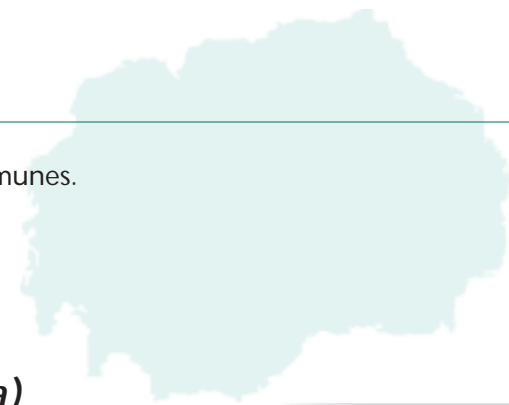
The **regional council** is the main decision-making body. Its members are elected at the indirect universal suffrage by the mayors of the commune of the region.

The **president** and the vice-president are the executive body. They are elected by the members of the regional council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ Teachers' training
- ▶ Represent local governments to the regional fund for health insurance

Macedonia is a unitary state made of communes.



## Local level: over 120 communes (*onwmuha*)

### Local authorities:

The **local council** represents the citizens. Its members (councillors) are elected by universal direct suffrage for four years.

The **communal government** is the executive body of the commune. It is made of members elected by the councillors and the citizens. Its composition, size and election procedures of its members vary according to the statute of the commune.

The **mayor** represents the commune and acts on its behalf. He/she is elected by universal direct suffrage for four years. The mayor can't be a local councillor.

### Competences:

- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Culture and sport
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Maternal education
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Road infrastructure
- ▶ Water supplies and delivery.

*Note:* The capital city, Skopje, is itself divided in five communes. It is a special local self-government "unit". Its communes are under a special legal system.

Malta is a unitary state composed of communes and regions.

## Local level: 68 Local Authorities

### Local authorities :

The **local council** is elected by universal direct suffrage under the proportional representation system. It has a three-year mandate. The number of councillors vary according to the size of the commune.

The **executive secretary** is designated by the Council for a three-year period. He/She is the executive, administrative and financial head of the commune. The local council can designate other staff members to assist the executive secretary.

The **mayor** is elected from within the councillors for a three-year mandate. He/She is at the head of the political arm of the commune and represents the local council. The mayor chairs the local council's meetings.

### Competences:

- ▶ Maintenance of public areas (parks, sports centres, leisure centres...)
- ▶ Maintenance of road infrastructure
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Preserving public order
- ▶ Administrative duties

## Regional level: 3 regions

Malta's three regions are administrative bodies made of several communes. The three regions are Gozo (14 local councils), Malta Majjistral (29 local councils) and Malta Xlokk (25 local councils).



Norway is a unitary state composed of communes and counties.

## Local level : Over 440 communes (*Kommune*)

### Local authorities:

The **local council** is composed of councillors elected at the universal suffrage direct for four years. Each council elects its president who chairs the council's meetings.

The **executive council** is in charge of overall strategy, administration and budget.

The **mayor** is elected for four years by the local council. He/She heads the council and represents the commune.

### Competences:

- ▶ Maternal and primary education
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Culture and leisure (sport, music, cinema)
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Trade and industrial development

## Regional level : 19 counties (*fylkeskommune*)

### Counties' authorities:

The **county council** is the main legislative body. Its members are elected at the universal direct suffrage for a four-year mandate. They are in charge of the budgetary, financial and economic issues in the county.

The **executive committee** is composed of members designated by and from within the council. It meets at least once a month.

The **president** (or mayor) is the county's political head and representative. He/She heads the council and the executive committee.

### Competences:

- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Regional development
- ▶ Transport and the environment
- ▶ Trade and industrial policy

*Note:* Norway's capital city, Oslo, has a dual county/local statut.

The Netherlands is a unitary state composed of communes and provinces.

## Local level : 467 communes

### Local authorities :

The **local council** (*gemeenteraad*) is the legislative body of the commune. The councillors are elected for four years under the proportional representation system. The council takes the main decisions in the commune; it is headed by the mayor (who can not take part in any vote).

The **college of aldermen** (*burgemeester & wethouders*) is the executive body. It prepares and implements the council's decisions. Aldermen are elected from within the council for a four-year mandate.

The **mayor** (*burgemeester*) chairs of the local council and of the college of aldermen. He/She is designated by the government for a six-year mandate.

### Competences:

- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Public work
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Culture and sport

## Intermediate Level: 12 provinces

### Provincial authorities :

The **provincial states** (*provinciale staten*) are the legislative body. Their members are elected at the universal direct suffrage for a four-year mandate. The provincial states are made of various standing committees. Their members elect the member of the executive Bureau.

The **executive bureau** is made of 3 to 9 members designated by the provincial states and of the queen's commissioner. The Queen's commissioner heads the executive bureau, and is designated by the national government, for 6 years, under proposal from the provincial states.

### Competences:

(most shared with the central government)

- ▶ Social institutions
- ▶ Regional planning
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Sport and leisure
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Tourism





Portugal is a federal State composed of parishes, municipalities, districts and regions.



## Local level: more than 4240 parishes (*freguesias*) and 300 municipalities (*municípios*)

### Parish authorities:

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

The **Executive Committee** (*junta de freguesia*) is the executive board of the parish. Members are elected by and within the Assembly. They are responsible for the preparation and implementation of decisions of the Assembly.

The **President** is the candidate heading the list with the most votes. He is elected for four years.

### Competences:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Health

### Municipal authorities:

The **Municipal Assembly** (*Assembleia Municipal*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term, and of the municipal area Parish Presidents. The Assembly, the deliberative body of the municipality, also monitors activities of the executive. This executive board has competences in the organisation and functioning of services, more specifically in urbanism and public works.

The **Municipal Council** (*Câmara Municipal*) is a collegial body composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. Members of the executive can intervene in the Municipal Assembly where they also vote.

The **Mayor** is the candidate heading the list with the most votes, at the time of the assembly election. He is elected for four years.

### Competences:

- ▶ Management of municipal assets
- ▶ Public works
- ▶ Urbanism

## Intermediary level: 18 districts (*divisão distrital*)

### Provincial authorities:

The **district assembly** is mainly composed of the municipal and parish assemblies. This deliberative body assists municipalities in regard to technical services, and has consultative powers in economy, social affairs, education and culture.

The **advisory council** is mainly composed of the civil governor, heading the council, four members elected by the district assembly and of civil experts (appointed by the Governor).

The **civil governor** is appointed by the central government. He represents the government in the district and has competences given by the Ministry of the Interior.

### Competences:

- ▶ Coordination of services in the district
- ▶ Coordination of local authorities' activities in regard to education facilities
- ▶ Culture

*Note* : Lisbon and Porto are administrated by an assembly composed of members of Municipal Assemblies of the territory. The Executive Committee (*junta metropolitana*) is composed of the Mayors and of a consultative metropolitan Committee.

## Regional level: 5 Regional Coordination Commissions (RCC) and 2 Autonomous Regions

The **regional coordination** commissions are administrative bodies; their members are appointed by the government. They are responsible for the development of the regions.

There are two **autonomous regions**: the Azores and Madeira. These two regions are composed of a legislative assembly elected by universal suffrage, a regional Government and of a Minister of the Republic. The Minister of the Republic is the State services superintendent within the region. He appoints the President of the regional Government. He has the right of veto concerning decrees of the Assembly.



Poland is a unitary State composed of municipalities, counties and regions.



## Local level: about 2500 municipalities (*gminy*)

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*rada gminy*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. In addition to its legislative powers, this assembly votes the municipal budget and determine local taxes. The council appoints members of commissions from among the councillors. These commissions are responsible for the preparation of decisions taken by the council and for the supervision of its execution.

The **executive board** (*zarząd gminy*) is composed of the mayor elected by direct universal suffrage and of its deputies elected by the municipal council. It implements the decisions taken by the council.

The **mayor** is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. He is the official representative of the municipality and is assisted by deputies elected by the council. The mayor is called *wójt* in the rural municipalities, *burmistrz* in the urban ones and *prezydent miasta* in towns of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

The **head of the municipal administration** (*sekretarz gminy*) is appointed by the council, upon proposition of the mayor.

### Competences:

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

*Note* : Great urban municipalities in Poland have a special status with powers normally devoted to counties (*powiat*).



## Intermediary level: about 380 counties (*powiaty*)

### Counties authorities:

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 president of the county.

The **executive board** (*zarząd powiatu*) is composed of the president and his deputies elected by among the council for four years. This body is in charge of implementing the council's decisions.

The **president – head of the county** (*starosta*) is elected for a four-year term by the council. He is the official representative of the county and is assisted by deputies elected by the council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Road building and maintenance
- ▶ Secondary education
- ▶ Civil protection
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Employment

*Note* : The capital city, Warsaw, is also a county and is divided in districts. Warsaw has an assembly (*rada miasta stołecznego Warszawy*), a mayor (*prezydent miasta stołecznego Warszawy*), representing the executive body of the city. The mayor is elected by direct universal suffrage.

## Regional level: 16 regions (*voivodies-województwo*)

### Regional authorities:

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

The **executive board** (*zarząd województwa*) is composed of members and of a president (*marszałek*) who are elected by the council for four years. This board is responsible for the execution of decisions taken by the regional council.

The **governor** (*wojewoda*) is appointed by the prime minister upon proposal by the minister responsible for public administration. The governor represents the prime minister of the Republic of Poland as well as the central government at regional level. He also supervises the activities of the regional government.

### Competences:

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

Serbia and Montenegro is a state union of member states: Serbia and Montenegro. Serbia is composed of 164 communes (*opstina*), 29 districts (*okruzi*), and 2 autonomous provinces (*autonomne pokrajine: Kosovo and Vojvodina*).

## Local level: 164 municipalities and 29 districts

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal assembly** (*skupstina opstine*) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The assembly enacts municipal statutes, rules of procedure, development programs, the budget, local urban plans and other municipal regulations. It also appoints and dismisses amongst others the members of the municipal board, and the president of the assembly.

The **mayor** (*predsednik opstine/gradonacelnik*) is the executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for 4 years. The mayor represents the municipality, chairs the municipal council, directly implements decisions of the assembly, directs and harmonises the work of municipal administration, passes individual acts etc. (S)he appoints her/his deputy with the assembly's consent.

The **municipal/town council** monitors the work of the municipal administration. It is headed chaired by the mayor. The number of its members is established by municipal statute. The council draws the draft budget, monitors the work of the municipal assembly, takes decisions on appeal in administrative procedure, assists the mayor etc.

### Competences:

- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Public transports
- ▶ Urban planning
- ▶ School facilities
- ▶ Municipal administration
- ▶ Water supply and electricity
- ▶ Social care

### Authorities of the districts:

**Municipalities** are the only local government units. Districts correspond to State executive offices. The central government provides the districts with a specific budget for the implementation of its decisions. Districts do not have legislative competences.

## Intermediary level: 2 autonomous provinces

### Provincial authorities:

The **assembly of the autonomous province** is composed of deputies elected in direct universal election and of a president. This deliberative board of the province enacts programmes of economic, regional and social development and adopt a budget. The assembly is highest representative organ of the province.

The **executive council** is composed of elected members and vice-presidents who are responsible to the assembly. This body is the executive organ of the province.

### Competences:

- ▶ Economic and financial development
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Culture

*Note* : The two autonomous provinces are Kosovo-Metohija and Vojvodina.

Romania is a unitary State organized into communes, towns and counties.

## Local level : 2825 rural localities (*comune*), 208 towns (*orase*) and 103 municipalities (*municipii*)

### Local authorities:

The **local council** (*consiliul local*) is the deliberative assembly. It is composed of councilors elected by universal direct suffrage for a four-year term. The local council approves the budget of the local authority.

The **mayor** (*primarul*) is elected by universal direct suffrage for a four-year term. He/She is the executive body, and leads the local public administration. The mayor delegates some of the responsibilities to the vice-mayor (who is appointed by the members of the Local Council from within its ranks). The mayor is the main budget coordinator and is responsible for the budgetary execution. He/She also coordinates the activities of the local social services.

### Competences:

- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Urbanism
- ▶ Environmental protection, waste management and public health
- ▶ Transport infrastructure
- ▶ Water supply and sewage system
- ▶ Administration of the educational system's assets (except academic level)
- ▶ Administration of the local heritage
- ▶ Public order
- ▶ Administration of the parks and public gardens and other green public areas

## Departmental level: 41 counties (*Judete*)

### County authorities:

The **county council** (*consiliul judetean*) is composed of members elected by universal, equal, direct, secret suffrage for a four-year term. It monitors the implementation of the provisions of the law in the field of public administration. It is responsible for the distribution of the public funds according the law regulations according the local council requirements. There is no subordination between Local Councils and County Council.

The **president** (*presedinte*) of the county council is appointed by the elected members of the council having executive responsibilities. He/She is in charge of the legal representation of the council in relation with third parties. The President can delegate responsibilities to the two vice presidents who are appointed by the members of the county council.

The Government appoints a prefect (Prefect), as its own representative in each county and in Bucharest municipality. The prefect exercises the control of the legality of the administrative acts adopted or issued by local and county public administration authorities as well as by the president of the county council. He ensures the implementation of the governmental strategy and programs in these territories.

### Competences:

- ▶ County development
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Sewage
- ▶ Public transports
- ▶ Departmental roads
- ▶ Social assistance to children
- ▶ Education



Sweden is a unitary State composed of municipalities, counties and pilot regions.

## Regional level: 8 development regions

The regional development process is coordinated by the **national council for regional development** (*Consiliul National de Dezvoltare Regionala*) and implemented through the **regional development agencies** (*Agentii de Dezvoltare Regionala*). These are non-governmental, public, non-profit bodies, constituted on the voluntary association of neighbouring counties. The president and vice president are elected for one year by the regional development council.

### Competences of the agencies for regional development:

- ▶ Draft regional development strategies, and programs
- ▶ Implement the regional development programs and manage the funds
- ▶ Submit proposals to the ministry of European Integration to finance development projects
- ▶ Act to attract financial contributions to the Regional Development Fund



## Local level: 290 municipalities (*kommuner*)

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly takes every important decision in the municipality, levies taxes and adopts the budget.

The **municipal executive committee** (*kommunalstyrelse*) is composed of members elected by the council. This executive board heads and coordinates the municipal administration and supervises activities of the commissions.

The **specialised commissions** (*utskott*) are composed of members elected by the council. Commissions are responsible for assisting the council in the preparation and implementation of decisions made by the council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Waste management
- ▶ Water supply
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Health protection
- ▶ Social services
- ▶ Public transport (shared competence with municipalities)
- ▶ Urbanism
- ▶ Roads

**Note** :The Municipality of Gotland was formed in 1971 from the merger of several municipalities. The municipality took over the duties of the county (health care, professional education and public transport). Gotland is composed of a council (parliament), an executive board (government) and a president.

## Regional level: 20 counties (*Landsting*)

### Regional authorities:

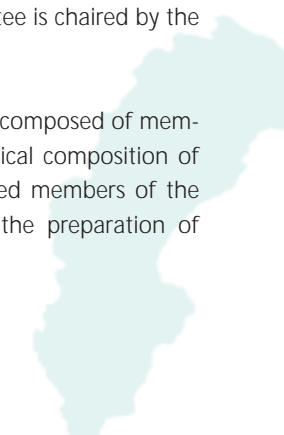
The **county council** (*Landstingsfullmäktige*) is composed of members who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly is the decision-making body of the county, levies taxes and appoints members of the executive committee.

The **county executive committee** (*Landstingsstyrelse*) is composed of members elected by the county council. This executive body is responsible for the preparation and implementation of decisions taken by the council. The Committee is chaired by the leader of majority party.

The **specialised commissions** (*utskott*) are composed of members appointed or elected on basis of political composition of the council. They are not necessarily elected members of the council. Commissions are responsible for the preparation of decisions made by the council.

### Competences:

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Public transport (shared competences with municipalities)
- ▶ Professional formation





Slovenia is a unitary State composed of municipalities, regional administrative units and communes.



## Regional level: 2 regions (*Skåne et Västra Götaland*)

The new regions are still county councils, but have assumed greater responsibility for regional development than other county councils.

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council** (*region*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This regional assembly is the decision-making body and is responsible for taxes in the region and for the appointment of members of the executive committee.

The **regional executive committee** (*Regionstyrelse*) is composed of members appointed by the regional council. This executive board is responsible for the preparation and execution of decisions taken by the council. The Committee is chaired by the leader of majority party.



## Local level: more than 190 municipalities

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*obcinski svet*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four year-term. This deliberative assembly appoints deputy mayors within its members, upon proposition of the mayor. The council is responsible for making the fundamental decisions in a municipality.

The **mayor** (*zupan*) is elected by direct universal suffrage with a four-year mandate. (S)he is the executive body of the municipality, represents the municipality, and heads the administration.

### Competences:

- ▶ Public safety and protection
- ▶ Pre-primary and primary education, crèches
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Urbanism and land development
- ▶ Trade and industry
- ▶ The environment
- ▶ Water treatment and waste collection

*Note* : Urban communes, over 200,000 inhabitants, have wider competences (urban transport...) than the communes.

## Regional level: 58 administrative units

These are not regions. Slovene communes can join to create such regional bodies which will address issues of common interest. Administrative units are managed by a **head of unit** designated (and who can be dismissed) by the central government.



Slovakia is a unitary State composed of municipalities (*obec*) and regions (*samospravne kraje*).



## Local level : 2891 municipalities (*obec*)

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council** (*obecné zastupiteľstvo*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly is the deliberative body of the municipality. The council is assisted by executive consultative commissions. In cities, the council is called mestské zastupiteľstvo.

The **mayor** (*starosta*) is elected for four years by direct universal suffrage. He is the executive board of the municipality. The mayor chairs the municipal council and holds the main executive powers. In cities, he is called primator.

*Note* : The Slovak capital, Bratislava, is a municipality divided in five districts and seventeen sections (also called municipalities) with their own municipal councils. These sections have their own self-governing bodies and manage their own budgets.

Kosice, the second largest city in Slovakia, is divided in four districts and twenty-two sections with their own self-government bodies. The system of local government is organised similarly to that of Bratislava.

### Competences:

- ▶ Public transports
- ▶ Water supply and sewage
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Civil status
- ▶ Urbanism
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Culture and sport
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Pre-primary and primary schools

## Regional level: 8 regions (*samospravne kraje*)

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council** (*zastupiteľstvo*) is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. This assembly is the deliberative body of the region. It is assisted by commissions composed of members appointed by and among the council and of experts.

The **president** (*predseda*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. He represents the region and is assisted by an office responsible for the management of administrative services and for the organisation of the region.

### Competences:

- ▶ Regional road network
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Land development
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Regional development

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

## Local government

In general, councillors are elected for a 4 year term, on the "first past the post" system.

**England:** 34 county councils, 238 non-metropolitan councils, 82 unitary authorities.

The basic pattern – which still exists in parts of the country – was set in the 1970s, involving a system of **county councils**, and smaller **districts** (or boroughs). In the 1980s and 1990s, in many areas (mainly larger urban areas) the system was replaced by single **unitary authorities**.

In London, there are 32 London boroughs and also the **Corporation of the City of London** (*the financial district*). The Greater London Authority (set up in 2000) is seen as a regional authority.

There are 22 Welsh **unitary authorities** and 32 Scottish unitary authorities.

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

### Competences:

▶ **Counties:** education, social services, highways and transport, strategic planning advice, fire, waste disposal, libraries.

▶ **Districts :** local planning, housing, licensing, building control, environmental health, waste collection.

▶ **Unitary authorities** have the competences of both counties and districts. The police service is based on separate Police Authorities, generally covering a number of local authority areas, with a majority of the members of the Police Authority being local councillors. Local authorities do not have responsibility for medical health services or for water and sewerage services: the former are provided by the National Health Service, the latter by private companies.

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



## Regional government

Since 1999, **the Scottish Parliament**, with a Scottish Executive (government) has had legislative powers over a wide range of matters – effectively, all issues except those reserved to the UK Parliament. Its competences include education, health, environment, agriculture, justice, social work, planning and local government.

The **Welsh Assembly** also came into existence in 1999. It has weaker legislative powers (mainly on secondary legislation, giving more detailed effect to UK Parliament measures). 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.

The **Northern Ireland Assembly** came fully into being in 1999. It has been suspended more than once due to difficulties arising from the complex political situation. Its main competences include education, health and agriculture, with the possibility of further powers being transferred to it at a later date.

In **England**, the only directly elected regional authority is the Greater London Authority, which has an Assembly of 25 elected members, with a strong executive Mayor, directly elected. Its main competences include public transport, sustainable development planning, fire and emergency planning, and the Metropolitan Police.



In the rest of England, legislation now permits the setting up of elected regional assemblies, but only if there is a positive popular vote by referendum to do so. At present, no regional assembly has been set up. A referendum to decide whether to establish the first directly elected Assembly, in the North East of England, was held in November 2004, and by a large majority the proposal was rejected.

Instead of directly elected regional assemblies, at present there are, outside London, 8 **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**, appointed by central government with a strong business presence, whose task is mainly strategic economic development. The RDA Boards do, however, each have four representatives appointed from local government in the region.

## Local level: 25 municipalities (*hromada*)

### Municipal authorities:

The **municipal council (*rada*)** is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. Members of this deliberative assembly exercise their powers through council sessions or standing commissions, which are in charge of the preparation of the work of the council.

The **executive committee** is composed of the mayor, the vice mayors, the executive secretariat and the heads of departments within the committee. The mayor appoints members of the executive committee. These nominations must be confirmed by the council. The committee is responsible for development programmes, the municipal budget and for the coordination of departments and services within the committee.

The **mayor** is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. (S)he appoints and controls members of the executive committee, heads the council and represents the municipality externally.

### Competences:

- ▶ Development programmes
- ▶ Local budget
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Urban development
- ▶ Taxes

## Regional level: 490 districts (*raions*) and 25 regions (*oblasti*)

The regional level in Ukraine is organised in two levels: the districts (*raions*) and the regions (*oblasti*).

### Regional authorities:

The **regional council (*oblast*)** and the **district council (*raion*)** are composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. These regional assemblies represent the common interests of municipalities (*hromadas*) such as villages, townships and cities.

The **president of the region** and of the **district** are elected by the councils of the region and of the district. The president heads the council and delegates his executive powers to the state administration.

The oblast and raion councils do not have separate executive committees. Executive functions on these levels are performed by oblast and raion state administrations created by the national government.

### Competences:

- ▶ Management of public property
- ▶ Redistribution of municipal funds

*Note* : In Kiev and Sevastopol, the system of local self-government coexists with the system of state administration. These cities correspond to special municipalities (*mista*) with regional status (*oblast*).

# CEMR in a nutshell

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is a non-profit association. It is the broadest association of local and regional government in Europe. Its members are national associations of local and regional governments from over thirty European countries.

The main aim of CEMR is to promote a strong, united Europe based on local and regional self-government and democracy; a Europe in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to its citizens, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

CEMR's work covers a wide range of themes, including public services, transport, regional policy, the environment, equal opportunities... CEMR is also active on the international stage. It is the European section of the world organisation of cities and municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

## CEMR's activities

### Influencing European legislation

EU legislation – in fields such as the environment, public procurement, structural funds, state aids and competition law - has a huge impact on local and regional government across Europe. Influencing European laws is thus one of CEMR's key activities. Working closely with its national associations, CEMR draws up policy positions, which form the basis of responses to the European Commission, especially through its dialogue and consultation processes, and for lobbying the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, e.g. via specific amendments.

### Shaping the future of Europe

CEMR works for a Europe that respects the principle of subsidiarity and local and regional self-governance, a Europe in which all spheres of government (local, regional, national, EU) work together as partners. CEMR has campaigned for a European Constitution that recognizes the role of municipalities, towns and regions; it has also helped local and regional governments from new EU member states to prepare for accession to the EU.

### Exchanging information and experience

Taken together, localities and regions constitute a well of experience in their domains of competences (social welfare, economic development, environment, transport...). CEMR's role is to facilitate the flow of information on these experiences, to spread ideas and skills to all its members. To achieve this, CEMR organises working groups, seminars and conferences that enable its members to meet and discuss their concerns and ideas.

### Supporting town twinning

CEMR has created the concept of European town twinning, which stems from the idea that a peaceful and successful Europe can be best built at its base, by its citizens. Today, there are over 30,000 town twinnings across Europe, and support for this unique movement remains one of CEMR's priorities –in particular, by co-coordinating the work of twinning officers. CEMR works closely with the European Commission (DG Culture and Education) and the Parliament to ensure necessary financial and policy support for the twinning movement.

### Strengthening local and regional government in the world

CEMR is the European section of the world organisation of towns and municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Within UCLG, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions promotes democracy, local self-government and exchange of experience across the world. It also promotes North-South co-operation and capacity building.