



Local & Regional  
Europe

# Local and Regional Governments in Europe

Structures and Competences



State structure



Currency



Number of  
sub-national governments



Capital city



Population



Vote



Geographical size

MAP >>



## CEMR

CEMR brings together more than 130,000 cities, towns and regions federated through 60 national associations from 42 European countries. It constitutes the most representative association of local and regional governments in Europe.

CEMR is also the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through which it represents European local and regional governments at international level.

## Our mission

CEMR promotes the construction of a united, peaceful and democratic Europe founded upon local self-government and respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

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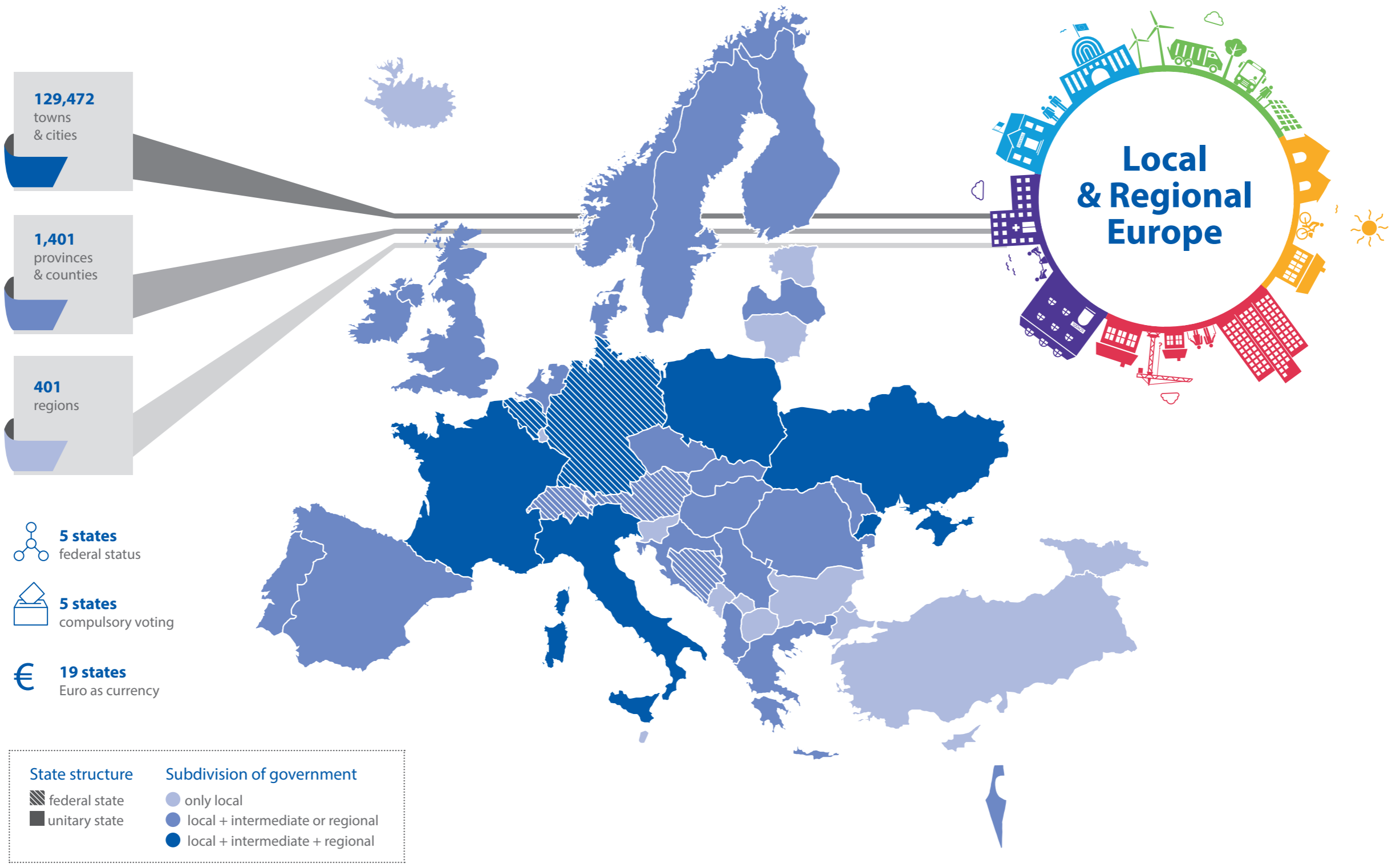
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- Albania**  
unitary state  
local: 61  
regional: 12
- Austria**  
federal state  
local: 2,100  
regional: 9
- Belgium**  
federal state  
local: 589  
intermediate: 10  
regional: 3
- Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
federal state  
local: 145  
regional: 10
- Bulgaria**  
unitary state  
local: 265
- Croatia**  
unitary state  
local: 555  
regional: 21
- Cyprus**  
unitary state  
local: 380
- Czech Republic**  
unitary state  
local: 6,258  
regional: 14
- Denmark**  
unitary state  
local: 98  
regional: 5
- Estonia**  
unitary state  
local: 213
- Finland**  
unitary state  
local: 313  
regional: 19
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**  
unitary state  
local: 82
- France**  
unitary state  
local: 36,658  
intermediate: 99  
regional: 16
- Georgia**  
unitary state  
local: 72

- United Kingdom**  
unitary state  
local: 419  
regional: 4
- Ukraine**  
unitary state  
local: 10,885  
intermediate: 488  
regional: 25
- Turkey**  
unitary state  
local: 19,695
- Switzerland**  
federal state  
local: 2,324  
regional: 26
- Sweden**  
unitary state  
local: 290  
regional: 20
- Spain**  
unitary state  
local: 8,176  
regional: 19
- Germany**  
federal state  
local: 11,313  
intermediate: 295  
regional: 16
- Greece**  
unitary state  
local: 325  
regional: 13
- Hungary**  
unitary state  
local: 3,201  
intermediate: 19
- Iceland**  
unitary state  
local: 74
- Ireland**  
unitary state  
local: 126  
regional: 3
- Israel**  
unitary state  
local: 260  
regional: 6
- Italy**  
unitary state  
local: 8,006  
intermediate: 110  
regional: 20
- Kosovo\***  
unitary state  
local: 1,323

- Slovenia**  
unitary state  
local: 212
- Slovakia**  
unitary state  
local: 2,930  
regional: 8
- Serbia**  
unitary state  
local: 174  
regional: 2
- Romania**  
unitary state  
local: 3,181  
regional: 41
- Portugal**  
unitary state  
local: 3,400  
regional: 2
- Poland**  
unitary state  
local: 2,497  
intermediate: 380  
regional: 16
- Norway**  
unitary state  
local: 428  
regional: 19
- Netherlands**  
unitary state  
local: 390  
regional: 12
- Montenegro**  
unitary state  
local: 23
- Moldova**  
unitary state  
local: 1,679  
regional: 35
- Malta**  
unitary state  
local: 68
- Luxemburg**  
unitary state  
local: 105
- Lithuania**  
unitary state  
local: 60
- Latvia**  
unitary state  
local: 119  
regional: 5



\* See p.48

# Foreword

60% of the decisions taken by our towns and regions are influenced by European legislation and almost 70% of public sector investments in Europe come from local and regional governments. These two figures alone show the increasingly important part local and regional governments play in the European economy and in the life of our citizens.

On the global level, the role of towns and regions is recognised as being a vital factor in the transformation of society to reach the goals set by the United Nations. Towns and regions come across as key players on topics such as climate change or international cooperation. They are also on the forefront of overcoming challenges Europe has to face: welcoming refugees, social and economic challenges...

Unfortunately, just when the role of towns and regions seems vital, their financial resources are put into question, and we have to constantly fight to defend their capacity to invest and manage local public services in the interests of their population.

"Structures and competences" is a regular publication of CEMR, it gives an up-to-date overview of European towns and regions. Since its last edition in 2012, the number of local entities in Europe has decreased by approximately 15%. Indeed, many reforms have been launched – more than ten – claiming to fight against the fragmentation of local governments and achieve economies of scale, taking the risk to lose proximity with citizens.

On the contrary, the number of regions has increased by approximately 10%. The majority of countries now have a regional level (28, so 4 more than in 2012). This echoes a certain type of modelling of territorial organisation and the debates on regionalisation, inter-municipal cooperation, metropolitanisation... as many initiatives more or less formal, more or less bottom-up, which reveal the need to associate public local policies to the right territory level. Finally, the competences dilution and their distribution between sector of governance calls for a stronger coordination according to the principle of governance in partnership advocated by CEMR.

We would like to thank CEMR's member associations who contributed to this publication, which we are sure will, in turn, contribute to strengthening our understanding of local and regional structures in Europe.



Frédéric Vallier  
CEMR Secretary General



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# Albania

**The Republic of Albania is a unitary state** composed of municipalities (*bashkia*) - the basic level of local self-government, and the regions (*Qarku*) - the second tier of local self-government.



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Tirana



**Currency**  
Lek (ALL)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
3,185,000



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2012	2016
LOCAL	373	↘ 61
REGIONAL	0	↗ 12



**Geographical size**  
28,748 km<sup>2</sup>

## Local level 61 municipalities (*bashkia*)

The **municipal council** (*Këshilli Bashkiak*) is the local authority's deliberative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The municipal council, among others, is responsible for the approval of the local budget, the usufruct right of its property, the organisation and supervision of the municipal administration, and local taxes.

The **mayor** (*Kryetari*) is the head of the executive body of the municipality and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. The mayor of the municipality is entitled to three consecutive mandates and is also a member of the regional council. He/she approves and implements municipal council decisions, guarantees that all the local authority's obligations are met, and represents the commune or municipality vis-à-vis third parties.

The mayor has the right to ask the municipal council to reconsider decisions, should he deem them harmful to the community's interest.

**Municipalities** can be subdivided into several **administrative units** that have traditional, historic, economic and social ties. The territory of the administrative units of a municipality, their name, and their creation shall be set forth in a law. The administrative units are comprised of towns (*qytete*) and/or villages (*fshatra*). Towns may be divided into smaller units called quarters or neighbourhoods (*lagje*). As a rule, a quarter can be established in territories with over 20,000 residents. A town's division into quarters and its territory shall be approved upon a decision of the municipal council.

### Competences

The functions and competences of municipalities in Albania are divided in two: the **exclusive functions** and the **functions and powers delegated** by the central government institutions.

#### Exclusive functions

- Budget
- Public Infrastructure and Services
- Welfare Service
- Culture, Sports and Recreational Services
- Environmental Protection
- Agriculture
- Rural Development
- Public Forests and meadows
- Nature and Biodiversity
- Local Economic Development
- Public defence and security
- Pre-school education

The **administrative unit** (*njësia administrative*) is headed by the administrator (*administrator*). The administrator is appointed and discharged at the mayor's discretion and reports to him. The structure and the staff of the administrative unit is a part of the municipal administration.

### Delegated Functions and Powers

- Pre-university education
- Public health
- Social affairs
- Protection of the environment

## Regional level 12 regions (*Qarku*)

The regions have their own functions which are developing and implementing regional policies and ensuring their harmonisation with the national policies, as well as any other exclusive function granted by law.

Each region may perform any functions that are assigned to it by one or more municipalities within the region, according to an agreement reached between the parties. Each region shall perform those functions delegated to it by the central government.





# Austria

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



**State structure**  
*federal*



**Capital city**  
*Vienna*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	2,357	↘ 2,100
REGIONAL	9	→ 9



**Population**  
*8,507,786 (1.7% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*83,879 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1995**

**18** *Seats in the  
European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions*

## Local level 2,100 municipalities (*Gemeinden*)

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

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

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

### Competences

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

## Regional level 9 regions (*Länder*)

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

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

The **regional government** (*Landesregierung*) is the executive board of the region and is headed by the governor. There are two

systems for the election of the regional government, depending on the region: the proportional system (almost each party is represented within the regional government) and the majority system (not all parties are represented within the regional government).

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

### Competences

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



# Belgium

## Belgium is a federal state

composed of municipalities (*gemeenten* in Dutch and *communes* in French), provinces (*provincies/provinces*), regions (*gewesten/regions*) and communities (*gemeenschappen/communautés*).



**State structure**  
*federal*



**Capital city**  
*Brussels*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	→	2016
LOCAL	589	→	589
INTERMEDIATE	10	→	10
REGIONAL	3	→	3



**Population**  
*11,203,992 (2.2% EU)*



**Vote**  
*compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*30,528 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1958**

**21** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 589 municipalities

The **municipal council** (*conseil communal* in French and *gemeenteraad* in Dutch) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term (next local elections in 2018). It is the municipality's legislative body and it decides on local policy.

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

of the day-to-day management of the municipality.

The **mayor** (*bourgmestre/burgemeester*) chairs the college of mayor and aldermen. He or she can be nominated by the municipal council to chair it. In Flanders and in Brussels, he/she is appointed by the regional government after a nomination by the municipal council for a six-year mandate. In Wallonia, the mayor is directly elected by the population (by «earmarking»: the best score on the list with the largest municipal majority), after which he/she is also appointed by the regional government. The mayor is in charge of the municipal administration and heads the municipal police.

### Competences

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

\* See p.88

## Intermediate level 10 provinces\*

The **provincial council** (*conseil provincial/ provincieraad*) is the deliberative body of the province. It is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term, via the proportional representation system (next provincial elections in 2018).

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

for managing the province's daily administration.

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

### Competences

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

## Regional level 3 regions (Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia)

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

The **regional parliament** (*Parlement régional* or *Parlement wallon* et *Parlement bruxellois/Vlaams Parlement*) is the region's legislative body. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for five years (next regional elections in 2019). The parliament holds legislative powers, votes on the regional budget and monitors the regional government's actions.

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

The **minister-president** (*Ministre-Président du Gouvernement régional* or *Ministre-Président du Gouvernement wallon/bruxellois/Minister-president van de Vlaamse regering*) is appointed among members of the regional government for a period of five years. He/she is responsible for the coordination of policies led by the regional government, over which he/she presides.

### Competences

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

\* See p.88

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

The **community parliament** (*Parlement de la Communauté française* and *Parlament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft/Vlaams Parlement*) is the legislative body of the community. It is composed of members elected by universal suffrage for five years (next elections in 2019). The community parliament has legislative powers, monitors the government of the community and votes the budget.

The **government of the community** (*Gouvernement de la Communauté française/Regierung der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft/Vlaamse regering*) is the executive body composed of ministers appointed by the parliament for five years. It also has legislative powers (right of initiative).

The **minister-president** (*Ministre-Président de la Communauté française/Ministerpräsident der Regierung der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft/Minister-president van de Vlaamse regering*) is appointed for a five-year term among members of the government of the community over which he/she presides. He/she is responsible for the coordination of community policies led by the government of the community.

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

For **Brussels Region**, the community competences are exercised by, on the one hand, the French and Flemish communities and, on the other hand, by the three community commissions (GGC/COCOM, COCOF and VGC). The common community commission (GCC/COCOM) regulates and manages matters common to the two communities in the Brussels-Capital region and has recently been assigned a large number of competences for matters such as health and assistance to citizens, following the sixth State reform.

Depending on the community, it's the **COCOF** (*Commission communautaire francophone* for the French speaking community) and the **VGC** (*Vlaamse gemeenschapscommissie* for the Dutch speaking community) which are competent for the community level. COCOF and VGC can form and fund institutions or take initiatives within the scope of community responsibilities.

### Competences

- Education
- Culture
- Social affairs
- Tourism
- Sports
- International relations
- Health
- Assistance to citizens



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Bosnia and Herzegovina is a federal state divided into two entities**

the Republic of Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Brcko District, which has a special district status that falls outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Srpska.

The Republic of Srpska is composed of municipalities (*opština*) and the Federation BiH is composed of municipalities (*općina*) and cantons (*kantoni*).



**State structure**  
federal



**Capital city**  
Sarajevo



**Currency**  
Convertible Mark (BAM)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
3,825,000



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2012		2016
LOCAL	137	↗	145
REGIONAL	10	→	10



**Geographical size**  
51,209 km<sup>2</sup>

**Local level** 57 municipalities and 7 cities in the Republic of Srpska, 74 municipalities and 6 cities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Brcko District

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

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

and temporary working bodies.

The **mayor** (*načelnik opština* or *općina* in municipalities and *gradonačelnik* in cities) is the executive body of the local authority. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years\*. The mayor can put forward draft legislative proposals to the municipal assembly. He/she also implements local policy, has responsibility for the execution of the municipal budget and enforces national laws and regulations to be implemented at the local level.

### Competences

City and municipalities are the key providers of essential public and social services.

- Economic development
- Spatial and urban planning
- Social care
- Civil protection and defence
- Environment
- Heating
- Local roads
- Sewage and solid waste disposal
- Water
- Culture and tourism

\* See p.88

.....  
Cities and municipalities are encouraged by existing local government laws to establish

companies, institutions and other organisations so as to help manage, finance and improve local infrastructures and services.

- Housing
- Pre-school
- Sports
- School building maintenance
- School bus transportation
- Ambulance services
- Health care supplies

## Regional level 10 cantons (*kanton* or *županija*)

Cantons, which have their own regional government, are federal units within the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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

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

\* See p.88



# Bulgaria

**Bulgaria is a unitary state**  
with one level of local self-governance:  
the municipality (*obshtina*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Sofia*



**Currency**  
*Bulgarian Lev (BGN)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	264 ↗	265



**Population**  
*7,245,677 (1.4% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*111,002 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2007**

**17** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 265 municipalities (*obshtina*)

The **municipality** is Bulgaria's only administrative and territorial level of local governance. It is an independent legal entity which owns property and has responsibility for its own budget. The population lives in 5,600 settlements (*naseleno myasto*), organised in 265 municipalities. The average number of settlements per municipality is 20.

The **municipal council** (*obchtinski savet*) is the municipality's legislative body and decides on local policy. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The municipal council elects a chairperson from among its members (between 11 and 61 councillors). The

chairperson convenes the council meetings and guides the preparation of these meetings. The chairperson also coordinates the work of standing committees, assists councilors with their activities and represents the Council before third parties.

The **mayor** (*kmet*) is the municipality's executive body. The mayor of the municipality is elected by direct universal suffrage based on a majority system for a four-year term. His/her role is to implement and manage the policies of the municipal council, to represent the municipality and to manage the municipal staff.

### Competences

- Management of municipal property, municipal companies and enterprises, municipal budget and borrowing, and the municipal administration
- Public safety\*
- Education\*
- Social and welfare services\*
- Cultural activities\*
- Public works
- Parks and recreation
- Sports and leisure
- Water supply and sewage
- Tourism
- Household refuse collection
- Spatial planning
- Public transportation

\* See p.88



The law requires three types of administrative and territorial units within the municipalities:

- Wards (*gradski rayon*) are territorial units in the three largest cities (population above 300,000). The ward mayors are elected by direct universal suffrage. The wards have their own administration.

- The settlements, which are not cities, with a population of above 100, are called mayoralties (*kmetstvo*) and have elected mayors.

- The municipal mayor appoints mayor's representatives in settlements with a population below 100 (*kmetski namestnik*).

The term of all elected officials (mayors and councilors) is four years.

- Maintenance and conservation of cultural, historical and architectural monuments\*
- Environmental protection\*

\* See p.88



# Croatia

**Croatia is a unitary state**

composed of municipalities, towns and cities (*grad*), and counties (*županija*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Zagreb*



**Currency**  
*Croatian Kuna (HRK)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	556	↘ 555
REGIONAL	21	→ 21



**Population**  
*4,246,700 (0.8% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*56,594 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2013**

**11** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**9** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 428 municipalities, 127 towns and cities

### Municipalities

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

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

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

### Competences of municipalities and towns

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

## Towns and cities

Towns are units of local self-government with more than 10,000 inhabitants and cities are units of local self-government with more than 35,000 inhabitants. In exceptional cases, when there are some special reasons (historic, economic, and geographic), a place may be defined as being a town /city even though it has fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.

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

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

### Competence of cities (on top of those also held by municipalities)

- Maintenance of public roads
- Building and renting permits

.....

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

## Regional level 21 counties (*županija*)

There are a total of 21 counties, including the city of Zagreb, which doubles as a county and as a city.

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

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

### Competences

- Education
- Health services
- Regional and urban planning
- Economic development
- Traffic and traffic infrastructure
- Maintenance of public roads

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



# Cyprus

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Nicosia*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	380	→ 380



**Population**  
*858,000 (0.2% EU)*



**Vote**  
*compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*9,251 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2004**

**6**

*Seats in the  
European Parliament*

**5**

*Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions*

## Local level 350 communities\* (*koinotites*) and 30 municipalities (*dimoi*)

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

### Communities

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

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

### Competences\*

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

\* See p.88

## Municipalities

The **municipal council** (*dimotiko sumvoulío*) is the municipality's deliberative assembly and is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. It is responsible for providing assistance and advice to the mayor as regards the execution of his duties. The municipal council also sets up different committees within the municipality, including the management committee responsible for the preparation of the budget and other ad-hoc committees that provide technical, cultural, and environmental and personnel assistance.

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



# Czech Republic

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Prague



**Currency**  
Czech Koruna (CZK)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	6,250 ↗	6,258
REGIONAL	14 →	14



**Population**  
10,512,419 (2.1% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
78,867 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**21** Seats in the  
European Parliament

**12** Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 6,258 municipalities (obec)

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

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

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

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

### Competences

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

## Regional level 14 regions (*kraje*)

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

The **regional committee** (*rada kraje*) is the executive body of the region and is composed of the president, vice-presidents and other members elected by and from within the regional assembly for four years. It is assisted by a regional authority (*krajský úrad*), which is headed by a director and divided into several

departments in charge of specific fields, such as social affairs, transport, spatial planning and environment.

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

The city of Prague is both a municipality and region with only one assembly and one board.

### Competences

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



# Denmark

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Copenhagen*



**Currency**  
*Danish Krone (DKK)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	98	→ 98
REGIONAL	5	→ 5



**Population**  
*5,627,235 (1.1% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*42,921 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1973**

**13** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**9** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 98 municipalities\* (*kommuner*)

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

The **executive committees** (*kommunale udvalg*) are in charge of local administration. The municipal council appoints the members of the executive committees for a period of

four years. Permanent committees assist the municipal council in the preparation of its decisions. The council is obliged to set up a financial committee, but may also set up special committees such as the education, the employment, or the health and social affairs committees.

The municipal council also elects the **mayor** (*borgmesteren*) for four years. He/she heads the municipality's administration as well as the municipal council.

## Competences

- Primary education, including special education for adults
- Childcare
- Care for the elderly
- Social services: total regulatory, supply and financing responsibility
- Social psychiatry
- Health care preventive treatment, care and rehabilitation, home care and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse
- Integration of refugees and immigrants
- Environmental protection and waste management, water and preparation of local plans
- Unemployed service
- Assistance to the unemployed
- Economic development
- Culture and sports
- Local business service and local tourism
- Local roads

\* See p.88



## Regional level 5 regions\* (*regioner*)

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

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

The **chairman of the regional council** (*regionsrådsformanden*) heads the council and region's administration. He/she is elected from among the regional council's members and is assisted by deputies also elected by the council.

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

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

### Competences\*

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

\* See p.88



# Estonia

**Estonia is a unitary state**

composed of rural municipalities (*vald*) and cities (*linn*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Tallinn*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	226	213



**Population**  
*1,315,819 (0.3% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*45,227 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2004**

**6**

*Seats in the European Parliament*

**6**

*Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 183 rural municipalities (*vald*) and 30 cities (*linn*)

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

The **local government** (*valitsus*) is the municipality's executive body. It is composed of the mayor and of

members appointed by the mayor, following the council's approval. Members of the local government cannot sit on the municipal council.

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

### Competences

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



# Finland

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Helsinki*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012		2016
LOCAL	336	↘	313
REGIONAL	2	↗	18



**Population**  
*5,451,270 (1.1% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*338,435 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1995**

**13** *Seats in the  
European Parliament*

**9** *Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions*

## Local level 313 municipalities (*kunta*)

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

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

The **mayor** (*kunnanjohtaja*) is elected by the municipal council for a fixed or indefinite term of office, as decided upon by the municipal council. He/she is at the head of the municipality's administration and prepares the decisions to be adopted by the executive board. The mayor can be appointed from amongst the members of the council. As of December 2015, two cities have done so.

### Competences

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

## Regional level 18 regional councils (*maakunnanliitto*)

The **regional council** is the region's statutory joint municipal authority; every local authority must be a member of a regional council.

Each regional council is governed by a **regional assembly** (*maakuntavaltuusto*) and a **regional board** (*maakuntahallitus*) assisted by the council's office run by the director of the council. The total number of staff of all offices is about 650 persons, and the budgets about 50 million euros, or slightly less than 10 euros/resident.

### Competences

- Regional development
- Regional land use planning
- International affairs of the regions
- Promoting region's interest
- Responsibility for the EU's structural Fund Programmes and its implementation
- Protection and promotion of culture and regional traditions
- Promote mental and economic well-being

## Autonomous province the Åland Island

The Åland Islands is an autonomous province. The **autonomous government** (*Landskapsstyrelse*) is the province's executive body, presided over by a **president**

(*lantråd*). This provincial authority also has a **legislative assembly** (*lagting*), whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage.

### Competences

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



# Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Skopje



**Currency**  
Denar (MKD)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
2,108,000



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2012		2016
LOCAL	85	↘	82



**Geographical size**  
25,713 km<sup>2</sup>

## Local level 81 municipalities (opstina) and the capital city of Skopje

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

The **mayor** (*gradonacalnik*) is the municipality's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year mandate. He/she executes decisions made by the municipal council and submits draft municipal acts to the local council. The mayor represents the municipality, acts on its behalf and is responsible for the organisation, performance and quality of services of its administration. He/she cannot be a local councillor at the same time as mayor.

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

### Competences

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

# France

**France is a unitary state**  
composed of municipalities (*communes*),  
departments (*départements*) and regions (*régions*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Paris*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	36,700 ↘	36,658
INTERMEDIATE	101 ↘	99
REGIONAL	27 ↘	16



**Population**  
*65,856,609 (13% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*632,834 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1958**

**74** *Seats in the  
European Parliament*

**24** *Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions*

## Local level 36,658 municipalities

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

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

Since 2015, the municipality is the only level of local government which benefits from a general competence clause; they can intervene over and above their competences in all fields of local interest.

Since 2014, all municipalities are part of an intercommunal structure\*. These structures have limited competences allocated to them by the municipalities.

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

### Traditional competences

- Registrar office functions
- Organisation of elections on behalf of the State
- Protection of local public order
- Maintenance of municipal roads

### Core decentralised competences

- Urban planning
- Education: nursery and elementary schools
- Social action
- Environment: water supply and sanitation
- Culture
- Sports

\* See p.88

## Intermediate level 96 departments and 3 overseas departments

The **county council** (*conseil départemental*) is the department's deliberative body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The council elects its president among its members and is composed of specialised committees. The county councils can manage part of the European structural funds.

The **president** (*président*) of the county council is the department's executive authority. He/she is assisted by a permanent committee which elects vice-presidents.

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

### Competences

- Social and health action: children, disabled people, seniors, social assistance
- Urban and equipment planning
- Education: colleges
- Culture and tourism
- Safety: departmental fire and emergency services

## Regional authorities 13 regions\* and 3 overseas regions

The **regional council** (*conseil régional*) is the deliberative body of the region. It is composed of regional councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. The regional council elects its president from among its members. Since the adoption of the law of 27 January 2014, regional councils, instead of the state, can now manage part of the European structural funds.

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

### Competences

- Economic development
- Territorial development and planning
- Transport
- Education: secondary schools
- Job training programmes
- Culture
- Tourism

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

Among the 13 regions, Corsica has a specific status and represents a self-governing authority with specific institutions.

There are several types of overseas communities:

The **president** (*président*) is elected from among the members of the regional council for a six-year period. He/she is the region's executive authority and is at the head of the regional administration. The president's functions are similar to those of the president of the county council.

- Overseas departments and regions (DOM and ROM)
- Since December 2015, there are two additional overseas territories, which combine the competences of overseas departments and overseas local authorities
- Overseas communities
- New Caledonia and the Territory of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF)

\* See p.88



# Georgia

## Georgia is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*minucipaliteti*) and self-governing cities (*tvitmmartveli qalaqebi*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	69	↗ 72



**Capital city**  
*Tbilisi*



**Population**  
4,323,000



**Geographical size**  
69,700 km<sup>2</sup>



**Currency**  
*Lari (GEL)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*

## Local level 60 municipalities (*minucipaliteti*) and 12 self-governing cities (*tvitmmartveli qalaqebi*)

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

The **municipal or city executive branch** is represented by a **mayor** (in cities) and a **gamgebeli** (in municipalities), elected by direct

elections with 50% of electoral barrier threshold. The executive branch is composed of the heads of several structural and territorial units present in each local authority and implements decisions taken by the municipal or city council. The mayor / *gamgebeli* is the supreme official of city/municipality.

The **chairman of the municipal or city assembly** (*sakrebulo tavmjdomare*) is elected by and from within the municipal or city assembly for a period of four years. The chairman organises the work of the municipal or the city assembly and approves decisions of the council.

The capital city of Tbilisi\* also exercises competences delegated by central government agencies, including

### Competences

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

\* See p.89



military recruitment, emergency response and state of emergency, environment and legalisation of property. The city of Tbilisi is divided into ten administrative districts. Each district has its own executive branch headed by a chief executive officer nominated by the mayor.

The remaining local government units in Georgia have limited delegated powers, which extend mainly to military procurement and sanitation. The tasks are delegated from specific ministries by a legal decision or agreement between the relevant ministry and a particular municipality.

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



# Germany

## Germany is a federal state

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



**State structure**  
federal



**Capital city**  
Berlin



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	11,481 ↘	11,313
INTERMEDIATE	295 →	295
REGIONAL	16 →	16



**Population**  
80,780,000 (15.9% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
357,340 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**1958**

**96** Seats in the  
European Parliament

**24** Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 11,313 municipalities (*Gemeinden*) of which 2,060 are cities (*Städte*)\*

There are two types of local structures in Germany, depending on the region's municipal code (*Gemeindeordnung*): the magistrate system (*Magistratsverfassung*) and the council system (*Süddeutsche Ratsverfassung*).

The **council system** (*Süddeutsche Ratsverfassung*) exists in all German regions except for Hessen. According to the council system, the local council is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. The **mayor** (*Bürgermeister*) is also elected by direct universal suffrage for a mandate that can vary from four to nine years, which also applies to Hessen. The mayor chairs the local council and heads the municipal administration.

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

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

### Competences\*

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

\* See p.89

municipality, is in charge of the daily local administration and implements local council decisions.

## Intermediate level 295 counties (*Kreise*)

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

The **county president** (*Landrat*) is elected either by the county assembly or by direct universal suffrage,

depending on the region. He/she is a civil servant elected for a period that varies from five to eight years and chairs the county assembly.

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

### Competences\*

- Construction and maintenance of intermediary roads
- Social services and youth
- Collection and disposal of household waste
- Health care
- Food safety
- Protection of nature and environment
- Foreign affairs
- Disaster management
- Public transport

## Regional level 16 regions (*Länder*)

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

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

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

This differs for the three city-states Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg, where the house of representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*) or citizens' assembly (*Bürgerschaft*) is the legislative, the senate of the city (*Senat*) is the executive and the mayor (*Bürgermeister*) is the governing chair.

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

### Competences

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

\* See p.89



# Greece

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Athens*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	325	→ 325
INTERMEDIATE	13	→ 13



**Population**  
*10,992,589 (2.2% EU)*



**Vote  
compulsory**



**Geographical size**  
*131,957 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1981**

**21** *Seats in the  
European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions*

## Local level 325 municipalities (*dimos*)

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

The **executive committee** (*ektelestiki epitropi dimou*) is the municipality's executive body. It is composed of the mayor and deputy mayors and monitors the implementation of municipal policy, as adopted by the municipal council.

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

### Competences

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

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

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

## Regional level 13 self-governing regions (*peripheria*)

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

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

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

### Competences

- Regional development planning
- “Green” development



# Hungary

## Hungary is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*települések*), towns (*városok*), towns with county rank (*megyei jogú városok*), capital town districts (*fővárosi kerületek*), the city of Budapest and counties (*megyék*)\*.



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Budapest



**Currency**  
Hungarian Forint (HUF)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	3,177	↗ 3,201
INTERMEDIATE	19	→ 19



**Population**  
9,879,000 (1.9% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
93,024 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**21**

Seats in the  
European Parliament

**12**

Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

**Local level** 3,177 municipalities\* (*települések*), towns (*városok*), towns with county rank (*megyei jogú városok*), 23 capital town districts (*fővárosi kerületek*) and the city of Budapest

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

The **mayor's office** (*Polgármesteri hivatal*) is the municipality's executive body and the mayor presides over the body of representatives. He/she is a member of the body of representatives and is elected by

direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The body of representatives is obliged to elect deputy mayors from within its ranks or may also elect external persons to this post, on the basis of a secret ballot.

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

## Competences

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

\* See p.89

The capital city of Budapest is composed of 23 districts. This level is managed by autonomous local entities, which have the status of a municipality. The capital general

assembly is composed of the mayors of the 23 districts and the Lord Mayor who is also elected by direct universal suffrage.

## Intermediate level 19 counties (*megyék*)

The **county council** (*megyei közgyűlés*) is the county's deliberative body. It is composed of members elected from party lists for a five-year term. The sphere of power of the county local government has been reduced since 2011.

The **county chair** (*közgyűlés elnöke*) is elected for a five-year mandate by and from within the county council. The county's executive branch is the county local government office and the chair represents the county council.

Towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants can gain the rank of a county. However, this process is quite rare in Hungary, as the last town to have gained county rank was Érd in 2006. There are 23 towns with county status in Hungary.

.....  
There is no hierarchy between local and county authorities as they have equal rights in the eyes of the national government.








### Competences

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



# Iceland

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

 <p><b>State structure</b> unitary</p>	 <p><b>Capital city</b> Reykjavík</p>	 <p><b>Currency</b> Iceland Krona (ISK)</p>						
 <p><b>Number of Sub-national governments</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LOCAL</td> <td>76</td> <td>↘ 74</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012	2016	LOCAL	76	↘ 74	 <p><b>Population</b> 333,000</p>	 <p><b>Vote</b> non-compulsory</p>
	2012	2016						
LOCAL	76	↘ 74						
	 <p><b>Geographical size</b> 103,000 km<sup>2</sup></p>							

## Local level 74 municipalities (*sveitarfélag*)

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

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

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

Municipalities have the possibility of taking on additional tasks concerning their inhabitants provided that they have the budget to support these and that the tasks in question are not assigned to other government administrations by law.

### Competences

- Social services and child welfare
- Services for persons with disabilities
- Preschools and primary schools
- Culture, sports and leisure activities
- Public utilities (heating, sewage, water and electricity)
- Spatial and urban planning
- Building inspection
- Public parks and open areas
- Monitoring of public and environmental health
- Fire services
- Public transport
- Waste management and collection
- Harbours





# Ireland

*Ireland is a unitary state composed of two levels of local government: the first tier is composed of municipal districts, cities, and counties\* and the second tier is composed of regions.\**



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Dublin



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012		2016
LOCAL	80	↗	126
INTERMEDIATE	34	↘	
REGIONAL		↗	3



**Population**  
4,604,029 (0.9% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
69,797 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**1973**

**11**

Seats in the  
European Parliament

**9**

Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 31\* cities and counties and 95 municipal districts (administrative local level)

### City and county councils 26 county councils, 3 city councils, 2 city and county councils

Local authorities (county\* and city councils) operate under the supervision of the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

The **city council** or **county council** is elected by direct universal suffrage every five years, via proportional representation. The number of councillors varies and is set by national legislation. There are 949 elected members in the Irish local government system (2016). Local elections take place every five years (the last one was in May 2014). The

city or county council is assisted by local policy committees, made up of both local elected council members and representatives from local interest groups.

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

#### Competences

- Economic Development
- Planning city development
- Road infrastructure
- Environmental Services
- Housing
- Fire services and civil defence
- Community development
- Libraries
- Local arts, culture and leisure facilities
- Coordination of public services across different agencies operating locally

\* See p.89

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

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

## Administrative local level 95 municipal districts

The Local Government Reform Act gave legal affect to the replacement of 80 town councils with the designation of 95 municipal districts. The Act integrated town and county governance with municipal districts acting as decision-making entities rather than corporate structures.

**Municipal districts** are designed to enhance democratic governance, subsidiarity and accountability and are intended to improve operational efficiency and value for money, with **a single county-wide executive** (the executive of the city/county council) and operational structure.

As each county council comprises a number of municipal districts, councillors are elected simultaneously in local electoral areas to both a municipal district and county council, with members in common in the **plenary council**.

The elected members focus on operational issues at municipal district level and strategic issues at plenary council level. There is no duplication or overlapping of functions of members between county and municipal district jurisdictions; matters decided at district level are not dealt with at county level.

### Competences

- Policy and regulatory functions in areas e.g. planning, housing, roads, environment
- Representational and oversight functions
- Civic and ceremonial roles
- Citizen/community engagement and leadership

## Regional level 3 regions

Under the Local Government Reform Act (2014) eight regional authorities were dissolved and replaced with a 3-regions structure. **Regional assemblies** have the functions of

both the former regional authorities and regional assemblies, with significant enhancement of some powers.

### Competences

- Adoption of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- Spatial and Economic Strategies
- Management of EU structural funds (ERDF) and *ad hoc* EU-funded projects



# Israel

## Israel is a unitary state

composed of regional councils (*moatsa ezorit*) local councils (*moatsa mekomit*) and municipalities (*iria*)\*.



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Jerusalem*



**Currency**  
*New Sheqel (NIS)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
*7,822,000*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*

	2016
LOCAL	260
REGIONAL	6



**Geographical size**  
*22,072 km<sup>2</sup>*

## Local level 57 regional councils (*moatsa ezorit*), 126 local councils (*moatsa mekomit*), 75 municipalities (*iria*) and 2 industrial councils

The law distinguishes between three types of local authorities: regional councils, which represent the rural areas of Israel, local councils with 20,000 inhabitants or less and municipalities in urban centres with 20,000 inhabitants or more.

The **city council** (*moetset hair*) and **local council** (*moatsa mekomit*) are the local authority's deliberative body. Their members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. As the elections are proportional, the different parties form a coalition to manage the council. The number of councillors, as determined by the ministry of the interior, varies depending on the size of the population.

The **city council** (*moetset hair*) is the deliberative and executive body. As a mandatory responsibility, the city council has to approve the city's yearly budget and the motions presented by the city councillors or inhabitants regarding the use of the financial plan. It also makes crucial decisions concerning the city's management and legislates local municipal laws.

The **mayor** (*rosh hair*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. He/she represents the local authority vis-à-vis the Ministry of the Interior and other governmental bodies. The mayor is in charge of the local administration and of executing the city's annual working plan. He/she is assisted by a number of deputies of his choosing, nominated according to the constitution of the coalition leading the local public authority.

### Competences

- Local development
- Health
- Managing local services (water, sewage, garbage disposal, road paving)
- Public gardens and parks
- Sanitation
- Household refuse
- Education
- Social services
- Levy local taxes
- Establishment of facilities for sports, education, culture and health
- Manage finances
- Culture
- Sports
- Safety and emergency services
- Public transport
- Maintenance of roads, public areas and cemeteries
- Environment

\* See p.89









## Regional level 6 administrative regions

Although the 1957 government decision divided Israel into six regions, it did not develop a coherent regional governance level. Instead of an independent and resourceful regional coordinating unit, each government ministry either utilised the regional division to establish its own local branch or abolished it altogether.



**Italy is a unitary state**

composed of municipalities (*Comuni*), provinces (*Province*), metropolitan cities (*Città metropolitane*) and regions (*Regioni*).

 <p><b>State structure</b> <i>unitary</i></p>	 <p><b>Capital city</b> <i>Rome</i></p>	 <p><b>Currency</b> <i>Euro (EUR)</i></p>												
 <p><b>Number of Sub-national governments</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LOCAL</td> <td>8,094</td> <td>↘ 8,006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INTERMEDIATE</td> <td>110</td> <td>→ 110</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REGIONAL</td> <td>20</td> <td>→ 20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012	2016	LOCAL	8,094	↘ 8,006	INTERMEDIATE	110	→ 110	REGIONAL	20	→ 20	 <p><b>Population</b> <i>60,782,668 (12% EU)</i></p>	 <p><b>Vote</b> <i>non-compulsory</i></p>
	2012	2016												
LOCAL	8,094	↘ 8,006												
INTERMEDIATE	110	→ 110												
REGIONAL	20	→ 20												
 <p><b>Geographical size</b> <i>302,073 km<sup>2</sup></i></p>														
 <p><i>EU Member State since</i> <b>1958</b></p>	<p><b>73</b> <i>Seats in the European Parliament</i></p>	<p><b>24</b> <i>Seats in the European Committee of the Regions</i></p>												

**Local level 8,006 municipalities (*Comuni*)**

The **council** (*Consiglio*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for five-year period. It is the main decision-making body of the municipality, is responsible for planning and controls governance matters. The city council in particular adopts the budget of the town.

The **city board** (*Giunta comunale*) is the executive body of the municipality. It implements decisions taken by the council. Its members are called deputy mayors (*Assessori*) and are appointed by the mayor.

The **mayor** (*Sindaco*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a of five-year period. He/she delegates some of his/her powers to the deputy mayor, who is appointed by the mayor. The mayor also heads up the local civil service.

Each municipality responds to a province or a metropolitan city, but they may also directly relate to its region or the central government if necessary. The municipality may acquire city status if the president of the Republic provides them with this status.

**Competences**

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

## Intermediate level 100 provinces (*Provincia*) and 10 metropolitan cities (*Città metropolitane*)

Italy is composed of two intermediate levels, i.e. the provinces (*Province*) and the metropolitan cities (*Città metropolitane*).

### Provinces

The **members of the provincial council** (*Consiglio provinciale*) are elected by, and from among themselves, i.e. from the mayors and councillors of the municipalities of the province concerned, for a period of two years. The council decides upon the policies of the province and approves the budget.

The **assembly of mayors** is composed of mayors of municipalities within the province. It has advisory and control powers as well as the power of initiative.

The **president** (*Presidente*) is elected by the mayors and councillors of the municipalities of the province, for a period of four years, and who will be drawn from one of the municipalities' mayors coming from the province concerned. He/she represents the province, is the chairperson of the board and of the assembly of mayors. His/her functions are to supervise the operation of the services and offices.

### Competences

- Environment
- Transport and land use planning

### Metropolitan cities

The members of **the metropolitan council** (*Consiglio metropolitano*) are elected by, and from among themselves, i.e. from the mayors and councillors of the municipalities of the metropolitan city. They are elected for a period of five years. The statute of the institution may provide for the direct election of the metropolitan council. It performs a planning and control function.

The **metropolitan conference** (*Conferenza metropolitana*) is composed of the metropolitan mayor, who convenes and chairs it, and of the mayors of the municipalities within the metropolitan city. It has the power of initiative and consultative powers.

The **metropolitan mayor** (*Sindaco metropolitano*) is the mayor of the provincial capital. The status of the institution may provide for his/her direct election. He/she represents the metropolitan city and supervises the operation of services and offices.

### Competences

- Environment
- Education
- Transport
- Urban planning
- Public services
- Traffic management
- Economic and social development

## Regional level 20 regions (*regione*)

The **regional council** (*Consiglio regionale*) is the legislative body of the region. It can present projects of law to the national parliament and can dismiss the president of the regional executive committee.

The **regional executive committee** (*Giunta regionale*) is the executive body of the region. It consists of a president and aldermen appointed by the president for a period of five years.

The **president** (*Presidente*) is elected by direct universal suffrage if the statute does not otherwise provide for a period of five years. He/she chairs the regional committee and appoints or dismisses the members. The president represents the region, determines the regional policy and executes the laws and regional regulation. He/ she is responsible for executing the administrative functions delegated by the state to the regions, according to government guidelines.








### Competences

- International relations with other regions and with the EU
- Trade
- Health
- Land development
- Transport
- Manufacturing and distribution of electrical energy
- Urban planning
- Agriculture



# Kosovo\*

**The Republic of Kosovo\* is a decentralised unitary government.** Kosovo\* is divided into two territorial levels: municipality and settlement.

 <p><b>State structure</b> unitary</p>	 <p><b>Capital city</b> Pristina</p>	 <p><b>Currency</b> Euro (EUR)</p>				
 <p><b>Number of Sub-national governments</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LOCAL</td> <td>1,323</td> </tr> </table>		2016	LOCAL	1,323	 <p><b>Population</b> 1,859,203</p>	 <p><b>Vote</b> non-compulsory</p>
	2016					
LOCAL	1,323					
	 <p><b>Geographical size</b> 10,908 km<sup>2</sup></p>					

## Local level 38 municipalities (*Komunë* in Albanian and *Opstina* in Serbian) and 1,285 villages (*fshat /selo*)

The **municipal assembly** (*Kuvendi i Komunës* in Albanian and *Skupstina Opstine* in Serbian) is the highest representative and decision-making body of the municipality consisting of all its elected members. The members of the municipal assembly are directly elected for a four-year term. The number of members of the municipal assembly varies from 15 to 51 depending on the size of the municipality.

The **mayor** (*Kryetar/Gradonačelnik*) is the highest executive body of the municipality and is elected through direct elections. The mayor of the municipality shall be elected for the same term of office as the members of the municipal assembly. The elected office of the mayor is not subject to term limits.

The **villages** (*fshat*) are registered as cadastral zones. Each municipality regulates the division of its suburbs.

There are three types of municipal competences: own competences, delegated competences and enhanced competences.

### Own competences

- Local economic development
- Urban and rural planning
- Land use and development
- Implementation of building regulations and building control standards
- Local environmental protection
- Provision and maintenance of public services and utilities, including: water supply, sewers and drains, sewage treatment, waste management, local roads, local transport, and local heating scheme
- Local emergency response
- Provision of public pre-primary, primary and secondary education
- Promotion and protection of human rights
- Provision of family and other social welfare services
- Public housing
- Public health



## Delegated competences

- Cadastral records
- Civil registrar
- Voter registration
- Business registration and licensing
- Distribution of social assistance payments (excluding pensions)
- Forestry protection on the municipal territory

## Enhanced municipal competences

Certain municipalities have their own competences enhanced in the areas of health, education and cultural affairs and have a participatory right in selecting local station police commanders.

Central authorities of Kosovo\* monitor the exercise of enhanced competences.

- Secondary health care: the municipalities of Mitrovica North,

Gracanica, and Shtërpçë / Štrpce)

- Higher education: the municipality of Mitrovica North
- Cultural affairs: all municipalities in which the Kosovar Serb Community is in the majority

Central authorities in Kosovo\* may delegate other competences to municipalities, as appropriate, in accordance with the law.

## Villages, Settlements and Urban Quarters

Each municipality may make arrangements with villages, settlements and urban quarters within its territory to ensure that services are offered closer to all citizens of the municipality.

With the approval of the municipality, villages, settlements and urban quarters, singly or in combination, may carry out activities that are within the responsibilities and powers of the municipality.

The statute and local municipal regulations shall stipulate the form of cooperation between the municipality and villages, settlements and urban quarters and the scope of the work and organisation of villages, settlements and urban quarters.

*\*All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.*



# Latvia

## Latvia is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*novads*) and cities (*pilsēta*).

The creation of new regional governments has been postponed and the elements of regional governments are fulfilled by 5 planning regions.



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Riga*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	119	→ 119
REGIONAL		5



**Population**  
*2,001,468 (0.4% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*64,573 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2004**

**8**

*Seats in the European Parliament*

**7**

*Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 110 municipalities (*novadi*) and 9 cities (*pilsēta*)

The **council** (*dome*) is the local authority's legislative body. Its members are councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. The council elects the chairperson of the council and members of the standing committees from among its councillors. The existence of both the Finance committee and Social, Education and Culture committee are mandatory. However, local authorities are free to set up other standing committees, all of them are composed of politicians and local experts. Standing committees prepare draft decisions for the council.

The **chairperson of the council** (*priekšsēdētājs*) is elected by and from within the council for a four-year term. He/she chairs the council and the Finance committee.

The competences of local authorities can either be autonomous (determined by law or voluntary) or delegated by the state or central government.

### Competences

The competences listed below are autonomous, determined by law:

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

## Regional level 5 planning regions

The **regional development council** (*Plānošanas reģiona attīstības padome*) is elected by representatives of all local governments, whose administrative territories compose the territory of the respective planning region. Its members are local councillors, who are involved directly. The regional development

council elects the chair and **executive director** (head of the administration of the planning region). The administration of the planning region is responsible to the regional development council. Planning regions have their own property, legislative and administrative rights and responsibilities.

### Autonomous competences

- Development planning and spatial planning, including legislative elements
- Organisation of public transport, in cooperation with central government

### Delegated competences

- Coordination of the replacement of deinstitutionalisation of social care
- Coordination of the regional scale public investment policy



# Lithuania

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Vilnius



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	60	→ 60



**Population**  
2,943,472 (0.6% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
65,300 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**11** Seats in the  
European Parliament

**9** Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 60 municipalities (savivaldybė)

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

The **director of administration** (*administracijos direktorius*) is in charge of all executive tasks. He/she is nominated by the local council for four years. The director is directly and personally responsible

for the implementation of national (except where the council decision is required) and local legislation in the municipality. He/she can be dismissed by a local council decision at the proposal of the mayor and must resign when the new council meets for the first time.

The **mayor** (*meras*) is elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. He/she is the head of the municipality and local civil service, and chairs local council meetings. The mayor resigns when the new council meets for the first time.

### Competences

- Municipal budget, local charges
- Pre-school, primary and basic education
- Civil protection
- Culture
- Environment
- Sanitary
- Housing
- Transport, local roads
- Labour market measures and promotion of entrepreneurship
- Primary health care
- Public services and municipal property management
- Spatial planning

By local council decision, each municipality can be administratively divided into smaller territorial units called **seniunija**. *Seniunija* is a branch of the municipality administration acting in a certain territory of the municipality. It is generally responsible for the provision of daily local services to citizens in a given municipal area. Each territorial unit is headed by a **civil servant** (*seniūnas*) appointed by the director of administration of the municipality concerned.

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

- Local development, participation in drafting regional development programmes
- Sports
- Tourism
- Social care
- Information society



# Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a unitary state composed of municipalities.



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Luxembourg



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	106	105



**Population**  
549,680 (0.1% EU)



**Vote**  
compulsory



**Geographical size**  
2,586 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**1958**

**6**

Seats in the  
European Parliament

**5**

Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 105 municipalities

The **municipal council** (*conseil municipal*) is the municipality's legislative body and is composed of councillors elected for a period of six years using a proportional or relative majority voting system, depending on the demographic size of the municipality. The council represents the municipality and is presided over by the mayor. It is in charge of all matters of municipal interest.

The **college of the mayor and aldermen** (*collège des bourgmestre et échevins*) is the municipality's executive and daily administrative body. It is composed of the mayor and the aldermen, whose number

varies according to the demographic size of the municipality; the mayor and alderman are chosen from within the municipal council and sit on the council.

The **mayor** (*bourgmestre*) is proposed by a majority of members from within the municipal council for a six-year mandate. He/she chairs the college of the mayor and aldermen and the municipal council.

### Competences

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



# Malta

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Valletta



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of  
Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	68	→ 68



**Population**  
425,384 (0.1% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
316 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**6**

Seats in the  
European Parliament

**5**

Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 68 local councils (*kunsill lokali*)

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

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

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

### Competences

- Maintenance of road infrastructure (not including reconstruction) and road signs
- Waste management
- Maintenance and upkeep of children's playground, public gardens and other leisure centres
- Recommendations in the field of planning or building schemes
- Restoration, design or alteration of the facade of buildings
- Support to citizens with regards to their rights (transport, communications, taxation)

- Establishment and maintenance of Child care Centres, Kindergartens and other educational services\*
- Establishment and maintenance of health and rehabilitation centres\*
- Health district offices, Homes for Senior Citizens and Night Care Centre\*
- The promotion of social policy initiatives
- Safeguard local identity
- Provide assistance to artists, musicians and sports individuals
- Cultural activities
- Protection of the urban Environment
- Promotion of sports activities
- Promotion of lifelong learning
- Provision and maintenance of local library services
- Promotion of entrepreneurship policy

\* See p.89



# Moldova

**The Republic of Moldova is a unitary state** composed of two levels of local government. The first tier is composed by: villages (*sate*), communes (*comune*), cities (*orașe*) and municipalities (*municipii*)\*. The second tier is formed of districts (*raioane*), the Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Administrative Unit and the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti.



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Chisinau



**Currency**  
Moldovan Leu (MDL)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
3,461,000



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2016
LOCAL	1,679
REGIONAL	35



**Geographical size**  
33,846 km<sup>2</sup>

**Local level** 1,547 villages (*sate*) and communes\* (*comune*), 5 municipalities (*municipii*) and 61 cities\* (*orașe*) plus about 66 villages (*sate*) within cities structure

The **local council** (*consiliu local*) is the deliberative body of the local authorities. Its members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years, either on the basis of political party lists or independent candidates. Budget setting, local policies and territorial planning are the main competences.

The executive body is represented by the **mayor** (*primar*), who is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years, and by the **mayor's office** (*primarie*).

### Competences of communes, cities and municipalities\*

- Urban and spatial planning
- Waste management
- Water management and sewerage systems
- Local roads management
- Local public transport
- Cemeteries
- Local property management
- Educational centre management
- Local gas and heating distribution
- Culture, sport and recreation
- Economic development
- Social housing
- Fire services

\* See p.89



## Regional level 32 districts (*raioane*), the Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Administrative Unit and the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti

The district is a territorial-administrative unit of the second level, consisting of a large number of villages and cities and satisfying the role of a distinct regional entity.

The **district council** (*Consiliul raional*) is a representative body of local government, elected through free and universal elections. The district council sets up a permanent board as a working body and executive authority comprised of the chair of the district, vice chairs and their executive apparatus.

The **chair** (*presedinte*) of the district is elected by the regional council for 4 years. He/she is at the head of the region's executive branch or apparatus. The executive body at the regional level is called the district chair's office (*Aparatul Presedintelui raionului*).

The executive body is responsible for the administration of regional affairs and implementation of the decisions of the district council.

### Competences

- Management of property
- Regional public transport
- Spatial planning
- Economic development support
- Local gas and heat distribution
- Education building maintenance
- Cultural, tourism and sport management
- Social assistance

## The Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Administrative Unit (*Gagauz-Yeri*)

Gagauzia is an autonomous territorial unit having a special statute and representing a form of self-determination of the Gagauzian people. As a special territorial unit it has its own assembly, the **Gagauzian people's assembly** (in Gagauz: *HalkTopluşu*; in Romanian: *Adunarea Populara*), which enjoys lawmaking powers within its own jurisdiction, and a **governor** (Gagauz: *Başkan*; Romanian: *Guvernatorul Gagauziei*) holds the executive power. She/he is

elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. Permanent executive power in Gagauz-Yeri is exercised by an **executive committee** (*Bakannik Komiteti/Comitetul Executiv*). Its members are appointed by the governor or by a simple majority vote in the assembly at its first session. The executive committee ensures the application of the laws of the Republic of Moldova and those of the Gagauzian assembly.

### Competences

- Science
- Culture
- Education
- Housing management
- Urban planning
- Health services
- Physical culture and sports
- Local budget, financial and taxation activities
- Economy and ecology
- Labour relations and social security
- Own police force
- International and foreign policy

## **The municipality of Chisinau** (*municipiul Chisinau*) **and the municipality of Balti** (*municipiul Balti*)

The municipalities of Chisinau and Balti have competences of both local level and district level.

### **Competences**

- Social and economic development
- Maintenance of public roads
- Construction of hospitals, schools, roads
- Health care
- Maintenance of sanitation and social institutions
- Assistance to young families
- Social protection to the unemployed
- Public order
- Environment protection
- Youth activities and sports
- Secondary education and professional education



# Montenegro

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Podgorica



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
622,000



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2012	2016
LOCAL	21	23 <span>↗</span>



**Geographical size**  
13,812 km<sup>2</sup>

## Local level 23 municipalities (*opština*)

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

The **mayor** (*Predsjednik opštine* in municipalities and *gradonačelnik* in cities) is elected by the municipal assembly for a four-year mandate.

He/she is the municipality's executive body. The mayor proposes regulations to be adopted by the assembly and is responsible for their implementation. He/she also supervises the work of the municipal administration and can appoint or dismiss deputy mayors.

The capital city of Podgorica is made up of two districts each of which enjoys the status of a municipality.

### Competences

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



# The Netherlands

**The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy.**

The state of the Netherlands is a decentralised unitary state composed of municipalities (*gemeenten*) and provinces (*provincies*) and water boards (*waterschappen*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Amsterdam*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	418	↘ 390
REGIONAL	12	→ 12



**Population**  
*16,829,289 (3.3% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*41,540 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1958**

**26** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 390 municipalities (*gemeenten*)

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

The **college of mayor and aldermen** (*burgemeester en wethouders*) is the municipality's executive body. The college prepares and implements local council decisions and is responsible

for executing national policies at the local level (*medebewind*). Aldermen, whose number varies depending on the municipality, are elected by the council for a four-year mandate.

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

## Competences

- Urban planning\*
- (Social) Housing\*
- Civil engineering\*
- Transport: local roads, city transport and public transport\*\*
- Public health and youth care: prevention and education\*
- Public safety and order
- Disaster management \*
- Primary and secondary education: school buildings\*
- Employment
- Local and regional economy
- Childcare
- Social services and welfare\*
- Culture and sports
- Leisure, Recreation and Tourism
- Local media and broadcasting

\* See p.90

## Regional level 12 provinces (*provincies*)

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

The **provincial executive board** (*gedeputeerde staten*) is the province's executive body. It prepares and implements decisions taken by the

provincial states and is responsible for executing national policies at the provincial level. The provincial executive board is composed of the king's commissioner and of three to nine members designated by the provincial states.

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

### Competences\*

- Regional planning
- Environment
- Culture
- Leisure and tourism
- Public transport, provincial road maintenance and traffic
- Energy
- Regional media and broadcasting

\* See p.90



# Norway

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Oslo*



**Currency**  
*Norwegian Krone (NOK)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
*5,092,000*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*

	2012		2016
LOCAL	430	↘	428
REGIONAL	19	→	19



**Geographical size**  
*32,387 km<sup>2</sup>*

## Local level 428 municipalities (*kommune*)

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

The **executive committee** (*formannskap*) is composed of members coming from the different political parties, based on the results obtained in the last local election. The committee prepares decisions concerning the local budget, as well as annual accounts and local taxes for the local council. It also makes decisions when it comes to less important or more urgent matters and monitors the administration's implementation of political decisions.

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

Three of the larger cities, Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, have a parliamentary system, whereby the local council elects a city government supported by a majority of councillors.

The **city government** heads the local administration, makes recommendations to the city council, and is responsible for carrying out its decisions. Following the 2015 local elections, Tromsø will return to the executive committee model by mid-2016.

The capital city of Oslo is divided into fifteen **boroughs**, each of which has a borough council, whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage.

### Competences

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

\* See p.90

## Regional level 19 counties (*fylkeskommune*)

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

The **executive committee** (*fylkesutvalget*) is composed of members designated by and from within the county council and meets at least once a month. Much like the municipality's executive committee, it prepares decisions on the county's budget, annual accounts and taxes. The executive committee also makes decisions on less important or more urgent matters and monitors the administration's implementation of political decisions.

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

The city of Oslo has the status of a municipality and of a county, and thus enjoys both the local and regional competences listed above.

Four of the counties, in addition to Oslo, have a parliamentary system, whereby the county council elects a county government supported by the majority of the councillors.

### Competences

- Secondary education
- Regional development
- Transport and environment
- Trade and industrial policy.
- Culture
- Dental health



# Poland

## Poland is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*gminy*), counties (*powiaty*) and regions (*voivodship-województwo*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Warsaw*



**Currency**  
*Polish Złoty (PLN)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	→	2016
LOCAL	2,479	→	2,479
INTERMEDIATE	379	↗	380
REGIONAL	16	→	16



**Population**  
*38,495,659 (7.6% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*312,679 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2004**

**51** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**18** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 2,479 municipalities (*gminy*)

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

The **mayor** (*wójt* in rural municipalities, *burmistrz* in urban ones and *prezydent miasta* in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants) is the local authority's single executive body. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term and

officially represents the municipality.

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

In Poland, 66 urban municipalities have a special status whereby they are responsible for competences usually exercised by counties. The capital city of Warsaw, which is divided into 18 districts, also has this special status and thus exercises the competences of both a municipality and a county.

### Competences

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



## Intermediate level 380 counties (*powiaty*), which includes the 66 municipalities with special status

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

The **executive board** (*zarząd powiatu*) is composed of the head of the county and deputies elected by and from

within the county council for a period of four years. This body is in charge of implementing council decisions.

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

### Competences

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

## Regional level 16 regions (*voivodship-województwo*)

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

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

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

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

### Competences

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



# Portugal

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Lisbon*



**Currency**  
*Euro (EUR)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	4,567	↘ 3,400
REGIONAL	2	→ 2



**Population**  
*10,427,301 (2.1% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*92,225 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1986**

**21** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 3,092 parishes (*freguesias*) and 308 municipalities (*municípios*)

### Parishes

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

The **executive committee** (*Junta de Freguesia*) is the parish's executive body and members are elected for a period of four years period by and from within the parish assembly's

members. The **executive committee** has responsibility for the preparation and implementation of parish assembly decisions.

The **president** (*Presidente da junta de Freguesia*) is elected for a four-year mandate and is selected as the electoral candidate as a result of being head of the list with the most votes. He/she chairs the executive committee.

### Competences

- Maintenance of roads and parks
- Culture and sports
- Environment
- Issuing of pet licences

## Municipalities

The **municipal assembly** (*Assembleia Municipal*) is composed of the presidents of the parishes located within each municipality's jurisdiction and of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. It is the municipality's deliberative body and monitors the activities of the executive council.

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

The **mayor** (*Presidente da Câmara Municipal*) is elected for a four-year mandate and is selected as the electoral candidate as a result of having been head of the list with the most votes during the election of the executive council. He/she presides over the work of executive council.

Alongside the municipalities and parishes, Portuguese local self-government units include other types of authorities, such as inter-municipal communities, associations of municipalities, big metropolitan areas and urban communities.

The role of these authorities is principally aimed at coordinating the municipal investments of inter-municipal interests. Their areas of competence also include strategic, economic, social and territorial management.

### Competences

- Education
- Energy
- Maintenance of roads and parks
- Social facilities for children, youth and seniors
- Culture and sports
- Environment
- Housing and urban planning
- Health Care (PHC)
- Procurement Contracts
- Civil engineering
- Community protection (municipal fire departments for example)
- Municipal police
- Town Twinning
- Local residence permits
- Infrastructure (water, waste, etc.)

## Regional level 2 autonomous regions (Açores and Madeira)

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

The **president** (*Presidente do Governo Regional*) co-presides over the regional government for a period of four years.



# Romania

## Romania is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*comune*), towns (*orase*), cities (*municipii*) and counties (*judete*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Bucharest*



**Currency**  
*Romanian Leu (RON)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	3,181	→ 3,181
REGIONAL	41	→ 41



**Population**  
*19,942,642 (3.9% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*238,391 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**2007**

**32** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**14** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

**Local level** 2,861 municipalities (*comune*), 217 towns (*orase*) and 103 cities (*municipii*)

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

The **mayor** (*primarul*) is the local authority's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is responsible for the local budget and public services. The mayor also represents the local authority vis-à-vis other authorities, represents the national government within the municipality, town or city, and cooperates with the decentralised departments of national government ministries and specialised units present within its jurisdiction.

## Competences

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

## Regional level 41 counties (*judete*)

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

The **president** (*presedinte*) heads the county council and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is in charge of the legal representation of the council vis-à-vis third parties. The president can delegate responsibilities to the two vice-presidents, appointed by the members of the county council.

The **prefect** (*prefect*) is appointed by the national government. The prefect is the guarantor of law and order at the local level and ensures the legality of the administrative acts adopted by local public administration authorities. He/she represents the national government within the county and ensures that national government strategies and programmes are implemented at the regional level. There are 42 prefects in total: one for each county and one for the capital city of Bucharest.

There is no subordination between local councils and county councils.

### Competences

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



# Serbia

## Serbia is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*opstina*), cities (*grad*) and autonomous provinces (*autonomne pokrajine*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	→	2016
LOCAL	174	→	174
REGIONAL	2	→	2



**Capital city**  
*Belgrade*



**Population**  
*9,468,000*



**Geographical size**  
*88,361 km<sup>2</sup>*



**Currency**  
*Serbian Dinar (RSD)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*

## Local level 174\* municipalities (*opstina*) and cities (*grad*)

The **municipal** or **city assembly** (*skupstina opstine* or *skupstina grada*) is composed of councillors elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The assembly enacts municipal or city statutes, rules of procedure, development programmes, the municipal budget, urban planning and other municipal regulations. It also appoints and dismisses the mayor, the deputy mayor, the members of the municipal or city council and the president of the assembly.

The **municipal** or **city council** (*opstinsko* or *gradsko vece*) is composed of members elected by the municipal or city assembly by secret ballot for a period of four years. It monitors the work of the municipality's administration and is chaired by the mayor. The council has a legally defined role to propose draft decisions (including draft

budget proposal) to the assembly, to take decisions on appeal in relation to administrative procedures, and to assist the mayor in his work

The **mayor** (*predsednik opstine* in municipalities or *gradonacelnik* in cities) is the executive body of the city or municipality and is elected by the assembly for a period of four years. The mayor represents the city or municipality, chairs the city or municipal council, implements city or municipal assembly decisions, and dictates the work of the local administration. He/she proposes the deputy-mayor and the members of the city or municipal council to the assembly.

### Competences

- Tourism
- Public transport (including waterway line transport) and taxi services
- Urban planning and residential buildings (shared competence with central authorities, the local governments are in charge of investment and the maintenance of buildings)
- Primary education and primary healthcare, sport
- Social services and protection
- Communal services (waste, energy efficiency, water, electricity, transport, markets, parks, green public spaces, public parking, cemeteries, spatial planning)
- Additional competences\*

\* See p.90

The capital city of Belgrade and 25 other local authorities have city status and therefore have an additional competence: the communal police.

The city of Belgrade, as a capital city, has additional competences e.g. in the field of water, fire protection, and construction.

## Regional level 2 autonomous provinces (*Autonomna Pokrajina Vojvodina* and *Autonomna Pokrajina Kosovo-Metohija*)

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

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

The autonomous province of Vojvodina generates its own revenue and thus provides its municipalities with the financial resources usually allocated by the national government.

### **Note from the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia**

Kosovo-Metohija is an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia and, in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, adopted on 10 June 1999, it is under the interim civilian and military administration of the UN. Serbia's state policy determines that Republic of Serbia will never recognise the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo and asserts that the future status of the southern Serbian province can only be defined within the framework of adequate principles and norms of the United Nations and other international organisations, with the respect of the constitutional order of the Republic of Serbia. Given this specific situation, further data on the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija cannot be provided.

### **Competences**

- Spatial planning, regional development and construction of facilities
- Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries, veterinary
- Environment
- Water
- Tourism, hotels and restaurants, spas and health resorts
- Industry and handcraft
- Road, water and railway transport maintenance
- Social welfare
- Health care
- Education
- Employment
- Science and technology
- Economy and privatisation
- Mining and Energy
- Culture
- Human and minority rights, support to religious communities



# Slovakia

## Slovakia is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*obec*) and self-governing regions (*samosprávny kraj*).



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Bratislava



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	→	2016
LOCAL	2,930	→	2,930
REGIONAL	8	→	8



**Population**  
5,415,949 (1.1% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
49,035 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**13** Seats in the  
European Parliament

**9** Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

**Local level** 2,751 municipalities\* (*obec*), 140 cities (*mesto*) and 39 city districts (*mestská časť*)

The **local council** (*obecné zastupiteľstvo* in municipalities, *mestské zastupiteľstvo* in cities and *miestne zastupiteľstvo* in city districts) is the local authority's deliberative body. It is composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years.

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

and executes the tasks according to local council decisions.

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

### Competences\*

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

\* See p.90



Bratislava and Košice have two levels of self-government: the **magistrate** (*magistrát*), which represents the city as a whole, and **city districts** (*mestská časť*). These city districts are responsible for issues of local significance such as urban planning, local road maintenance, budget, local ordinances, park maintenance and public safety.

## Regional level 8 self-governing regions (*samosprávny kraj*)

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

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

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

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

### Competences

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



# Slovenia

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Ljubljana



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	211 ↗	212



**Population**  
2,061,085 (0.4% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
20,273 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**2004**

**8**

Seats in the  
European Parliament

**7**

Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level 212 municipalities (občin)

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

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

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

### Competences

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

The capital city of Slovenia, Ljubljana, and 10 other municipalities have the status of **urban municipality** (*mestna občina*). A municipality can acquire the status of urban municipality if it has a minimum of 20,000 inhabitants and 15,000 jobs.

Urban municipalities have more competences than the other municipalities, including responsibility for urban transport, hospitals, public services, culture, radio, television, press, sports and recreation.



# Spain

## Spain is a unitary state

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



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Madrid



**Currency**  
Euro (EUR)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	8,169 ↗	8,176
REGIONAL	19 →	19



**Population**  
46,507,760 (9.2% EU)



**Vote**  
non-compulsory



**Geographical size**  
505,970 km<sup>2</sup>



EU Member State since  
**1986**

**54** Seats in the  
European Parliament

**21** Seats in the  
European Committee  
of the Regions

## Local level (8,176) 8,124 municipalities (*municipios*) and 52\* county council (*diputaciones, consejos and cabildos*)

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

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

The **mayor** (*alcalde*) or **president** (*presidente*) is the head of the executive body. He/she is appointed by and from within the local council and is assisted by a number of councillors which he/she nominates and can dismiss. The mayor also chairs the local council.

### Competences

*In every local authority*

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

*In local authorities of over 5,000 inhabitants - in addition to the aforementioned*

- Public libraries
- Green areas
- Local police

*In local authorities of over 20,000 inhabitants - in addition to the aforementioned*

- Social services
- Fire prevention
- Sporting facilities

*In local authorities of over 50,000 inhabitants - in addition to the aforementioned*

- Public transport
- Protection of the environment

\* See p.90

## Regional level 17 autonomous communities (*comunidades autónomas*) and 2 autonomous cities (*ciudades autónomas*)

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

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

The **president** is elected by the regional assembly for a four-year mandate. The president manages and

coordinates the work of the regional government council and represents the autonomous community vis-à-vis the national government.

The autonomous communities can create their own police force.

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

### Competences

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



# Sweden

## Sweden is a unitary state

composed of municipalities (*kommuner*), county councils (*landsting*) and regions (*regioner*).



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Stockholm*



**Currency**  
*Swedish Krona (SEK)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	290	→ 290
REGIONAL	20	→ 20



**Population**  
*9,644,864 (1.9% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*438,574 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1995**

**20** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**12** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 290 municipalities (*kommuner*)

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

The **municipal executive committee** (*kommunstyrelsen*) is composed of members appointed for a period of four years by the municipal assembly based on the share of seats obtained by each party within the municipal assembly. The municipal executive committee heads and coordinates

the municipal administration, supervises the activities of the specialised committees, drafts the municipal budget as well as prepares and implements municipal council decisions.

It is presided over by a **chair** (*kommunstyrelsens ordförande*), the highest political representative of the municipality, which can be referred to in other countries as the "mayor". However, in some Swedish municipalities, the "mayor" is the chair of the municipal assembly (*kommunfullmäktiges ordförande*).

## Competences

### *Mandatory competences*

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

The **specialised committees** (*nämnder*) are composed of members appointed for a four-year mandate by the municipal assembly. The committees are responsible for

assisting the municipal executive committee in the preparation and implementation of decisions made by the municipal assembly.

#### *Optional competences*

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

## Regional level 11 county councils (*landsting*) and 9 regions (*regioner*)

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

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

#### **Competences**

##### *Mandatory competences*

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

##### *Optional competences*

- Regional development
- Culture
- Tourism

The **executive committee** (*landstingsstyrelsen* for county councils and *regionstyrelsen* for regional councils) is appointed for four years by the county or regional council assembly based on the share of seats obtained by each party within the assembly. This executive body is responsible for the preparation and implementation of county or regional council assembly decisions. It also supervises the activities of the specialised committees, which are chaired by what can be considered in English as the “president” of the county council or region.

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



# Switzerland

**Switzerland is a federal state** where political power is shared between the confederation, cantons and communes.



**State structure**  
federal



**Capital city**  
Bern



**Currency**  
Swiss Franc (CHF)



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
8,211,700



**Vote**  
non-compulsory

	2012		2016
LOCAL	2,551	↘	2,324
REGIONAL	26	→	26



**Geographical size**  
41,285 km<sup>2</sup>

## Local level 2,324 municipalities

There is no single municipal system in Switzerland. There are two types of municipal parliaments (*parlements communaux*): the municipal assembly (system of direct democracy) which is the most common (4 out of 5 municipalities) and the general or municipal council (parliament composed of elected representatives; its name can vary from one canton to another), mainly in cities. Furthermore, and depending on the canton, municipalities of up to 1,000 inhabitants can either have a municipal assembly or a general or municipal council. Over and above this number of inhabitants, it must be a municipal council, a deliberative body composed of elected officials representing the citizens.

The **municipal assembly** is composed of citizens who have the right to vote and who wish to participate in the municipality's legislative branch by

ruling on municipal affairs (direct democracy). The citizens nominate the executive and can take political decisions themselves, not through representatives. This parliament of the people is established in several Swiss communes.

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

The executive power has also diverse designations. The **administrative**

### Competences

- Municipal heritage
- Local taxation
- Education (School operations)
- Community policing and traffic monitoring
- Civil protection
- Spatial planning
- Road infrastructures
- Water and sewage networks
- Streets and roads
- Protection of the environment
- Sports
- Culture
- Energy
- Social welfare



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

or municipal council, implements the municipal decisions and budget, and represents the municipality.

In Switzerland, municipalities have extremely varied competences and autonomy, depending on the canton's legislation.

## Regional level 6 half-cantons and 20 cantons

In reality there are no differences between half-cantons and cantons. The separation of cantons is historical, in particular due to religious reasons, following a reform in 1536 which affected part of Switzerland.

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

The **state council** (called "executive council" in the canton of Berne) is the executive body of the canton and is composed of members elected by the great council or by citizens, with differing mandate durations depending on the canton. The state council is divided into different departments and is headed by a president.

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

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

As federal states, cantons are sovereign local and regional authorities with great legislative, executive and judicial autonomy and a constitution. They are sovereign insofar as their sovereignty is not limited by the Federal Constitution and they exercise all rights that are not delegated to the Confederation (art. 3 of the Federal Constitution).

### Competences

- Public health
- Primary, secondary and post-secondary education (hautes écoles)
- Social policy
- Police
- Justice
- Spatial planning
- Environment
- Cantonal taxes



# Turkey

## Turkey is a unitary state

composed of villages (*köy*), municipalities (*belediye*) and special provincial administrations (*il özel idaresi*)\*.



**State structure**  
unitary



**Capital city**  
Ankara



**Currency**  
Turkish Lira (TRY)



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	37,336	19,695



**Population**  
75,837,000



**Vote compulsory**



**Geographical size**  
783,562 km<sup>2</sup>

**Local level** 18,247 villages (*köy*), 1,397 municipalities (*belediye*), and 51 special provincial administrations (*il özel idaresi*)

## Villages

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

The **village council** (*köy derneği*) is one of the decision-making bodies of the village and is composed of citizens of 18 years or older.

The **village executive committee** (*ihiyar heyeti*) is the main executive body of the village.

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

## Competences

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

## Municipalities

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

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

\* See p.90

less than 100,000 have five executive committee members while those with more than 100,000 inhabitants have seven members.

The **mayor** (*belediye başkanı*) is the executive body of the municipality. He/she is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years. The mayor

heads the municipal administration and represents the local authority.

Municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants must also open shelters for women and children.

## Special provincial administrations

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

The **provincial executive committee** (*il encümeni*) is composed of ten members. Five members are elected each year by the provincial council from among its own members via secret ballot. The other five are appointed for a one year period by the governor, from among the heads of unit of the special provincial administration. The head of the financial services unit is mandatorily one of them.

The **governor** (*vali*) is the head of the special provincial administration. He/she is appointed by the national government and represents the special provincial administration. Governors represent the central government apparatus across the provinces, whereas district governors do so for districts.

In 2014, the status of 30 provinces was converted into that of a **metropolitan municipality system** and their special provincial administration was abolished. Municipalities enjoy full administrative and financial autonomy.

## Competences

- Health and social assistance
- Public works
- Culture
- Education
- Agriculture and animal husbandry
- Economic and commercial matters
- Urban planning for villages



# Ukraine

## Ukraine is a unitary state

composed of villages (*sela*), towns (*selyshcha*), cities (*mista*), districts (*rayony*) and regions (*oblasti*)\*.



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*Kiev*



**Currency**  
*Hryvnia (UAH)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**



**Population**  
*44,941,000*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*

	2012		2016
LOCAL	11,517	↘	10,885
INTERMEDIATE	488	→	488
REGIONAL	24	↗	25



**Geographical size**  
*603,500 km<sup>2</sup>*

**Local level** 10,885 municipal councils, among them 9,644 village councils (*sil'ska rada*), 783 town councils (*selyshchna rada*), and 458 city councils (*miska rada*)

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

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

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

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

## Competences

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

\* See p.90

## Intermediate level 488 districts (*rayony*)

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

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

### Competences

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

## Regional level 24 regions (*oblasti*) and 1 autonomous republic (Crimea)

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

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

### Competences

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



# United Kingdom

**The United Kingdom is a unitary state**

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



**State structure**  
*unitary*



**Capital city**  
*London*



**Currency**  
*Pound Sterling (GBP)*



**Number of Sub-national governments**

	2012	2016
LOCAL	433	↘ 419
REGIONAL	4	→ 4



**Population**  
*64,308,261 (12.7% EU)*



**Vote**  
*non-compulsory*



**Geographical size**  
*248,528 km<sup>2</sup>*



*EU Member State since*  
**1973**

**73** *Seats in the European Parliament*

**23** *Seats in the European Committee of the Regions*

## Local level 419 local authorities\*

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

**England** has 27 county councils, 36 metropolitan district councils, 201 non-metropolitan district councils (local authorities outside of big cities) and 56 unitary authorities (a one tier local authority). In the United Kingdom's capital city of London, there are 33 boroughs, including the City of London, which is the city's financial district.

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

**Scotland** has 32 single tier unitary authorities. In Scotland delivery of services is becoming more complex with Community Planning Partnerships bringing together by law the municipalities with the other

### Competences\*

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

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

\* See p.90

public and voluntary bodies of that local area. Furthermore in addition to transfer of some services to the central level there is now integration of national and local services of social care and health.

**Northern Ireland** has 11 district councils whose competencies are more limited than elsewhere in the UK, but who have been reformed in April 2015, restructured from 26 to 11 authorities, to possess new powers including Planning, Community Investment and Economic Development, in addition to Regulatory, Registration, Enforcement, Animal Welfare, Refuse, Waste Management, Building Control, Leisure, Arts and Environmental Health.

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

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

#### *Counties*

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

#### *Districts*

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

## **Nations and regions** England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

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

In the rest of England, legislation could allow for the setting-up of

elected regional assemblies, but only if there is a positive popular vote by referendum. At present, no regional assembly has been set up and there are no plans to do so.

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

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

Since 1999, the **Scottish Parliament**, with a Scottish executive government has had full legislative powers over a wide range of matters – effectively, all issues except those reserved to the UK Parliament. Its exclusive competences include education, health, environment, agriculture,

justice, social work, planning and local government. A further transfer of mainly tax and borrowing powers to the Scottish Parliament was enacted via the Scotland Act 2012 and following the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 a new package is currently (2016) being discussed in the UK parliament.

The **Northern Ireland Assembly** also came fully into being in 1999. Its main competences include the economy, foreign direct investment, justice, policing, education, health, regional infrastructure and agriculture, with some planning and economy powers now devolved to Councils. From April 2015, there is the possibility of further powers being transferred to it at a later date.



# Notes

## Belgium

### Local level

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

### Intermediate level

Brussels-Capital is not a province, but a region. It does however have special competences normally allocated to provinces.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Local level

There are some exceptions for certain mayoral elections. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the mayor of Mostar and the mayor of Sarajevo are not directly elected. Instead they are elected by the cities' assemblies. In the Republic of Srpska, this is also the case for the mayor of the city of East Sarajevo.

## Bulgaria

### Local level

The service provision of these activities is shared between the municipalities and the national government.

## Cyprus

### Local level

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

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

The consultation with the central government, for the reform of local self-government, is still ongoing. Three Bills of Law have already been sent to the House of Parliament, which will be examining them as of January 2016. The Bills provide for compulsory clustering of services between municipalities and/or communities, to jointly promote various competences, policies, projects and services, with a view to merging these clusters into new entities.

## Denmark

### Local level

A new municipal structure was implemented in January 2007. The new structure reduced the number of municipalities but increased the overall sizes. This model requires municipalities to have a minimum of 20,000 inhabitants. Municipalities with a population of less than 20,000 are accepted as long as they establish a legally binding cooperation with a larger municipality.

### Regional level

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

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

The Faroese Municipal Organisation ([www.ksf.fo](http://www.ksf.fo)) has the status of observer to the work of CEMR.

## France

### Local level

There are different levels of intercommunal structures:

- The metropolises (minimum population of 400,000 inhabitants)
- The urban communities (minimum population of 250,000 inhabitants)
- The conurbation communities (minimum population of 50,000 inhabitants)
- The commune communities (minimum population of 15,000 inhabitants)

### Regional level

The law of 16 January 2015 has reduced the number of regions from 22 to 13. Six regions have kept their original boundaries, others have merged with one or two other regions. This new delimitation entered into force on 1 January 2016.

## Georgia

### Local level

Tbilisi has also broader functions such as the organisation of local business support programmes and social protection. The mayor is the head of the municipal cabinet, which is composed of the mayor, three vice-mayors and the heads of the sectoral departments, in which can be included transport, social affairs and architecture. Each department has its own head and staff.

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## Germany

### Local level

11,313 (31.08.2015) municipalities (*Gemeinden*) of which 2,060 (01.01.2015) are cities (*Städte*).

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

### Intermediate level

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

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## Hungary

### General note

The new Hungarian Act on Local Government was released in 2011 and has led to the recentralisation of certain local competences, such as primary education, due to current budget restrictions being experienced in Hungary.

### Local level

A municipality can become a city at the initiative of its body of representatives, depending on its level of development and its impact at the regional level.

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## Ireland

### General note

The city and county councils are considered as the primary units of local government in Ireland and, between them, cover the entire area and population of the country.

The Local Government Reform Act (2014) gave legal effect to a major programme of reform in relation to local government structures, functions, funding, governance and operational arrangements and reduced the total number of local authorities per se from 114 to 31.

### Local level

The Local Government Reform Act gave legal affect to the merger of city/county councils in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford reducing the overall number of city and county authorities from 34 to 31.

Each county has at least one council, although Dublin County, for example, has a total of three councils, on top of a city council.

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## Israel

### General note

Municipalities and local councils are assembled within the Union of Local Authorities in Israel, established in 1938, while regional councils are represented by the Association of Regional Councils.

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## Malta

### Local level

In conjunction with any competent authority.

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## Moldova

### General note

The first tier of local government includes the localities of Transnistria region whose statute is not defined yet.

### Local level

Communes consist of two or several villages in one administrative-territorial structure.

Out of the 61 cities, 5 are officially recognised municipalities, of which two are located in the region with a special status, allowing them to fall outside the control of the Moldavian government (Transnistria). The other is located in the autonomous region Gagauzia.

All local governments of the first tier have the same competences and the same degree of local autonomy, which is quite low.

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## Netherlands

### Local level

Competences shared with the national or provincial government.

### Regional level

Competences mostly shared with the national government.

## Norway

### General note

Both municipalities and counties can themselves choose to implement a parliamentary system. The proposal simply has to be put forward in one election period, although it does not require a majority vote, and can be implemented after the next election.

## Serbia

### Local level

174 is the number of local units according to the Law on Territorial Organisation of the Republic of Serbia (including Kosovo-Metohija), Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 129/07.

### Local level

Additional competences:

- Environment
- Local and non-categorised roads and streets
- Local economic development and tourism
- protection and natural disasters
- Agricultural land, pasture land and cooperatives
- Legal assistance to citizens
- Local public property and construction land
- Protection and development of culture

- Support to people with disabilities and vulnerable groups, child protection
- Human and minority rights

## Slovakia

### Local level

Municipalities can gain city status upon request and as long as they meet the criteria specified within municipal law.

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

## Spain

### Local level

The 52 county councils are composed of 38 county councils and of the 3 provincial councils of the Basque Country, the 7 county councils of the Canary Island, and the 4 county councils of the Balearic Island.

## Turkey

### General note

Turkey is administratively divided into 81 provinces and 919 districts.

## Ukraine

### General note

In 2015 the consolidation of territorial communities started in Ukraine which led to 159 consolidated communities being established (21 cities, 45 towns, and 93 villages).

## United Kingdom

### Local level

Combined authorities consist of two or more English councils (outside London only). The creation of a combined authority is voluntary but its formation must be approved by Parliament. The combined authority has the power to exercise any function of its constituent councils that relates to economic development and regeneration, and any of the functions that are available to the transport authorities; combined authorities are encouraged to borrow from EU institutions for social and environmental schemes which meet EU objectives. The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill 2015–16 is intended to allow the introduction of directly-elected mayors to combined authorities in England and to make it possible for combined authorities to exercise a wider range of powers, including those otherwise delivered nationally. Since 2011, the following combined authorities have been created: Greater Manchester, North East, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, and West Yorkshire; others are being planned from 2016 onwards.

Unitary authorities have the competences of both counties and districts.

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## Disclaimer

While we strive with utmost care and concern to provide accurate and timely information, we cannot exclude the possibility of inadvertent factual or contextual inaccuracies, incompleteness or technical errors for which we apologise. Similarly, inaccuracies may result from developments occurring after the editorial deadline.

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