



Local & Regional
Europe

CEMR study

The legal status of national associations
of local and regional governments



Context

On the request of member associations, CEMR conducted a survey on the **legal status of national associations of local and regional governments** (referred to as “the association(s)”, “CEMR members”, or “national associations” here below). This publication presents the survey results collected in 2015. We received responses from 25 associations from 19 different countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The legal status of national associations of local and regional governments is fundamental for understanding their mission, and therefore the one of CEMR. This report indicates the national associations’ legal status (1) and their role (2), with data on their statutory levels, conditions for membership, staff employed by the associations, their composition, and their main activities. All the responses given by the associations are presented in the annex table.

This report analyses how CEMR associations are empowered to defend regional and local interests, comparing the legal status on which national associations are established, whether their membership is mandatory or voluntary, their size in terms of number of employees, etc. This study also highlights CEMR and its members’ role as legitimate representatives of local and regional governments at national, European, and international level.



CEMR and its members are not just any lobbying organisation in Brussels, they represent local public authorities and eventually the citizens who elected their leaders. It is crucial to acknowledge this difference in our mission. 19 countries is an important geographical scale but a more comprehensive overview is sought for the next edition(s), pursuing to ultimately include all our members.

The legal status of the national associations of local and regional governments

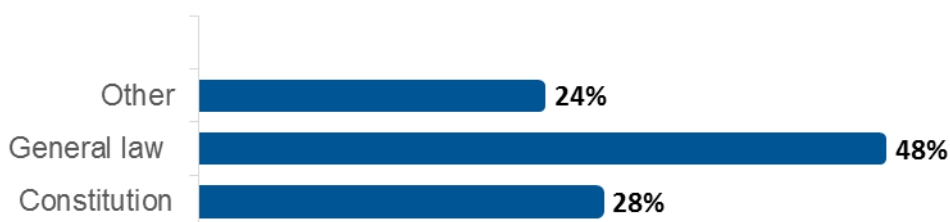
The general right of local authorities to associate is crucial for local autonomy, as recognised in article 10 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe¹: “The entitlement of local authorities to belong to an association for the protection and promotion of their common interests and to belong to an international association of local authorities shall be recognised in each State”.

Article 10.2 leaves to individual member states the choice of means, legislative or otherwise, whereby the principle is given effect. However the type of law which creates the association or the general right to associate, the specificity of the provision of the document upon which the association is established, and the legal status *per se* of the associations (public law, civil law, non-profit associations of legal person, etc.) are contributing factors to the importance and role of the national association of local and regional governments.

At which legislative level / legal force is your association anchored?

The capacity of national associations to assemble their members and to influence national policies depends as well on “the structure, the story, the local and regional cultural context, the country priorities and the governance reform programmes”². That stressed, the legislative level in which the association is anchored can provide more – or less – legal security and force.

The result of the survey is extremely positive as a vast majority of the respondents, more than 70%, geographically balanced (North, South as well as East and West), have their association, or the right of their members to associate, anchored in a legal framework.



More than half are anchored to a general law adopted by a legislative body of their respective country of origin, either public or private. This is the case, among others, for Denmark, Estonia, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain (the Association of the Basque Municipalities - EUDEL), and Italy (based on the Italian civil code) for instance.

¹ European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe:
<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2561161&SecMode=1&DocId=2157286&Usage=2>

² FOGAR, PLATFORMA, Study on national associations of regional authorities in the European Union partner's countries,
<http://www.regionsunies-fogar.org/images/Documentos/ORUFOGARFinalReport.pdf>

Small historical aparté:
CEMR as well was created at the initiative of mayors. In 1951, around 60 mayors from Switzerland, France, Italy, and Benelux, reunited in Geneva had this vision, 40 years ahead, of a Europe for citizens based on the subsidiarity

None of the respondents indicated regulatory provisions as their basis, whereas “voluntary association” was repeatedly cited in the “other” category. The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) is not anchored on any constitutional, general law or regulation, but on a decision of mayors. The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG, Belgium) was also primarily set up directly by mayors.

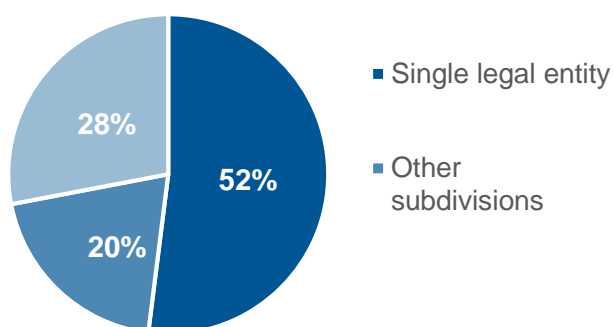
The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) also signified that as a voluntary association, with all local and regional authorities as members, KS is not established by any legal adoption. For the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, COSLA is a voluntary association of Local Authorities of Scotland: “it is not a NGO, nor a private law entity but a public body that is legally inseparable from the municipalities it is made of”.



To be noted that all national associations are a voluntary association in the sense that their membership is on a voluntary basis. The association can be stipulated (per name or in general) in laws or regulations, without imposing membership upon local authorities. **All respondents to the survey indicated that their membership is voluntary**, with one remark concerning the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (KUNNAT): their membership is voluntary but since one of their member is the municipal employers organisation, and given it is compulsory for local authorities to be part of the employer organisation, all municipalities are members.

Can also be found in the “other” category, **associations with multiple status**: they are composed of different entities. This is the case of KUNNAT which is composed of separated operational divisions (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.) and each is based on different legal framework, including general law. 7 respondent associations have indicated such a division e.g. the Local Government Association (LGA-United Kingdom), the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB), or the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS). Five other are composed by subdivisions such as regional federations, associations, or territorial subdivisions in Austria, Belgium, and Germany.

The main composition of CEMR members remain the single legal entity.



Lastly, **7 associations from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, and Poland indicated that they derive their legal status from the Constitution.** The associations anchored in Constitutional law are more protected than those which are not anchored, given that the Constitution is the highest level of legislation: it cannot be overruled neither derogated by any inferior law (Gicquel, Hauriou, 1983). Moreover, the mention of the national association in the Constitution is an indicator that the central government recognises the importance of the associations as an agent to promote and defend local interests. In these cases they are acknowledged as associations “different” from other types of associations.

The survey results nuanced this affirmation as one of the biggest association, in terms of staff as well as activities covered, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) is yet a private organisation that was formed by the wish of their members: no law stipulates that SALAR needs to exist, nor were they founded by any legislative body.

How specific is the provision of the document?

Nuances are important to apprehend the complexity of the role and status of national associations. Notwithstanding, especially for those countries where the tradition of local autonomy or decentralisation is quite new, the legal framework – and its level of detail – can play a major role in the legitimacy of the national association (Shafritz, 1988³).

The legitimacy to unite local governments, to represent them and to even take binding decisions is key. If there is not a strong basis of local autonomy through culture, tradition and heritage, regulatory and legal frameworks need to palliate. The more specific the document is, the more the association is supposed to have the credibility and capacity to perform.

When **the document foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local or regional authorities**, it is assumed that it tends to credit competences and authority to the association. 40% of the respondents fall under this category.

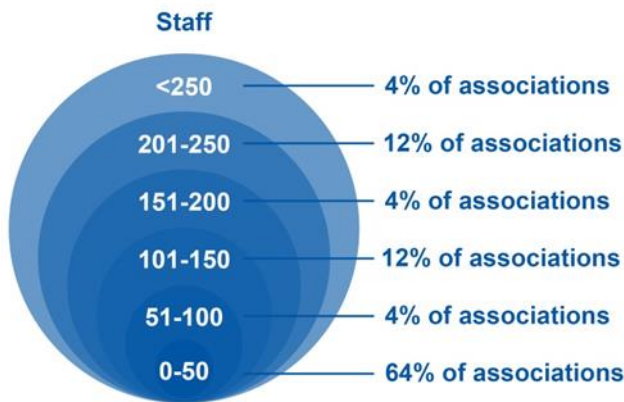


Then, **the general right of local and regional governments to associate** is the most common basis (44%) for the creation of CEMR members, which is in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe.

But the survey actually reveals that there is no correlation between the specificity of the document and the size (if the number of staff⁴ can be considered as an indicator of the number of competences and the size of the activity). Indeed, small associations as well as bigger ones are based on specific provisions, and small associations as well as bigger ones are based on general ones... There is no trend in terms of geographical localisation or structure of the state. Actually, some of the biggest associations like the Swedish one is part of the few associations based on the less specific provision i.e. **the general right of natural or legal person to associate.**

³ On the concept of the legitimacy, the author details a valuable reasoning that can be applied to national associations.

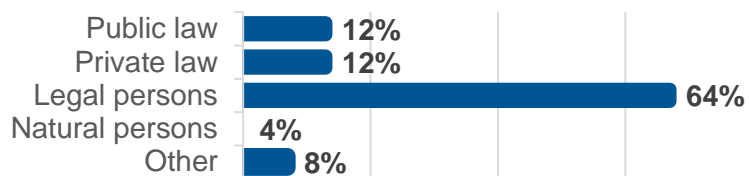
⁴ Numbers to be carefully used as they would need to be relative to the number of members of the associations, the number of their members, the level they represent, etc.



Regarding the staff of national associations, there is an important variation among CEMR members. Two main groups can nevertheless be distinguished. The first group (0 - 50 employees) represents more than 60% of the respondents with no geographical correlation. The second group, with the higher number of employees (101 - >250) represents 32%. In this group we mainly find Northern and Western country associations e.g. KUNNAT, LGA, VNG, KS, and the Danish Regions (*Regioner*). Among these, SALAR counts the biggest number of employees: 380.

What is the legal status of your association?

Last but certainly not least, depending on their legal status (public law, civil law, non-profit associations of legal person or other) the associations have different responsibilities towards society, power and capacity to influence governments.



Nearly 40% of the associations are divided between organisations based on public law, private law, natural person, and others.

Public law is the law that regulates the relationship between the state and its citizens (Constitutional law, Administrative law and Criminal law), while private law is concerned with the rights and duties of individuals towards each other. The state's involvement in this area of law is confined to providing a civilised method of resolving disputes (Smith, 2013). It is difficult to make a common comparison since the standards of public law or private law can vary widely depending on the country.

It was displayed from the data of our survey that most of the associations – more than 60% – are non-profit associations of legal persons (e.g. municipalities or regions). In common law, non-profit organisations are subjects of private law existing for some purpose other than profit making ; meaning that they could be considered as other non – profit organisations.

However, national associations of local and regional governments belong to a specific **hybrid category** as they are also considered as contributory organisation whose legal basis is provided by budgetary rules of the state, regions and municipalities. Because of the area of their activity, they are often subsumed under non-profit sector, but they differ from other subjects in the non-profit sector by both their connection to public budget and their overall conception (Ronovska, 2010).

This means that national associations have more capacity and law protection than other regular non-profit associations, since **they defend and promote a public body**.

The role of the national associations of local and regional governments

The legal status stressed the specificity of national associations and their role in the promotion of local autonomy. As already revealed above, the legal status has not as an evident impact as it could be assumed on the competences and the role of the national associations. What about their mission? The next part of this report is a snapshot of the main activities of the national associations.

What are the main activities/ missions of your association?

The questionnaire offered 6 activities as multiple choice answers, with the possibility to choose if it is a main or secondary activity, or if it is not covered at all. Some associations also specified additional ones.

100% of the respondents did mark **“Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interests of your members”** as number one key activity. This is clearly the *raison d'être* of the national associations. CEMR could not stress it more: our members are not as any other lobbying organisation in Brussels, and our members do not represent a sectorial or thematic approach of the local work; CEMR represents all local authorities, from all levels.

The second activity most covered by absolutely all respondents in all countries is **“Exchanges of good practices and knowledge-sharing”**. The nuance in this case is that for 52% of the respondents, it is a main activity while it is a secondary one for the rest. There is no geographical correlation or link to the size of the associations. For the Finnish, the Bulgarian, both Austrian, but also the Italian association for instance, this activity is considered as a main one. While for the associations from Denmark, Portugal, Luxembourg, Latvia, Iceland, Spain, or Croatia, this activity is secondary.

Unsurprisingly, these two activities are also the two pillars on which CEMR mission is based.

Another result that should be emphasised is that **for those countries with more than one association there can be different positions regarding the main activities**. For example in Belgium, for the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) and the Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (AVCB-VSGB) the exchange of good practice and knowledge sharing activities is considered as the main activity. Though the Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW) considers it a secondary activity. A similar fact is found in the UK: for COSLA this activity remains secondary, while for the LGA it is a prior activity. To give an example on another activity, for both the German association of CEMR (RGRE) and the German Association of Cities (*Staedtetag*), publications (e.g. newspapers, and other) are a secondary activity while it is a main one for the German County Association (*Landkreistag*).

CEMR work is organised around two main pillars:

1. Influencing European policy and legislation in all areas having an impact on municipalities and regions;
2. Providing a forum for debate between local and regional authorities via their national representative associations.



The activity of **Publications** is actually the third in terms of priority. All respondents have ticked it, as main or secondary, except the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. The expression “Publish or Perish” is used in the academic world, but publication is an essential factor of publicity, notoriety, and credibility for any group or organisation. A publication is a vehicle for information and the fact that all the associations but one cover it as an activity is relevant. 6 associations even estimated it as a main activity: all three Belgium associations, CEMR Italian section (AICCRE), the German County Association (*Landkreistag*), and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

The three other activities are: “Training/ capacity building” (one fifth of the associations did not tick it), “Research and studies” (7 associations do not cover this activity) and “Negotiate the paying of local/regional governments’ workforce” (8 associations do not undertake this activity).

Negotiate the paying of local/regional government workforce is a heterogeneous activity, since almost half of the associations (12) address this issue as a main mission. Among them, we find SALAR, KUNNAT, LGA and COSLA. 8 associations do not cover it at all. This can be explained by the fact that not all associations have the competence to do so. In general, such a function is established by law. An example is the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). As a voluntary association, KS is not established by any legal adoption but one exception is that a provision in the Local Government Act gives KS the competence to bind its members on the results of collective bargaining agreements.

It can be even vaguer: The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities plays such a role but on the basis of a legal right given to “an” association, without stipulating COSLA specifically. Still, there is a legal framework for carrying out such an activity. Another example is provided by Estonia: there is a specific provision in the State Budget Act stipulating the involvement of the national association in negotiations over the equalisation fund and support fund of the state budget.

CEMR has also invested in research and studies, to back-up its advocacy work and boost the knowledge pillar. In a world of big on-line data and overwhelming researches and studies, the role of knowledge brokers (Meyer, Fisher, 2010) is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge research into policy and practice.

More than half of the respondents do take on **Research and Studies** as a secondary activity, 5 associations considering it as a main activity in Italy, Croatia, Austria, Portugal, and Finland. On the 7 associations which do not cover it at all, 3 have less than 26 employees, one is COSLA (50 employees) and the remaining three are the German associations, among which the German Association of Cities, the only “big” association not carrying out such a mission. This activity is usually linked to Publications, even if for some larger associations there is a dedicated team for research *per se*, as a service to members. The LGA for instance has a Research and Information team of around 20 staff. They notably developed an online tool named Local Government Inform (LG Inform)⁵. It is a benchmarking data service bringing together a range of key performance data for authorities, alongside contextual and financial information. Users can view data from over 1000 individual items, make comparisons between their authority and other councils or groups of councils, or construct their own reports bringing several data items together.

⁵ <http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform>

Training and capacity building is also an important topic for the associations, surprisingly not covered by all of them (5 out of 25 associations did not tick it). On the 5, there are all three German associations, as well as the Danish Regions, and COSLA (but the LGA considers it as a main activity). 80% associations do address it: 40% as a main activity and the other 40% as a secondary activity. There is no correlation with the size, the localisation of the associations, or with considerations based on need for capacity building. Indeed, this activity was marked either main and/ or secondary by associations that could be considered as displayers of good practices as well as more in need of them because starting from the scratch (e.g. the Balkan countries in terms of receiving refugees).

For example, SALAR, KUNNAT as well as EUDEL or the Croatian County Association (HRVZZ) has indicated it as main activity. As a secondary activity, we can find: the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (SAMBAND), the Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL), or the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, as well as the Association of Estonian Cities (ELL) or the National Association of the Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP).

Further activities have been pin pointed by the associations such as **providing advice, counselling to members** on all relevant topics related to local policy issues. The VVSG is dealing with about 35.000 requests for advice on a yearly basis. There are additional **service activities** that associations perform for their members, as underlined by KUNNAT. There is also providing **support to elected members** - particularly those not aligned to a main party, pointed out the LGA. Associations did also highlight as secondary activity their role as secretariat to the national delegation to the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE).

The Association of Estonian Cities shared an interesting tool, conforming the consultation requirement. This principle, inherent to the scope of local self-government, as well as the role of the associations in this process, is enshrined in the article 4 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The text provides that the manner and timing of consultation should be such that the local authorities have a real possibility to exercise influence. Such consultation should take place directly with the authority or authorities concerned or **indirectly through the medium of their associations** where several authorities are concerned.

In Estonia, the Draft Information System (*Eelnõude Infosüsteem*- EIS) provides access to all draft laws and other documents that have been submitted by government bodies for consultation and approval or sent to the Government. In addition, the system gives access to EU draft laws, as well as other documents related to EU decision-making process. The EIS allows users to follow proceedings of drafts, read all documents as well as comment upon them. The Association of Estonian Cities is playing a real role of counterpart: it is mandatory for the ministry responsible for drafting the law to write specific feedback and explain why the proposal of the association has been rejected if this is the case.

Question: is there a correlation between the size of the association and the number of activities covered?

On one hand, on the 8 bigger associations that have responded (with a number of staff >130), only two did not tick all 6 activities: the German Association of Cities, and the Danish regions. For the rest, all activities are always covered, with 4 or 5 activities indicated as main ones; the ones indicated as secondary are research and publications. On the other hand, on the 6 smaller associations (with a number of staff <16), only 2 have indicated that they are covering all of them: the Croatian County Association, and the Association of the Basque municipalities.

Conclusion

To conclude, a myriad of factors play a role in providing legitimacy, strength and performance to national associations. The comparative analysis of their legal status as well as their role pointed out that there is no one size fits all. The key conclusion though is that national associations of local and regional governments as well as their association at European level, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, are definitely not “any” non-profit organisation... They defend and promote public interests. As association members did call attention upon in their comments for additional activities: **our vital role is still, and always, to support and build the reputation of local government (LGA), and to defend the autonomy of the Local Democratic Power (ANMP).**

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ANNEX – The responses given by CEMR associations

Name of your organisation	1. What is the legal status of your association?	2. At which legislative level / legal force is your association anchored?	3. How specific is the provision of the document, upon which is your association established?	4. Is the membership in/ to the national association compulsory or voluntary?	5. How many staff does your organisation have?	6. Is your association composed of different legal entities?
Austrian Association of Municipalities (Austria)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	The constitution, a constitutional law or organic law	It foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate	Voluntary membership	13	Yes, other subdivisions (e.g. regional federations/ associations or territorial subdivisions)
Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (Austria)	Organisation based on public law	The constitution, a constitutional law or organic law	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	20	Yes, other subdivisions (e.g. regional federations/ associations or territorial subdivisions)
Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (Belgium)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	Set up by local authorities in 1913 in unitary Belgium, in 1994 reorganised in three autonomous associations	It foresees generally the right of local/regional governments to associate	Voluntary membership	130	No
Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia (Belgium)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate	Voluntary membership	60	No
Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (Belgium)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	Other :ASBL	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	26	Yes, other subdivisions (e.g. regional federations/ associations or territorial subdivisions)

Name of your organisation	1. What is the legal status of your association?	2. At which legislative level / legal force is your association anchored?	3. How specific is the provision of the document, upon which is your association established?	4. Is the membership in/ to the national association compulsory or voluntary?	5. How many staff does your organisation have?	6. Is your association composed of different legal entities?
National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	The constitution, a constitutional law or organic law	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	50	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (Finland)	Our legal status is officially based on private law, but partly we also act based on public law	Some parts of our association is anchored general law, some parts to decision by an executive body and some parts are not anchored at all to any of these.	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Mostly voluntary, but all municipalities are members. The municipal employer's organization is a part of our association and it is compulsory to be a member of the employers' organization.	225,6	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
Association of Estonian Cities (Estonia)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	11	No
Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (Iceland)	Organisation based on public law	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	25	No
CEMR Italian Section (AICCRE, Italy)	(Non- profit) association based on private/civil law	Italian civil code	It foresees generally the right of natural or legal persons to associate	Voluntary membership	10 part time	Yes, other subdivisions (e.g. regional federations/associations or territorial subdivisions)

Name of your organisation	1. What is the legal status of your association?	2. At which legislative level / legal force is your association anchored?	3. How specific is the provision of the document, upon which is your association established?	4. Is the membership in/ to the national association compulsory or voluntary?	5. How many staff does your organisation have?	6. Is your association composed of different legal entities?
Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (Luxemburg)	Organisation based on public law	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees generally the right of local/regional governments to associate	Voluntary membership	4	No
Association of Netherlands Municipalities-VNG (Netherlands)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	The VNG is not anchored on any constitutional, general law or regulation, but on a decision by mayors.	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	+/- 200	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities –KS (Norway)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	As a voluntary association, with all local and regional authorities as its members, KS is not established by any legal adoption. One exception thus is that a provision in the Local Government Act gives KS the competence to bind its members on the results of collective bargaining agreements	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	250	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
National Association of Portuguese Municipalities-ANMP (Portugal)	Organisation based on private/civil law	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association of local/regional authorities	Voluntary membership	24	No



Name of your organisation	1. What is the legal status of your association?	2. At which legislative level / legal force is your association anchored?	3. How specific is the provision of the document, upon which is your association established?	4. Is the membership in/ to the national association compulsory or voluntary?	5. How many staff does your organisation have?	6. Is your association composed of different legal entities?
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sweden)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	We are a private organisation that was formed by the wish of our members. It does not say in any law that SALAR needs to exist, nor were we founded by any legislative body.	It foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate	Voluntary membership	380	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
Local Government Association (United Kingdom)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.)	It foresees generally the right of local/regional governments to associate	Voluntary membership	250	Yes, separate/detached operational division (e.g. daughter/ sister company, trading arm, consultancy, etc.)
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities – COSLA (United Kingdom – Scotland)	(Non-profit) association of legal persons (e.g. municipalities/ regions)	Voluntary association of Municipalities	It foresees generally the right of local/regional governments to associate	Voluntary membership	50	No



7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (1/2)

Name of your organisation	Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interest of your members	Negotiate the paying of local/regional governments workforce	Training/ capacity building	Exchanges of good practices/ knowledge sharing	Research and studies	Publications (e.g. newspapers and other)
Austrian Association of Municipalities (Austria)	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (Austria)	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (Belgium)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities
Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia (Belgium)	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities
Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (Belgium)	1: main activity/activities	2: Negotiate the paying of local / regional governments workforce	2: Training/ Capacity building	1: main activity/activities		1: main activity/activities



7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (1/2)

Name of your organisation	Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interest of your members	Negotiate the paying of local/regional governments workforce	Training/ capacity building	Exchanges of good practices/ knowledge sharing	Research and studies	Publications (e.g. newspapers and other)
National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (Finland)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Association of Estonian Cities (Estonia)	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (Iceland)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
CEMR Italian Section (AICCRE), Italy	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities

7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (1/2)

Name of your organisation	Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interest of your members	Negotiate the paying of local/regional governments workforce	Training/ capacity building	Exchanges of good practices/ knowledge sharing	Research and studies	Publications (e.g. newspapers and other)
Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (Luxemburg)	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Association of Netherlands Municipalities-VNG (Netherlands)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities
Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities –KS (Norway)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
National Association of Portuguese Municipalities-ANMP (Portugal)	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sweden)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities

7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (1/2)

Name of your organisation	Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interest of your members	Negotiate the paying of local/regional governments workforce	Training/ capacity building	Exchanges of good practices/ knowledge sharing	Research and studies	Publications (e.g. newspapers and other)
Local Government Association (United Kingdom)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities – COSLA (United Kingdom – Scotland)	1: main activity/activities	1: main activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	2: secondary activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities	0: uncovered activity/activities



7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (2/2)

<p>Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (Austria) <i>Österreichischer Gemeindebund</i></p>	<p>Main activities mentioned above.</p>			
<p>Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (Belgium)</p>	<p>Additional: providing advice, counselling to our members on all relevant topics related to local policy issues. The VVSG is dealing with about 35.000 requests for advice on a yearly basis.</p>			
<p>Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia (Belgium)</p>	<p>ASSISTANCE CONSULTING: legal advisory service for administrative and political authorities of local authorities.</p>			
<p>Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (Belgium)</p>	<p>Advice to local entities</p>			
<p>National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)</p>	<p>Specified in the list above</p>			
<p>Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (Finland)</p>	<p>Our main activities are lobbying, development activities (=capacity building etc.) and service activities. The first two are mentioned in your list, but service activities are not.</p>			



7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (2/2)

Association of Estonian Cities
(Estonia)

1. Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend the interest of your members

According to the law, our association is counterpart in preparing the draft legislation. Our association can write comments and put on proposals on any draft law made public in Draft (Law) Information System. Well... anyone can write the comments in that system but for our comments the ministry responsible for drafting the law has to write specific feedback and explain why the proposal has been rejected (if it gets rejected).

(The Draft Information System (Eelnõude Infosüsteem-EIS) provides access to all draft laws and other documents that have been submitted by government bodies for consultation and approval or sent to the Government. In addition, the system gives access to the EU draft laws, as well as other documents related to the EU decision-making process. The EIS allows users to follow proceedings of drafts, read all documents as well as comment upon them. The EIS integrates the functionalities of several separate operational systems.)

This of course includes participating at many meetings, workgroups etc.

Main activity is also participating at "budget negotiations". There is a specific provision in state budget act how the association is involved in negotiations over the equalisation fund and support fund of the state budget.

Secondary activities - the association is the secretariat to the Estonian national delegation to the Committee of the Regions and CLRAE.

Participating at the work of the CEMR is also unfortunately secondary activity, but not always (depends on the topic).

7. What are the main activities/ missions of your association? (2/2)

<p>Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (Iceland)</p>	<p>Everything covered above</p>			
<p>CEMR Italian Section (AICCRE), Italy</p>	<p>Euro projecting</p>			
<p>National Association of Portuguese Municipalities- ANMP (Portugal)</p>	<p>Representing and defend the Autonomy of the Local Democratic Power before the Bodies of Sovereignty (and not just the Government)</p>			
<p>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sweden)</p>	<p>Influence national government, representing local/regional government as employers</p>			
<p>Local Government Association (United Kingdom)</p>	<p>Providing support to elected members - particularly those not aligned to a main party (1)</p>			
<p>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities –COSLA (United Kingdom –Scotland)</p>	<p>COSLA is a voluntary association of Local Authorities of Scotland. It is however not a NGO, nor a private law entity but a public body that is legally inseparable from the Municipalities it is made of. As such it is not foreseen in any general piece of legislation but Local Government law allows Local Authorities to associate.</p> <p>Also individual pieces of legislation foresee that "a national association of Local Authorities" performs certain functions related to that piece of legislation. In other words it is a voluntary association of municipalities but based in public law.</p> <p>We clarify this here as our legal status does not exactly fit with Question 1 and 2.</p>			

Acknowledgment

CEMR would like to thank the member associations who contributed to this report:

Austria: the Austrian Association of Municipalities and the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns

Belgium: the Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region, the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, the Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia

Bulgaria: the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria

Croatia: the Croatian County Association

Denmark: the Danish Regions

Estonia: the Association of Estonian Cities

Finland: the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

Germany: the German Association of CEMR, the German Association of Cities, the German County Association

Iceland: the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland

Italy: the CEMR Italian Section

Latvia: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

Luxembourg: the Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities

Netherlands: the Association of Netherlands Municipalities

Norway: the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Poland: the Association of Polish Cities

Portugal: the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities

Spain: the Association of the Basques Municipalities

Sweden: the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

United Kingdom: the Local Government Association and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

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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 latest developments occurring after the editorial deadline.

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About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

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

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

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