



Local & Regional  
Europe

# National associations of local and regional governments in Europe



*A study on the CEMR and its members*





Local & Regional Europe

## BY THE NUMBERS

# National associations of local and regional governments in Europe

#EUlocal  
www.cemr.eu  
twitter.com/ccrecemr



EUROPE counts **100,000** local & regional governments.

CEMR unites **60** associations in **41** countries.



Associations cover **95%** of their country's population.

P7

P15

Associations	Local	Intermediate	Regional
45	●		
2		●	
4			●
1	●	●	
3	●		●
3	●	●	●

### Who do associations represent?

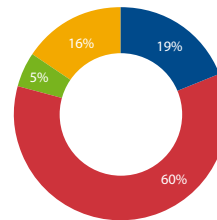
**3/4** of associations represent the local level only.



**6** associations can be referred to as "umbrella organisations".

P12

### How are associations legally protected?



- constitution
- general law
- regulation
- other



**100%** of associations act in the public interest.

P19

**43%** of associations have an office in BRUSSELS.



P25

### Activities covered by the associations

- covered
- not covered

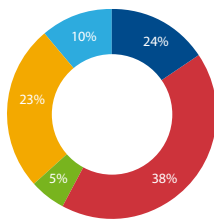


advocacy  
knowledge sharing  
publications  
training  
research  
salary negotiation

P25

**Staff 2/3** of associations count up to **50 employees**.

Smallest: **3**  
Biggest: **400**



- <10 employees
- 11-30 employees
- 31-50 employees
- 51-199 employees
- >200 employees

P22

### Consultation

**91%** of associations are regularly consulted by their **central government**.

Associations are consulted in **every** country



P31

### Representation in Europe

**84%** of associations collaborate with **the Committee of the Regions**.

**95%** of associations collaborate with **the Congress (Council of Europe)**.

P35

### Governing in partnership

In **2018**, the European Parliament adopted a resolution that supports CEMR becoming a permanent consultant of the EU institutions.



Resolution on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union

P36

Europe needs to take a local shift. Join us in making it happen!



## Local & Regional Europe

**The Council of European Municipalities and Regions is the united voice of Europe's local and regional governments federated through 60 national associations.**

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

### Shaping policy in Europe

We advocate on behalf of local and regional governments to make sure their voice is heard in Europe, shifting the focus to local democracy and autonomy. This advocacy work stands on our member associations' experience and expertise.

### Providing a forum for exchange

Through our large network, we facilitate exchanges and feed the debate between towns and regions, their associations, partners and stakeholders. We allow them to cooperate on issues that affect the day-to-day lives of Europeans.

### Making a difference in 5 areas

- Governance, democracy and citizenship
- Environment, climate and energy
- International engagement and cooperation
- Economic, social and territorial cohesion
- Local and regional public service management

### Our mission

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

Founded in

**1951**

**60**

member associations

**41**

countries

**100,000**

local and regional  
governments

**16**

committees &  
expert groups

# In a nutshell

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AND

### ALBANIA

Albanian Association of Municipalities  
*SHBSH*

Members: 61  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 3  
Web: [www.aam.org.al](http://www.aam.org.al)

### AUSTRIA

Austrian Associations of Municipalities  
*GEMEINDEBUND*

Members: 10  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 14  
Web: <https://gemeindebund.at/>

Austrian Association of Cities and Towns  
*STAEDTEBUND*

Members: 255  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 20  
Web: [www.staedtebund.gv.at](http://www.staedtebund.gv.at)

### BELGIUM

Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region  
*BRULOCALIS*

Members: 22  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 30  
Web: [www.brulocalis.be](http://www.brulocalis.be)

Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities  
*VVSG*

Members: 308  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 130  
Web: [www.vvsg.be](http://www.vvsg.be)

Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia  
*UVCW*

Members: 262  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 60  
Web: [www.uvcw.be](http://www.uvcw.be)

### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
*SOGFBiH*

Members: 80  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 8  
Web: [www.sogfbih.ba](http://www.sogfbih.ba)

Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska  
*ALVRS*

Members: 64  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 9  
Web: [www.alvrs.com](http://www.alvrs.com)

### BULGARIA

National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria  
*NAMRB*

Members: 265  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 55  
Web: [www.namrb.org](http://www.namrb.org)

### CROATIA

Croatian County Association  
*HRVZZ*

Members: 21  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 4  
Web: [www.hrvzz.hr](http://www.hrvzz.hr)

### CYPRUS

Union of Cyprus Municipalities  
*UCM*

Members: 39  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 12  
Web: [www.ucm.org.cy](http://www.ucm.org.cy)

### CZECH REPUBLIC

Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic  
*SMO ČR*

Members: 2,734  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 56  
Web: [www.smocr.cz](http://www.smocr.cz)

### DENMARK

Danish Regions  
*REGIONER*

Members: 5  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 170  
Web: [www.regioner.dk](http://www.regioner.dk)

Local Government Denmark  
*KL*

Members: 98  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 400  
Web: [www.kl.dk](http://www.kl.dk)

### ESTONIA

Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities  
*AECM*

Members: 74  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 19  
Web: [www.elvl.ee](http://www.elvl.ee)

### FINLAND

Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities  
*AFLRA*

Members: 311  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 220  
Web: [www.kuntaliitto.fi](http://www.kuntaliitto.fi)

### FRANCE

French Association of CEMR  
*AFCCRE*

Members: 1,000  
Type of members: ● ● ●  
Staff: 11  
Web: [www.afccre.org](http://www.afccre.org)

### GEORGIA

National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia  
*NALAG*

Members: 64  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 16  
Web: [www.nala.ge](http://www.nala.ge)

### GERMANY

German Association of CEMR  
*RGRE*

Members: 800  
Type of members: ● ● ●  
Staff: 3  
Web: [www.rgre.de](http://www.rgre.de)

German County Association  
*DLT*

Members: 13  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 25  
Web: [www.landkreistag.de](http://www.landkreistag.de)

Association of German Cities  
*DST*

Members: 3,400  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 120  
Web: [www.staedtetag.de](http://www.staedtetag.de)

German Association of Towns and Municipalities  
*DStGB*

Members: 17  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 30  
Web: [www.dstgb.de](http://www.dstgb.de)

### GREECE

Central Union of Municipalities of Greece  
*KEDE*

Members: 13  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 23  
Web: [www.kedke.gr](http://www.kedke.gr)

### HUNGARY

Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities  
*TÖOSZ*

Members: 1,614  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 6  
Web: [www.toosz.hu](http://www.toosz.hu)

### ICELAND

Association of Local Authorities in Iceland  
*SAMBAND*

Members: 72  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 28  
Web: [www.samband.is](http://www.samband.is)

### IRELAND

Local Government Management Agency  
*LGMA*

Members: 31  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 101  
Web: [www.lgma.ie](http://www.lgma.ie)

### ISRAEL

Federation of Local Authorities in Israel  
*MASHAM*

Members: 257  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 60  
Web: [www.masham.org.il](http://www.masham.org.il)

### ITALY

Italian Association of CEMR  
*AICCRE*

Members: 2,200  
Type of members: ● ● ●  
Staff: 9  
Web: [www.aiccre.it](http://www.aiccre.it)

### KOSOVO

Association of Kosovo Municipalities  
*AKK*

Members: 34  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 13  
Web: [www.komunat-ks.net](http://www.komunat-ks.net)

### LATVIA

Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments  
*LPS*

Members: 119  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 35  
Web: [www.lps.lv](http://www.lps.lv)



# REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPE

## LITHUANIA

Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania  
*LSA*

Members: 60  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 18  
Web: www.lsa.lt

## LUXEMBOURG

Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities  
*SYVICOL*

Members: 102  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 5  
Web: www.syvicol.lu

## MALTA

Local Councils Association  
*LCA*

Members: 480  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 4  
Web: www.lca.org.mt

## MOLDOVA

Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova  
*CALM*

Members: 800  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 10  
Web: www.calm.md

## MONTENEGRO

Union of Municipalities of Montenegro  
*UOM*

Members: 23  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 11  
Web: www.uom.me

## NETHERLANDS

Association of Provinces of the Netherlands  
*IPO*

Members: 12  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 50  
Web: www.ipo.nl

Association of Netherlands Municipalities  
*VNG*

Members: 355  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 220  
Web: www.vng.nl

## NORTH MACEDONIA

Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia  
*ZELS*

Members: 81  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 16  
Web: www.zels.org.mk

## NORWAY

Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities  
*KS*

Members: 439  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 250  
Web: www.ks.no

## POLAND

Association of Polish Counties  
*ZPP*

Members: 307  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 21  
Web: www.zpp.pl

Association of Polish Cities  
*ZMP*

Members: 201  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 30  
Web: www.zmp.poznan.pl

## PORTUGAL

National Association of Portuguese Municipalities  
*ANMP*

Members: 308  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 24  
Web: www.anmp.pt

## ROMANIA

National Union of County Councils of Romania  
*UNCJR*

Members: 41  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 12  
Web: www.uncjr.ro

Romanian Municipalities Association  
*AMR*

Members: 109  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 15  
Web: www.amr.ro

Association of Communes of Romania  
*ACOR*

Members: 1,750  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 8  
Web: www.acor.ro

## SERBIA

Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia  
*SKGO*

Members: 170  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 66  
Web: www.skgo.org

## SLOVAKIA

Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia  
*ZMOS*

Members: 2,786  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 29  
Web: www.zmos.sk

## SLOVENIA

Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia  
*ZMOS*

Members: 11  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 3  
Web: www.zmos.si

Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia  
*SOS*

Members: 175  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 7  
Web: www.skupnostobcin.si

## SPAIN

Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces  
*FEMP*

Members: 7,366  
Type of members: ● ● ●  
Staff: 119  
Web: www.femp.es

Association of Basque Municipalities  
*EUDEL*

Members: 256  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 19  
Web: www.eudel.eus

## SWEDEN

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions  
*SKL*

Members: 310  
Type of members: ● ●  
Staff: 380  
Web: www.skl.se

## TURKEY

Union of Municipalities of Turkey  
*TBB*

Members: 1,398  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 163  
Web: www.tbb.gov.tr

## UKRAINE

Association of Ukrainian Cities  
*AUC*

Members: 742  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 62  
Web: www.auc.org.ua

## UNITED KINGDOM

Local Government Association  
*LGA*

Members: 350  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 250  
Web: www.local.gov.uk

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities  
*COSLA*

Members: 32  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 50  
Web: www.cosla.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Local Government Association  
*NILGA*

Members: 11  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 9  
Web: www.nilga.org

Welsh Local Government Association  
*WLGA*

Members: 28  
Type of members: ●  
Staff: 56  
Web: www.wlga.gov.uk

### Key

- local
- intermediate
- regional
- federation of associations

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# Foreword

Since its creation in 1951, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) has steadily gained legitimacy among European municipalities and regions and, as their representative association at European and international level, among all the European and international institutions.

This legitimacy has been reaffirmed in recent months by the European Parliament, which recognises the specific role of CEMR as an actor within the European governance framework<sup>1</sup> and by the European Commission<sup>2</sup>. The Lisbon Treaty had already clarified the place of local and regional governments as elements of the European governance and these recent developments mark important progress.

With this study, we want to highlight the role of national associations of local governments as key players of the governance system. In some countries, laws and regulations recognise them as official partners while in others, the law frames the relationship between different levels of governance.

Each European country has its own history and approach to the concepts of decentralisation and subsidiarity. However, what this study shows is the specificity of our organisations, which are not conventional associations, but constitutive elements of the institutional democratic landscape, at national, European and international level.

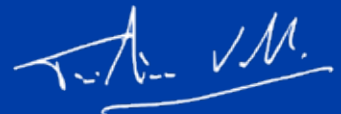
We have also included a non-exhaustive list of European associations, with which we cooperate, to ensure the representation of all European territories towards the institutions. As the main organisation of political representation of our communities, our role is to unify all the actors concerned to contribute to the debate and to apply our efforts on the basis a “governance in partnership” approach and which meets objectives 11 and 17 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

Furthermore, we hope that this work, initiated at the request of our members, will allow them to draw on their respective experiences and raise their profile at the national level. As regards European and international institutions, this unique study will provide them with a better understanding of how CEMR and its members contribute to the institutional and political framework. Thanks to its extensive and rich content, this study highlights the distinctive nature of CEMR in the history of European cooperation.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to this study and publication, in particular CEMR’s member associations and CEMR’s studies and research unit as we believe this work will contribute to a better understanding of the role of our members and by so doing, confirm the recognition of CEMR as key partner of the European Institutions.



Stefano Bonaccini,  
President



Frédéric Vallier,  
Secretary General

1 In the European Parliament resolution of 3 July 2018 on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union - PA\_TA\_PROV 2018/0273  
2 In the Commission’s communication in October 2018 on reinforcing subsidiarity and proportionality in EU policy-making – COM (2018) 703 final

# Introduction

Europe is a patchwork of approximately 100,000 municipalities, provinces and regions, most of which if not all are part of a national association of local and/or regional governments. What do they do? How do they work? What level of recognition do they enjoy from their national authorities? This study will help you to understand better those who speak on behalf of Local and Regional Governments, at the national – and European – level, and how they do it.

Since its creation in 1951, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) has promoted the construction of a united, peaceful and democratic Europe founded on local self-government, respect for the principle of subsidiarity and the participation of citizens. Our work is organised around two main pillars:

1. **Influencing European policy and legislation** in all areas that impact on municipalities and regions,
2. **Providing a forum for debate** between local and regional governments via their national representative associations.

CEMR is the oldest and broadest European association of local and regional governments. We are the only organisation that brings together the national associations of local and regional governments<sup>3</sup> from 41 European countries<sup>4</sup> and represents, through them, all levels of government – local, intermediate and regional.

This study is an introduction to the world of CEMR's members, national associations of local and regional governments. CEMR unites 60 member associations from 41 of the 47 Council of Europe member countries, including all 28 member states of the European Union (EU).

Organised in five chapters, this report analyses how CEMR associations are empowered to defend local and regional interests. It compares the representativeness of national Local and Regional Government Associations (LRGAs), their nature, whether their membership is compulsory or voluntary, their human resources, etc. This study also highlights the role of CEMR and its members as legitimate representatives of local and

regional governments at the national, European, and international level.

This analysis is the result of a survey conducted by CEMR amongst its members, i.e. local and regional government associations (LRGAs), also referred to as “the association(s)”, “CEMR members”, or “national associations” here below. CEMR secretariat received responses from 58 associations<sup>5</sup>, covering all 41 countries.

In the study, infographics and visuals will allow you to learn more about:

1. Who CEMR member associations represent, who are their members;
2. How associations of towns and regions are structured, their nature, their organisation, their staff, etc.;
3. What they do, how they organise their advocacy towards the central government, the exchange of knowledge between their members, or provide training for elected representatives or civil servants;
4. Their role in the legislative process;
5. And their voice at the European or even international level.

In the second part of the study, you will be provided with an overview of all the local and regional government associations that are CEMR members, country by country, on the basis of identity cards.

We hope that reading this publication will help you to realise how your area, city, town or region, is connected to others, both nationally and beyond frontiers. National associations are not as well-known as they should be, even by the citizens of their own country.

And yet they play a crucial role in linking governments and facilitating governance in partnership. The importance of their role is such that in some cases, these associations are even recognised in the national Constitution. They contribute, directly or indirectly, to local and territorial development, and to our quality of life, as individuals. So, who are they?

3 All CEMR Members are mentioned per country, in the second part of the study: *Local and Regional Government Associations at a Glance* p. 43  
4 CEMR membership covers the larger European scale, see the map of CEMR Members: <http://www.ccre.org/en/pays/map>  
5 See the list of the associations that took part in the survey, p. 88



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**Who do CEMR member  
associations represent?**

Country	Local and regional governments' associations	Type of members			
		Local	Intermediate	Regional	Federation of associations
Albania	Albanian Association of Municipalities	●			
Austria	Austrian Associations of Municipalities	●			●
	Austrian Association of Cities and Towns	●			
Belgium	Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region	●			
	Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities	●			
	Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia	●			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	●			
	Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska	●			
Bulgaria	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	●			
Croatia	Croatian County Association			●	
Cyprus	Union of Cyprus Municipalities	●			
Czech Republic	Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic	●			
Denmark	Danish Regions			●	
	Local Government Denmark	●			
Estonia	Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities	●			
Finland	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities	●			
France	French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●	●	
Georgia	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	●			
Germany	German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●		●
	German County Association		●		●
	Association of German Cities	●			●
	German Association of Towns and Municipalities	●			●
Greece	Central Union of Municipalities of Greece	●			●
Hungary	Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities	●			
Iceland	Association of Local Authorities in Iceland	●			
Ireland	Local Government Management Agency	●			
Israel	Federation of Local Authorities in Israel	●		●	
Italy	Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●	●	
Kosovo	Association of Kosovo Municipalities	●			
Latvia	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments	●			
Lithuania	Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania	●			
Luxembourg	Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities	●			
Malta	Local Councils Association	●			
Moldova	Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova	●			
Montenegro	Union of Municipalities of Montenegro	●			
Netherlands	Association of Provinces of the Netherlands			●	
	Association of Netherlands Municipalities	●			
North Macedonia	Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia	●			
Norway	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	●		●	
Poland	Association of Polish Counties		●		
	Association of Polish Cities	●			
Portugal	National Association of Portuguese Municipalities	●			
Romania	National Union of County Councils of Romania			●	
	Romanian Municipalities Association	●			
	Association of Communes of Romania	●			
Serbia	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia	●			
Slovakia	Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia	●			
Slovenia	Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia	●			
	Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia	●			
Spain	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces	●	●	●	
	Association of Basque Municipalities	●			
Sweden	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions	●		●	
Turkey	Union of Municipalities of Turkey	●			
Ukraine	Association of Ukrainian Cities	●			
United Kingdom	Local Government Association	●			
	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities	●			
	Northern Ireland Local Government Association	●			
	Welsh Local Government Association	●			

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) began as a community of mayors regrouped in national sections of CEMR in six original founding countries. Following the increase in its membership and the arrival of regions in the 1980s, nowadays, all tiers of sub-national governments are represented by our members (municipalities, provinces and regions). They are associations or federations of local and regional governments. One or several associations can exist in the same country.

## A. One single tier of government

46 associations represent members from a single tier of government<sup>6</sup>.

### Local level

41 associations represent municipalities only. Within this category, the number of members varies from 23 municipalities in the case of the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM) to 2,786 towns and city boroughs for the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS). In Slovenia, it is interesting to note that of the 212 municipalities, 11 are urban municipalities, all members of the Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (ZMOS).

In addition to local governments, some associations also open their membership to inter-municipal cooperation bodies, joint associations of local governments, or members whose competences can sometimes be compared with another tier of government.

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) is composed of 355 Dutch municipalities, as well as legal inter-municipal cooperation bodies and five of the six islands of the Dutch Antilles (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands). Their members are not only cities, towns and municipalities, but also

includes communes or city boroughs. The members of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA) are all 311 Finnish municipalities. Nevertheless, AFLRA also provides services to and cooperates with joint municipal authorities<sup>7</sup>, as well as Finnish hospital districts and regional councils. The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS) represents local and regional governments. However, its 119 members can be further sub-divided into two categories of local governments: all 110 Latvian municipalities, and nine republican cities<sup>8</sup>. The Maltese Local Councils Association (LCA) represents the 68 local councils in the Maltese archipelago, as well as the five regional committees<sup>9</sup>.

Another distinctive feature to be highlighted: the Welsh Association of Local Governments (WLGA) in the UK is composed of 28 members. Along with the 22 Welsh local authorities, the other members are three fire & rescue authorities of Wales, and three national park authorities. In Belgium, the city of Brussels and the 19 Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital region are part of the same association (BRULOCALIS) as active members, alongside the Public Centres for Social Welfare and inter-municipal associations as supporting members.

### Intermediate and regional level

Five CEMR member associations represent solely and directly the intermediate and regional level: the Association of Polish Counties (ZPP) with 307 members out of 380 counties; the Association of Danish Regions (REGIONER) composed of the five regions of Denmark; the Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO) made up of 12 members: all the Dutch provinces; the National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR) representing the regional level of government with 41 members; and the Croatian County Association (HRVZZ) gathering all 20 Croatian counties, as well as the city of Zagreb, which is also a region.

## B. Several tiers of government

Six associations bring together members from several tiers of government. Three of them represent the local and regional level. The Federation of Local Authorities in Israel (MASHAM) includes all 257 local governments as well as the regional councils of the country. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) gathers members from both the local (municipalities) and regional (counties) level. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) represents 290 local governments and 20 regions.

And three associations represent all three local, intermediate and regional tiers of government. Gathering 7,366 members, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) includes members that are town councils, provincial councils, and island councils. The French section of CEMR (AFCCRE) and the Italian section (AICCRE) both represent all tiers of government. In the case of France this means, municipalities and their groupings, departments and regions whereas in Italy, it is municipalities, cities, metropolitan cities, provinces and regions.

6 You can find a detailed typology and the number of local, intermediate and regional tiers of government in *Local and Regional Governments in Europe - Structures and Competences*, a CEMR publication : [www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR\\_structures\\_and\\_competences\\_2016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_structures_and_competences_2016_EN.pdf)

7 Joint municipal boards were introduced in Finland as a form of inter-municipal cooperation between several municipalities. They are independent legal persons and governed by the legislation on local government ([http://www.stat.fi/meta/kas/kuntayhtyma\\_en.html#tab1](http://www.stat.fi/meta/kas/kuntayhtyma_en.html#tab1)).

8 Latvia is composed of two different levels of government: the local and the regional level. The local tier of government is divided into two entities: the municipalities (110) and the republican cities (nine). These nine larger cities have the same competences as municipalities and regions.

9 The five Regional Committees represent a group of local councils.



## C. Federations of local and regional government associations

Six of CEMR's associations could be referred to as "umbrella organisations". Four German associations: the National Section of CEMR (RGRE), the Association of German Cities (DST), the German County Association (DLT), and the Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB), as well as the Austrian Association of Municipalities (GEMEINDEBUND), and the Central Union of Municipalities (KEDE) in Greece. Indeed, their direct members are not local and regional governments, but associations, or federations, representing local governments.

KEDE is composed of 13 regional unions of municipalities in its membership. The GEMEINDEBUND is composed of 10 regional member associations and therefore indirectly represents a total of 2,089 Austrian municipalities. In countries where umbrella associations are present together with other associations, this may result in dual membership. This is the case for the Austrian associations as there are cities that are members of both the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns, STÄDTEBUND (of which cities are direct members, mostly in urban areas), and of GEMEINDEBUND (through the regional associations of cities, mostly representing rural and peri-urban communities).

In Germany, the direct members of the DLT are 13 regional associations of counties as well as the intermediary higher communal corporations. The 294 German counties are, on the other hand, indirect members. The DStGB is composed of 17 members which in turn are associations of local governments in the respective *Bundesländer*, and that results in the indirect representation of 11,000 municipalities across Germany. The DST is in itself an illustration of diversity of membership: 195 cities are direct members, including all autonomous German cities such as the city-states of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen, as well as the 16 state local government associations, with about 3,200 indirect member cities and towns. As in Austria, double membership can happen, as a city may be a direct member of the DST and through its city association, be an indirect member of the DStGB. The National Section of CEMR (RGRE) unites the three associations plus individual municipalities and counties as direct members.

### CEMR Sections

AFCCRE, AICCRE and RGRE are CEMR sections and were founded at the same time as CEMR, to bring together members in their respective countries. Today, each section represents all tiers of sub-national governments and they cooperate with their national counterpart to organise the representation of local and regional governments at the European and international level.

From the six original national sections, CEMR has grown to 60 member associations, but the original setting is still present and remains very strong although most of the members (95%) are National Associations of Local and Regional Governments; three national sections of CEMR still represent the interest of French, German and Italian Municipalities and Regions (which in turn represents 40 % of the European population).

In France, where there are many different associations representing local and regional government, AFCCRE plays the role of unifying all local and regional governments and authorities interested in European and international affairs. It is the only French association composed of representatives of all tiers of sub-national governments. AFCCRE joins with other national associations in France to organise the representation of all tiers in CEMR, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE or Congress) and the Committee of the Regions. For several years, the Association of French Mayors (AMF) has enjoyed the status of associated partner in CEMR, under a specific agreement between both AFCCRE and AMF.

In Germany, although the three associations representing local and regional governments are full members of CEMR – Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB), Association of German Cities (DST), and the German County Association (DLT), the National Section of CEMR (RGRE) unites the three associations plus individual municipalities and counties as direct members.

In Italy, AICCRE, the national section of CEMR is the recognised association of all tiers of sub-national governments active in European and international activities. As in France, it is the only association representing all different tiers.

In Belgium, the Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities, a national section of CEMR, is the federation of CEMR member associations of municipalities, cities and provinces of the three regions: BRULOCALIS for Brussels' capital region, the Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW) for Wallonia and the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) for Flanders.

In the United Kingdom, owing to its unique constitutional structure with entirely separate local government jurisdictions, for Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales each has its own association of Local Authorities that are individual members of CEMR, and which together form the UK section of CEMR.

In all other countries, national associations of local and regional governments are members of CEMR and usually play the role of national sections of CEMR. In some countries where there are different associations representing different tiers or size of local and regional governments or local and regional governments from specific regions or parts of the country, the national section is the sum of all of them and one of the associations coordinates the representation in CEMR, like in Hungary. Indeed, there are seven association members of the CEMR in Hungary and the Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ) is the CEMR contact point for all.

## D. Population covered by the associations

The representativeness of CEMR member associations has been defined in terms of population coverage. The largest sub-national tier of government represented by a member of the association was taken into account. For instance, a regional council represents all the residents in its territory.

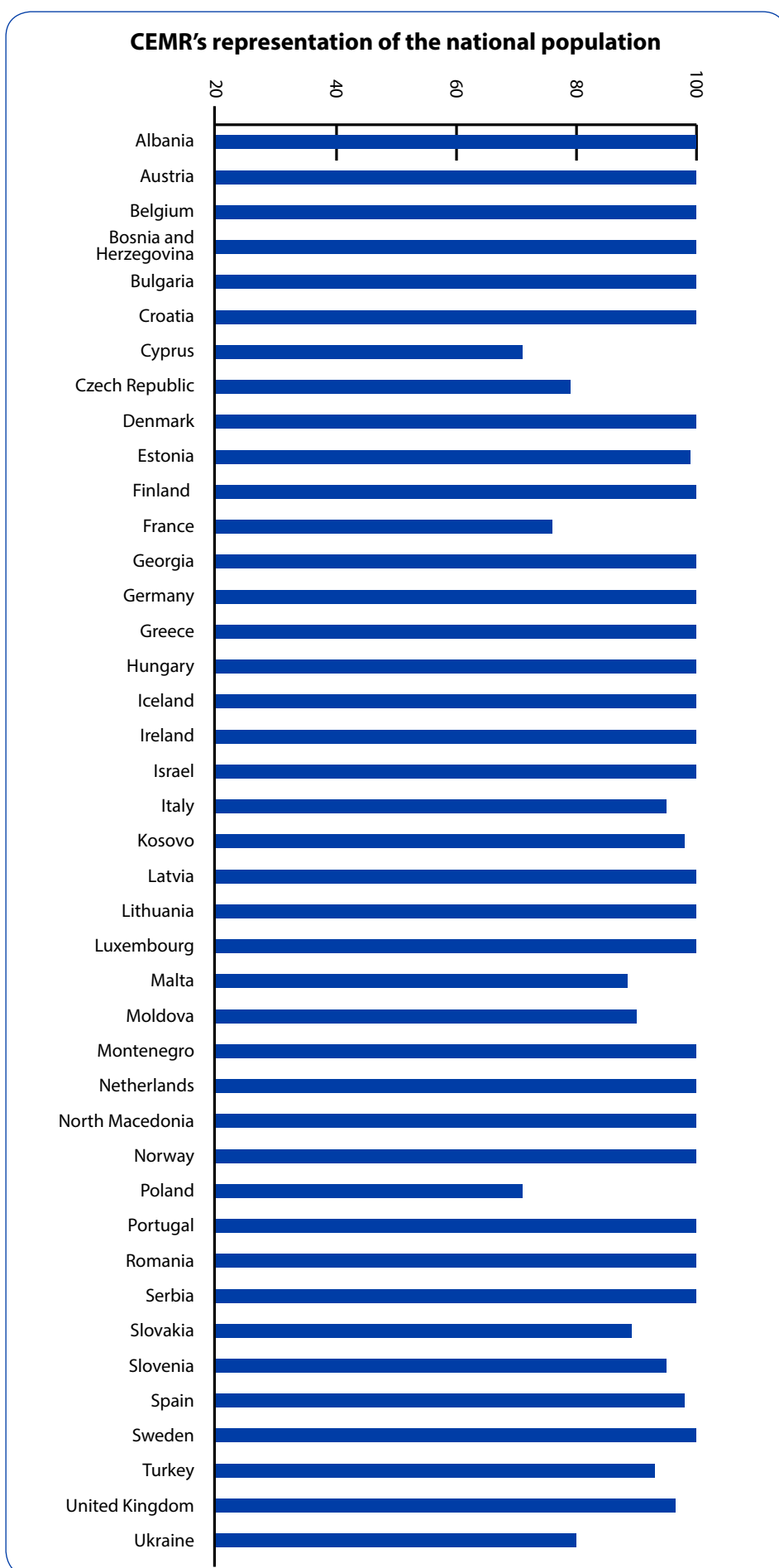
An extremely high percentage of Europe's population is covered by both CEMR and its member associations. The lowest rate of representativeness is around 71%. On average, the associations overall represent 95% of Europe's population.

The variations can be explained by the fact that membership is not compulsory in the vast majority of local and regional government associations. For only three associations is membership mandatory: the Greek association KEDE, the Irish Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), and the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB). KEDE and LGMA both cover 100% of their residents. TBB represent all 1398 municipalities of Turkey, i.e. 93% of the population as a number of villages are outside the remit of the municipalities.

Nonetheless, many other associations also represent 100% of the population of their country, while 95% (i.e. 55 associations) have voluntary membership.

In 23 countries, the associations' members cover the totality of the level of government represented (i.e. all cities or all regions, etc.), even though their membership is voluntary. For instance, in Bulgaria, all 265 municipalities are members of the national association of municipalities (NAMRB), and the Association of Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS) covers all 81 North Macedonian municipalities.

Membership of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is voluntary, but given that one of its members is the "Municipal Employers Organisation", which covers all local governments, all Finnish municipalities are also automatically AFLRA members. Sometimes, 100% of the population is covered by the associations, together, like in Austria, or in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



# 2

**How are associations  
of towns and regions  
structured?**

## A. Nature of the associations

Depending on their nature, associations undertake different tasks and have varying powers and capacity to influence governments.

None of the associations have the status of a non-profit organisation of natural persons (e.g. mayors as individual persons). Most of them (56) are non-profit associations of legal persons (e.g. municipalities or regions). The two others are the English Local Government Association (LGA) which is a wholly publicly owned unlimited company and the German Association of Cities (DST), an unregistered association (like political parties, trade unions or religious communities).

47 are based on private law; and 11 are officially based on public law. It can be noted that the countries favouring such a system are mainly from the northern and eastern part of Europe e.g. Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Slovenia, Turkey and Montenegro. Mixed structures exist such as the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities which has an official status based on private law but they partly act based on public law. Some associations, the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM), and the Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to quote a few examples, have the official status

of non-profit associations of public interest. To conclude, given the nature of their members, **all the associations of local and regional governments act for the public interest and perform an institutional role.**

## B. Legal basis

The general right of local governments 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 Europe:

“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”<sup>10</sup>

Article 10.2 leaves to individual member states the choice of means, legislative or otherwise, to put this principle into practice. However, the type of law on which the association is based, or the general right to associate, or the specificity of the documents upon which the association is established, can be contributing factors to the importance and role of the national associations of local and

regional governments, even though they are not crucial elements<sup>11</sup>.

The capacity of national associations to bring together their members and to influence national policies also depends on their environment. This is true for European associations, but also for EU partner countries: the power of national associations depends on “the structure, the story, the local and regional cultural context, the country’s priorities and the governance reform programmes”<sup>12</sup>. That being said, the legislative level at which the association is anchored can provide more, or less, legal protection for the existence and the activities of the associations.

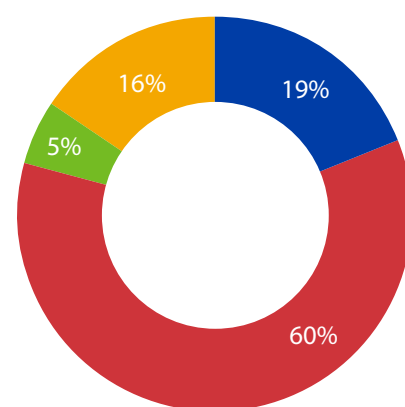
### The constitution

The associations anchored either in a written constitution or in an organic law see their status better protected than those which are not. Indeed, since a constitution is the highest level of legislation, it cannot be overruled or derogated by any inferior law (Gicquel, Hauriou, 1983). Moreover, the mention of the national association in a state’s constitution is an indicator that the central government recognises the importance of the association as an agent to promote and defend local interests. In these cases, local and regional government organisations are acknowledged as associations that are different from other types of associations, with a status



### How is your association legally protected?

- The constitution, a constitutional law or organic law ■
- General law adopted by a legislative body, national or regional (parliament, senate, etc.) ■
- Regulation or decision adopted by an executive body (government or presidential directives, decisions, decrees, orders, administrative provision, etc.) ■
- Other ■



10 European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

11 As highlighted in the report of the Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, CG/GOV07(2018)02, 9 March 2018, *The consultation of Local Authorities by Higher Levels of Government*, protractor: Anders KNAPE

12 FOGAR, PLATFORMA, Study on national associations of regional authorities in the European Union partner’s countries : [www.regionsunies-fogar.org/images/Documentos/ORU-FOGARFinalReport.pdf](http://www.regionsunies-fogar.org/images/Documentos/ORU-FOGARFinalReport.pdf).

and a mission worthy being enshrined in a constitution. In a few countries, such as France for example, an organic law can sit alongside the Constitution, detailing the organisation or the functioning of public authorities.

11 associations (in Albania, Austria, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and within the UK, Northern Ireland) derive their legal status either from a constitution or an organic law.

### General law

35 associations, representing more than half of CEMR's membership, are anchored in a legal framework, and more precisely in a general law adopted by a legislative body, either public or private. This is the case, among others, for Estonia, Israel, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain, Slovenia, Turkey and Italy (based on the Italian civil code).

In Luxembourg, the Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL) is based on a public legal framework. It is a general law concerning the creation of the so-called "*syndicats de communes*"<sup>13</sup>. Within this legal framework, SYVICOL was in fact created by a decision of the municipal councils themselves, who also drew up its statutes and defined its mission. According to the aforementioned law, those statutes were then published as a "*règlement grand-ducal*", which is a regulatory text<sup>14</sup>. The initiative to create a national association has clearly come from the municipalities themselves. In recent years, the association has been mentioned more and more in other laws and regulations, for example as a member of various commissions and other consultative bodies on the national level. Although SYVICOL is nowadays solidly anchored in national law, the association continues to strive for an institutionalisation of its role in the legislative process.

### Regulatory provisions

Adopted by an executive body, regulatory provisions (governmental or presidential directives, decisions, decrees, orders,

administrative provision, etc.) have to be compatible with both the legal and constitutional rules of the state. Therefore, a legal or constitutional change can modify regulatory provisions. The Irish association LGMA, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK), and the Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR), all three non-profit associations with legal personality, are the only three associations whose legal status is enshrined in a regulation or a decision adopted by an executive body.

### Other

Finally, a total of nine associations do not match any of the three aforementioned categories, as is the case for the Local Government Denmark Association (KL).

Defining the status of an association can represent a challenge, as an association might belong to several categories at the same time, as highlighted by the Finnish AFLRA as well as the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM).

Six associations are not anchored in any constitutional law, general law or regulation, but in a decision of mayors/ members. This is the case for the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), and the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG, Belgium) which were also primarily set up directly by mayors themselves. As for the Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO), its legitimacy is based on a decision taken by the members of the association based on private/civil law. In the same way, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) is a private organisation whose creation came about as a result of the wish of its members. It does not state in any law that SKL needs to exist, nor was it founded by any legislative body.

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) does not have a legal basis per se, but functions as a voluntary association, with all local and regional governments as members, even if not established by any legal regulation. The Scottish association COSLA is a voluntary association of Local Authorities of Scotland. It is however not an NGO, nor a private law entity, but a public body that is legally inseparable from the municipalities it is made up of.

### The specificity of the legal basis

When the national legal framework specifically foresees the establishment of a national association of local or regional governments, it is assumed that it tends to assign competences and authority to the association. This seems to be the most common basis for the creation of CEMR's members, as 25 associations representing 43 % of our membership fall within this category.

Moreover, a general right of local and regional governments to associate, which is in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe, accounts for 21 associations from all over Europe, representing about 36 % of our membership.

Furthermore, 12 associations fall within the category in which the legal basis foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate.

It can happen that associations are based on a legal basis with two different provisions. For instance, the Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS) is based on the one hand upon the Law on Self-government, which specifically foresees the establishment of a national association of local or regional governments, and on the other, ALVRS is also based upon the Law on Association and Foundation of Republika Srpska, which foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate.

The survey revealed that there is no correlation between the specificity of the document establishing the association and the size of the association (if the number of employees can be considered an indicator of the number of competences and the breadth of the activity). No trend in terms of geographical localisation or structure of the state can be identified. Actually, some of the largest associations in terms of human resources belong to the few associations based on the least specific provision, i.e. the general right of a natural or legal person to associate, such as the Swedish SKL. Some smaller associations are based on an agreement specifically foreseeing the establishment of a national association of local/regional governments.

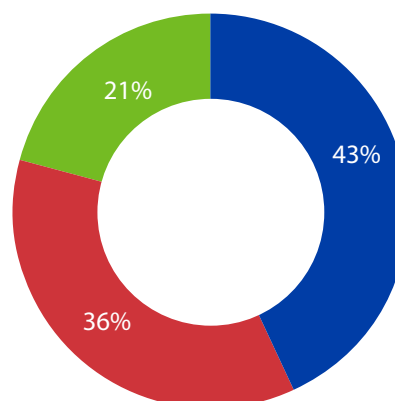
13 [www.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2001/02/23/n2/jo](http://www.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2001/02/23/n2/jo)

14 [www.syvicol.lu/download/1442/arrete-grand-ducal-du-10-juillet-2006-portant-approbation-des-nouveaux-statuts-du-syvicol.pdf](http://www.syvicol.lu/download/1442/arrete-grand-ducal-du-10-juillet-2006-portant-approbation-des-nouveaux-statuts-du-syvicol.pdf)



### How specific is the provision of the document, upon which is your association established?

- It foresees specifically the establishment of a national association ■
- It foresees generally the right of local/regional governments ■
- It foresees the general right of natural or legal persons to associate ■



## C. Subdivisions

19 associations are composed of different legal entities. A distinction was made between several categories of legal entities: either separate/detached operational divisions (e.g. daughter / sister company, a trading arm, a consultancy, etc.), or other subdivisions (e.g. regional federations/ associations or territorial subdivisions). It can be noted that there seems to be no geographical trend regarding the existence of different legal entities.

To give some examples, in Sweden, SKL is legally a non-profit association, owning limited liability companies. Through them, SKL has five subsidiaries, and three associated companies, including for example: Dagens Samhälle (it publishes a newspaper and runs a debate web), SKL International (engaged in international development projects), Inera (coordinates the county councils, regions and municipalities joint e-health work ), and even SOS Alarm (ensuring the SOS service in Sweden by receiving and transmitting emergency calls – 112). Besides this corporate structure, SKL also has a stake in different (non-profit) associations like the International Center of Local Democracy (ICLD).

In Norway, KS's sister company is KS Bedrift. It is an employers' association and interest group for over 500 enterprises in the municipal sector. Their members represent several trades, including energy, fire and rescue as well as other public services. KS holding company (KS Holding AS) has five wholly owned subsidiaries, including for example: KS Agenda, a centre for seminars and skills

development. Kommuneforlaget which started out as a publishing house, is today one of the most innovative companies in Norway, improving the quality of public services, and inhabitants' everyday life thanks to digital solutions and educational technology. The newspaper Kommunal Rapport publishes news, debates, commentaries and news stories, as well as the Kommunebarmeteret, an exhaustive analysis of Norwegian municipalities.

In the Netherlands, VNG has five enterprises: VNG Realisation (consultancy), VNG Congress and Study Center (organization of congresses, seminars, traineeships and studies and trainings), VNG International (international development projects/trainings), VNG Risk Management (consultancy, insurances) and VNG Knowledge Center for Enforcement and Compliance in the Social Domain (consultancy). All enterprises are limited companies (LTDs)<sup>15</sup>, which are 100% wholly owned by the association. The VNG association and the enterprises are all one big family... The European Affairs team has many interactions with VNG International in particular, due to the fact that they both provide the secretariat to the VNG European & International Affairs policy commission.

Interestingly, links can be created between national associations via daughter companies. The Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR) established in 2004 together with VNG International, a daughter company: MEPCO (International Advisory Centre of Municipalities). The centre provides consulting, management, training and research services to local governments

and regions, in the fields of strategic planning, performance assessment, and project management. There are five other detached entities relating to SMO ČR from a fund providing support for projects related to the performance of public administration and local self-government to an institute facilitating municipal developments in environment, transport, energy and the links with private companies, for SMART solutions.

In Latvia, the LPS owns 100 % of the shares of the company Local Government Consultancy Centre which provides consulting services to local governments. LPS is also a co-owner of the Latvian Local Governments Training Centre which offers training; primarily for local government employees, but in some cases also for the employees of state institutions and other organisations. Several other organisations operate within the LPS, however they have no legal status. These include the Association of Executive Directors of Latvian Local Governments, the Union of Seacoast Municipalities, the association of Heads of Social Services and the association of Custody Court Employees.

<sup>15</sup> in Dutch: BVs.

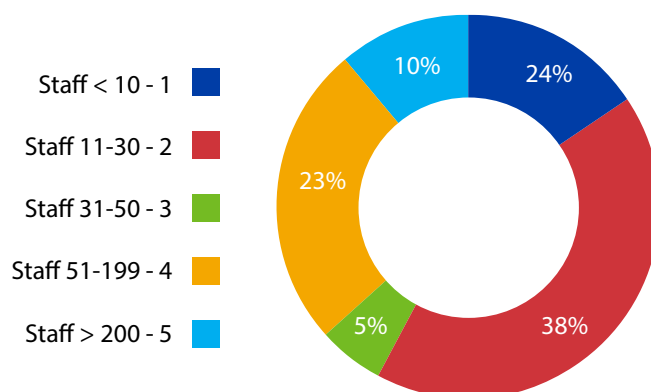
## D. Human resources

Regarding the number of staff of national associations, there is a significant variation among CEMR members. Three main groups can be distinguished. The first group, gathering up to 50 employees, represents almost 70 % of CEMR membership with no geographical correlation. 14 associations have less than 10 employees (three associations employ only three full-time staff), and 22 associations have between 11 and 31 employees (full-time equivalent).

The second group, with a range between 50 and 200 members of staff, represents 23 % of the associations. In this group, the geographical sample is also balanced.

10 % of associations count over 200 full-time employees, those are concentrated in Northern Europe. The six associations concerned are the Dutch VNG (220), the Finnish AFLRA (220), the Norwegian KS and the English LGA (250), the Swedish SKL (380) and the Danish KL (400). These associations cover services that are delivered by other means in other countries like civil servant training, consultancy, and social services.

How many staff does your organisation have?



# 3

**What are the associations'  
activities?**

Six activities as multiple-choice answers were offered in the survey, with the possibility to choose if the activity is a main or secondary one, or if it is not covered at all by the responding associations. Some associations also specified additional activities.

In those countries with more than one association, there can be different positions regarding the main activities. In Romania for instance, for the Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR) as well as for AMR, the negotiation of the pay of local and regional governments' workforce is considered a main activity. However, the Romanian UNCJR does not undertake this for the moment. In the UK, for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the exchange of good practice is a secondary activity, while for the English LGA, the Welsh WLGA and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) it is a main activity.

## A. Advocacy and knowledge-sharing

100 % of respondents marked the activity of 'influencing governments through policy and campaigning' and 'defending the interests of local and regional governments' as their number one key activity. Among the 'additional activities' mentioned by a number of associations, to represent, defend, improve, promote, sustain and champion local self-governance towards anybody, and not only the central government, is the most repeated one. This is clearly the *raison d'être* of the national associations.

As well as lobbying national governments 'at home', many associations also conduct advocacy activities towards the EU institutions through engagement with the CEMR, the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament and the European Commission in particular. Close networks within the associations present in Brussels also exist. 26 associations<sup>16</sup> from 17 countries have an office in Brussels; 15 of them located in the House of Cities, Municipalities and Regions, the same building as the CEMR, close to the European Parliament. These networks allow coordination of advocacy activity on a pan-EU basis to provide an effective voice in Brussels and in national capitals for local and regional government.



The second most covered activity by all respondents in all countries is the exchange of good practices and knowledge-sharing. The nuance in this case is that for 60 % of respondents, it is a main activity while it is a secondary one for 35%. Three associations do not cover this activity: the Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO), the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK), and the German County Association (DLT). There is no geographical correlation or link to the size of the associations. For the Swedish, the Bulgarian, and both the Austrian associations, but also the Italian association, and the Association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL) for instance, this activity is considered

a main activity. On the contrary, for both Danish associations, the ones from Portugal, Luxembourg, Latvia, Iceland, Spain, or Israel, this activity is secondary.

Correspondingly, these two activities of influencing governments as well as exchanging good practices and knowledge are also the two pillars on which CEMR's mission is based.

## B. Publications, research and studies

For all associations except seven, these being the Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM), the German DLT, the Irish LGMA, the Kosovan AKK, the Romanian ACOR, the Scottish COSLA and the Welsh WLGA, "Publications" are a main or secondary (for the majority) activity. Producing publications is an essential factor of publicity, esteem, and credibility for any group or organisation. A publication (whether electronic or otherwise) is a vehicle for information and the fact that all but seven associations mention it as an activity is relevant.

11 associations assessed it as being a main activity: the Albanian Association of Municipalities (SHBSH), all three Belgium associations, the German Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB), CEMR Italian section (AICCRE), the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR), the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia (SKGO), the Association of Municipalities and Towns of

### What are the activities covered by your association?



<sup>16</sup> Including the Belgian associations.

Slovenia (SOS), and the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB).

Almost two thirds of the respondents take on Research and Studies as a secondary activity. Moreover, 13 associations consider it to be a main activity, while 11 do not cover it at all. This activity is usually linked to the above-mentioned publications, even if for some larger associations, there is a dedicated team for research per se as a service for members like in LGA in England, or KS in Norway. It can be noted that from the 11 associations that do not cover the mission of Research and Studies, one considers publication as a main activity (the Belgian BRULOCALIS), four do not produce any publications (COSLA and WLGA from the UK, AKK from Kosovo, and DLT from Germany), and six consider publications to be a secondary activity: the Danish KL, the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (AECM), the German DST and RGRE, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (LSA), and the Luxembourgish SYVICOL.

The English LGA for instance has a Research and Information team of around 20 staff in London. Notably they have developed an online tool named "Local Government Inform" (LG Inform). It is a comprehensive benchmarking data service bringing together a range of key performance data for local governments, alongside background and financial information. Users can view data on 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.

## C. Salary negotiation of local and regional governments' workforce

The negotiation of the pay of local/regional government workforce is a heterogeneous activity, since almost two thirds (19 associations) of the associations exercising this activity (32 in total) address this issue as a main mission. Among them, we find for instance both Danish associations, the Bulgarian NAMRB, the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia ZMOS, the the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland

(SAMBAND), the Association of Basque Municipalities EUDEL, and the Swedish SKL.

26 associations do not cover this activity at all. This can be explained by the fact that not all associations have the competence to do so, as in general, such a function is established by law. An overview of the respondents shows that the countries considering this activity as a main mission are geographically located in the north and east of Europe. An example is the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). As a voluntary association, KS is not established by any legal provision, however one exception is that a provision in the Local Government Act gives KS the competence to bind its members to the results of collective bargaining agreements.

## D. Training and capacity building

Training and capacity building is also an important topic for the associations, although not covered by all of them (eight out of 58 associations do not implement at all this activity). 53% address it as a main activity and 33% as a secondary activity. There is no correlation with the size, the geographical location of the associations, or with considerations based on need for capacity building. For example, the Spanish FEMP, the Slovakian ZMOS, the Austrian STÄDTEBUND and the Croatian HRVZZ have indicated training and capacity building as being a main activity. For the association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL), this is a key activity. EUDEL provides specific training for women elected officials (network of mayors and councillors named "*Basqueskola*") as well as for all locally elected representatives (men and women) and for civil servants.

Those that cite it as a secondary activity include: the Association of Polish Cities (ZMP), the Belgium BRULOCALIS, as well as the Maltese LCA, and the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP).

Regarding the associations not exercising this activity, this includes the three German associations DLT, DST, RGRE, as well as the Danish Regions (REGIONER), the Kosovar AKK, the Dutch IPO, and in the UK: COSLA and WLGA. It seems important to highlight the fact that, except for Kosovo, the countries from which these associations originate have at least one

other CEMR association that exercises training and capacity building as a main activity (in the UK NILGA and LGA) or a secondary activity (German DStGB, Danish KL, Dutch VNG).

In France, AFCCRE has a specific agreement with the French National Centre for Local Public Service (CNFPT) which organises the training of local civil servants to provide specific training on European policies. AFCCRE is also recognised by the state as a training facility for local and regional elected representatives.

Further activities have been identified by the associations, such as providing advice and counselling to members on all relevant topics related to local policy issues. Furthermore, the Flemish VVSG deals with about 35,000 requests for advice on an annual basis. There are additional service activities that associations perform for their members, such as training, as underlined by the Finnish AFLRA. Both associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH) and the Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS), pointed out that they have the aim of improving local government performance.

Last example: the Master's degrees Course on Euro-projecting, a national course organised internally by the Italian AICCRE. With two editions each year (one per semester), it is managed by AICCRE in collaboration with selected professors. It is open to LRGs and their employees.

Alongside these activities, one of the main objectives and scope for the existence of the national associations is their representativeness and their capacity to speak for a number of local and regional governments. Is their voice heard at the national level?



# 4

**How are associations  
of towns and regions  
consulted?**

The right of local governments to be consulted by higher levels of government is a fundamental principle of European legal and democratic practice, enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Articles 4.6, 5, 9.6 and 10). The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has issued a report on *The consultation of local authorities by higher levels of government*<sup>17</sup>. It stresses the importance of the formalisation of institutionalised and result-oriented consultation and provides guidelines on the main elements an effective consultation should include. The important role of national associations of local and regional governments is stressed. The report also addresses the difference between consultation and lobbying.

In the first part of this chapter, the question of the national transparency registers will be addressed, before detailing the consultation processes in the 41 CEMR countries.

## A. National transparency registers

The objective of having a transparency register is to strengthen the framework for a transparent and ethical interaction between interest representatives and the European institutions. Transparent lobbying helps to ensure democratic decision-making processes that are open to scrutiny, at all stages of decision-making and to foster the trust of citizens. CEMR has consistently stated its support for more transparent policy-making. However, it has also underlined that national associations of local and regional government should be treated differently from commercial lobbyists or single-issue interest groups. National associations are often recognised as being public institutions with legal personality, a component of the State structure, or encompassing different infranational tiers of government. The work of the associations is typically steered by democratically elected representatives.

A register of lobbyists has existed in the European Parliament since 1995, but it has never been compulsory to be registered. In 2008 the Commission launched its own register and the two registers that of the European Parliament and of the European Commission were merged in 2011.

Of 41 countries, a transparency register exists only in 10 countries<sup>18</sup> and is not always directly comparable with the European one. In Germany for instance, there is a national transparency register for the German parliament (Bundestag) only. Of the 10 countries where a similar register exists, four countries have a mandatory register: Germany, Cyprus, Greece, and Israel.

For the rest, it is a voluntary register. In Romania for example, the transparency register acts as a database open to all organisations and persons that have lobbying or advocacy activities: registration is on a voluntary basis. The register includes an index of associations, foundations, federations, unions and other entities (like the one of the European Institutions).

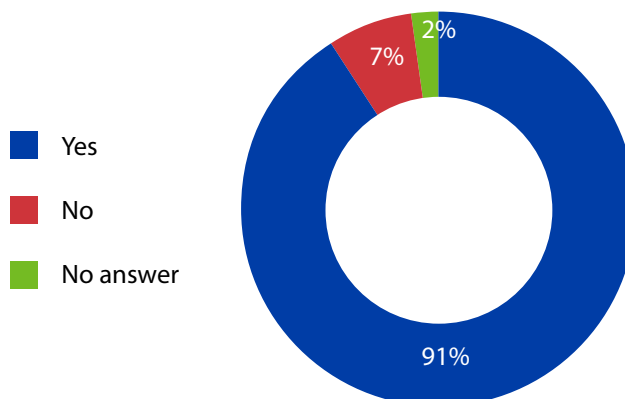
In the United Kingdom, there is no transparency register similar to the one of the European Institutions at the national level. While there are no registers for Wales and Northern Ireland, in Scotland the Lobbying Act 2016 entered into force on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018, but makes clear that Local Government communication does not constitute lobbying. In England, there

are also voluntary transparency registers for commercial lobbyists or consultants, and for public relations specialists.

In Poland, there has been a “Lobbying Act” in force since 2006. The Act aims to increase the transparency of lobbying in three ways: 1) an obligation for the government to publish its legislative agenda; 2) the creation of a lobby register; 3) requiring all public authorities participating in the law-making process to declare their lobby contacts.

In September 2016 the European Commission came forward with its proposal for a mandatory Transparency Register, which for the first time has seen efforts to introduce a compulsory register that would bind the working practices of all three EU Institutions. In the Commission’s draft proposals for which discussions are on-going, it clearly states that **local and regional governments and their representative associations should be excluded from the scope of the register**. This recognises CEMR’s position that since national associations perform an institutional role, often recognised by national constitutional or legal provisions, to articulate and represent the views of local government at national, European and International level, they should not be placed in the same category as commercial lobbyists.

Is your association regularly consulted by central government during the national legislative process?



17 CG35(2018)20 final, 8 November 2018, Rapporteur: Anders Knape  
 18 Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia.

## B. Mandatory consultation and process efficiency

98 % of the national associations responding to the survey are consulted by their central government during the national legislative process, on a regular basis for 91 % of them, even if the consultation is mandatory in only one country out of two (55%). Several consultation systems exist, depending on the nature of the document foreseeing the consultation of the associations.

### Consultation based on the Constitution

Both Austrian associations must be consulted according to a Constitutional provision. They are the constitutional representative bodies of the Austrian local level (cities, towns and municipalities). The Austrian consultation mechanism ensures local and regional governments' right to a proper impact assessment of national legislation. Local government associations may even veto a national law that does not correctly assess the (financial) impact for the local level, leading to renegotiation. In case of non-respect of this obligation, local government associations, municipalities and/or regions can go to Court.

In Albania, the Organic Law on Local Self-Government ensures consultation between central government and local self-government units. A Consultative Council has been established. It is a structure made up of representatives of central and local governments, serving as a platform for dialogue.

### Consultation based on law

10 associations specifically mention a Legislative Act as the basis for the compulsory nature of their consultation by the central government. For instance, several associations such as the Bulgarian, the Icelandic or the Lithuanian associations have their right to be consulted anchored in a Local Government Act. It should be noted that the consultation only has to take place for draft legislation that might have an impact on local government, in terms of local finances for example. The Bulgarian NAMRB and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) for

instance, mentioned the right to draft and/or discuss amendments to national legislation.

The Spanish Constitution recognises the uniqueness of the economic system of the Basque Country with respect to the Central Government. Therefore, the Association of Basque Municipalities (EUEDEL) has a specific and differentiated status anchored in law, meaning that it must be consulted by the regional government regarding draft legislation with local impact. That direct consultation of local government (represented through EUEDEL) is regulated by an "early warning" body, consisting of locally elected representatives, whose main mission is to alert to possible infringements of local self-government in the preliminary design of draft legislation (bills and regulations) so that they can be corrected prior to their legislative development.

The Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (AECM) explained that in addition to the mandatory consultation on legislation, the AECM takes part in the budget negotiations. Indeed, while the draft budget is prepared, the Central Government and AECM make an agreement on the financial transfers from the next year's state budget to the municipalities. This agreement is annexed to the draft budget when sent to the Parliament.

The National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) insisted on the fact that NALAG representatives actually participate in

the committees of the Georgian Parliament with a consultative voice. The association also works with the Government of Georgia on issues that are linked to local governance and local development.

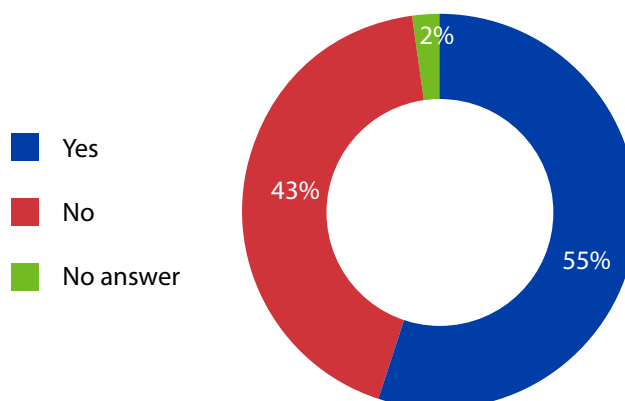
### Consultation based on other documents

The Netherlands is a particular example where the consultation of the associations is based on a code of conduct. In 2004, the central government and the representatives of sub-national governments drew up an Inter-Governmental Relationships Code<sup>19</sup>. According to its provisions, whenever new legislation and policies that affect local government are being drawn up, the Dutch VNG and IPO have to be consulted and must be given time to consult their membership.

The North Macedonian association, ZELS, which is anchored at the level of General Law, explained that their consultation is guaranteed by a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) that has been signed together with the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. The MoC specifies that ZELS cooperates with the Government on the preparation of laws that concern local government. ZELS representatives are part of legislation drafting and analysing teams, contributing to the elaboration of laws and by-laws relevant for local self-government.

While local government is recognised in the Danish Constitution, there is no legal framework for consultation procedures.

Is your consultation mandatory?



<sup>19</sup> BZK, 2005

Parliamentary rules of procedure stipulate that all relevant partners are to be consulted prior to the presentation of a bill to parliament. There are established procedures on consultation with Local Government Denmark (KL) on all legislation with a bearing on local and regional governments. While purely consultative, this gives a degree of predictability that enables proper policy development by local government.

Notwithstanding the examples cited, the mandatory nature of a consultation is neither the guarantee of an efficient process, nor of the concrete taking into account of the associations' views. This is underlined by both the Moldavian CALM and the Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS).

CALM explained that the provided opinions are seldom considered, and that the consultations are formal and obsolete. SOS explained that in Slovenia, municipalities must be consulted, but that the government is not obliged to follow the recommendations or comments from municipalities.

### C. Frequency of consultations

Further comments made by the associations explain how regular the consultation process is, even though it is not legally mandatory. For instance, for the Flemish VVSG there is no formal consultative procedure that is binding by law, but several informal contacts between members of staff and all those

bodies that play an important role in the decision-making process. Also, the Croatian County Association (HRVZZ) mentioned a participation in working groups, the signing of common declarations as well as the existence of common conferences.

The consultation also depends on the topics that are addressed. In Germany, consultation takes place whenever municipal rights are concerned, but not concerning all legislative proposals on the federal level<sup>20</sup>. The national associations (DST, DStGB, and DLT) are frequently consulted or can provide their opinions on national level to the federal ministries and to the federal parliament (Bundestag). Furthermore, the local government associations in the "Land" are consulted on "Land" level. The frequency then depends on the corresponding "Land" legislation.

Several associations are regularly consulted through a committee (e.g. the Turkish TBB) or a joint secretariat (like NILGA in Northern Ireland), composed of representatives of local government associations and the government. The Hungarian association TÖOSZ explained that following a strategic partnership agreement with the Ministry of Interior Affairs, a Council has been set up to work closely together and in a pre-set manner on all issues.

The Association of Polish Counties (ZPP) delegates its representatives to the Joint Commission of Government and Local Government and has the right allocated by the regulations of the *Sejm* (lower house

of the Polish parliament) and the Senate to submit comments on the draft legislation.

In Norway, the consultation of the association takes place on a regular basis, settled on a mutual agreement between the association and the government. Indeed, there is a system of consultation between KS and the Norwegian government which takes place three times a year, with predefined topics and with different ministers in the government. KS is also involved in examinations and hearings on topics concerning the municipal and regional sector, and participates in hearings in the Parliament on relevant matters.

The Serbian SKGO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a number of national institutions which are the basis for cooperation on different topics, starting with the National Assembly, Government, relevant ministries, etc.

### D. Other cases

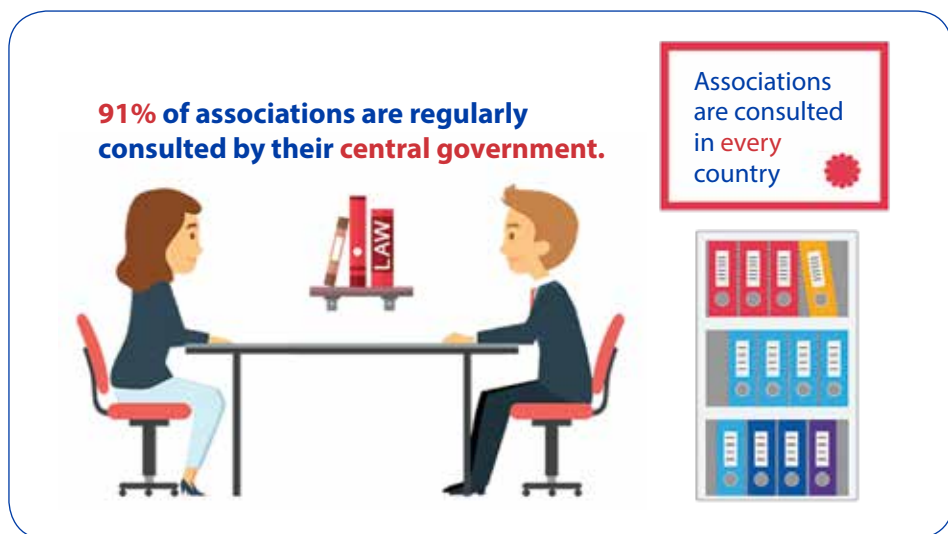
#### Associations with no regular or mandatory consultation

For two other associations, the Italian association AICCRE and the Greek association KEDE, consultation by central government is neither regular nor mandatory. Indeed, for the Greek association, consultation takes place at their own permanent request, while for AICCRE, the regularity of the consultation is managed through the State-Regions Conference and the State-Cities Conference. Therefore, the consultation is not mandatory for AICCRE, but only for associations with the official role of Syndicates of Local Governments.

#### Consultations regarding EU policies

Last but not least, for the Scottish association COSLA and both Austrian associations, a consultation process of the associations also exists in matters of EU Policies.

For the Austrian associations, according to the Austrian Constitution, the local (and regional) level has to be consulted and their positions considered on EU matters which impact the local level. As a result, both associations



<sup>20</sup> The consultation is regulated by the rules of procedure of the Federal Government, Federal Council and German Bundestag.

have offices in the Austrian Permanent Representation in Brussels.

When creating national EU policies that directly affect local governments, civil servants use COSLA as a first contact point with regards to the Scottish Government Guidance on Handling EU Obligations and Influencing EU policy. The UK Government EU Policy Statement on local government helps scope the impact of EU law upon UK municipalities; and the new joint UK-Local Government body that is being developed with the UK Government helps deal with Brexit and repatriation of EU powers.

Within the Danish EU decision-making process, 33 "EU Special Committees" allow to formally shape government policy. In the four weeks allocated to preparing a Danish negotiating provision, the Committee will evaluate the judicial, administrative and economic impact of the proposal and whether it is at odds with Danish interests. The purpose of the EU-Special Committees is to prepare the Danish EU-mandate on the different issues. The EU Committee in the Parliament gives the final mandate to the ministers before going to a Council meeting. CEMR's Danish associations KL and REGIONER are currently represented in ten committees.

For additional information and guidelines on how to make consultation processes even more effective and beneficial for all stakeholders, the Congress report is detailing concrete proposals and practices, while recalling the principles and what is at stake: democracy; and the importance of national associations of local and regional governments. Their role is crucial at national level. What about the European level?

5

**Representation in Europe**

Country	Associations participating in the work of:	CEMR	CoR	CLRAE   Congress
Albania	Albanian Association of Municipalities	●	●	●
Austria	Austrian Associations of Municipalities	●	●	●
	Austrian Association of Cities and Towns	●	●	●
Belgium	Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region	●		●
	Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities	●		●
	Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia	●	●	●
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	●	●	●
	Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska	●		●
Bulgaria	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	●	●	●
Croatia	Croatian County Association	●	●	●
Cyprus	Union of Cyprus Municipalities	●	●	●
Czech Republic	Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic	●	●	●
Denmark	Danish Regions	●	●	●
	Local Government Denmark	●	●	●
Estonia	Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities	●	●	●
Finland	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities	●	●	●
France	French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●	●
Georgia	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	●	●	●
Germany	German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●	
	German County Association	●	●	●
	Association of German Cities	●	●	●
	German Association of Towns and Municipalities	●	●	●
Greece	Central Union of Municipalities of Greece	●	●	●
Hungary	Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities	●		●
Iceland	Association of Local Authorities in Iceland	●	●	●
Ireland	Local Government Management Agency	●		
Israel	Federation of Local Authorities in Israel	●		●
Italy	Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions	●	●	●
Kosovo	Association of Kosovo Municipalities	●	●	●
Latvia	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments	●	●	●
Lithuania	Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania	●	●	●
Luxembourg	Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities	●	●	●
Malta	Local Councils Association	●	●	●
Moldova	Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova	●	●	●
Montenegro	Union of Municipalities of Montenegro	●		●
Netherlands	Association of Provinces of the Netherlands	●	●	●
	Association of Netherlands Municipalities	●	●	●
North Macedonia	Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia	●	●	●
Norway	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	●	●	●
Poland	Association of Polish Counties	●	●	●
	Association of Polish Cities	●	●	●
Portugal	National Association of Portuguese Municipalities	●	●	●
Romania	National Union of County Councils of Romania	●	●	●
	Romanian Municipalities Association	●	●	●
	Association of Communes of Romania	●	●	●
Serbia	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia	●	●	●
Slovakia	Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia	●	●	●
Slovenia	Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia	●		●
	Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia	●	●	●
Spain	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces	●	●	●
	Association of Basque Municipalities	●		●
Sweden	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions	●	●	●
Turkey	Union of Municipalities of Turkey	●	●	●
Ukraine	Association of Ukrainian Cities	●		
United Kingdom	Local Government Association	●	●	●
	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities	●	●	●
	Northern Ireland Local Government Association	●	●	●
	Welsh Local Government Association	●	●	●



The creation of the CEMR back in 1951 meant that for the first time, local governments could speak at the European level with a common voice. The desire of local governments to reinforce their advocacy efforts at the supranational level led to the creation of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe. Both these Consultative chambers were established in 1993. The Committee of the Regions has an advisory role and is consulted on all matters of the European Union that have an impact on Local and Regional governance while the Congress monitors the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the successor to the European Charter on local liberties, adopted by CEMR in 1953 as its first important political document. Nowadays, there exist a number of other associations and networks that voice local and regional concerns at the European level, usually focusing on a particular theme or representing a single tier of government.

## A. Council of European Municipalities and Regions

**Creation:** 1951  
**Members:** 60  
**Countries represented:** 41  
**More info:** [www.cemr.eu](http://www.cemr.eu)

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) was founded in 1951, as a community of mayors to support the creation of a united Europe based on empowered local self-governments. After the creation of the European Council of Municipalities (ECM), and in order to mobilise the greatest number of interested municipalities, they soon regrouped themselves into national sections in the original founding countries. Regions joined in the 1980s to create the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

With the growing interest of local and regional governments in European affairs, the successive enlargements of the EU, the fall of the Iron curtain, the opening up to central Europe and the growing influence of European regulations on local and regional policies, other National Associations of Local and Regional Governments requested

to participate in CEMR in the early 90's. This led to the merger of CEMR and the European section of IULA (the International Union of Local Authorities), creating the largest and sole organisation regrouping all national associations of local and regional governments in Europe.

Nowadays, all tiers of sub-national governments are represented by our members (municipalities, provinces and regions), from 41 European countries. They are associations or federations of local and regional governments. It is worth noting that CEMR does not represent federal or quasi-federal entities so as not to create conflicts of interest when speaking on behalf of their members. The membership comprises local, inter-municipal, provincial and regional governments' associations, but does not extend to the German Länder, the Belgian Regions or communities, or to Spanish Regions.

The European institutions have recognised the uniqueness of CEMR, and the value of its contributions to developing EU policies that impact local and regional governments. CEMR has worked extensively with the committees of the European Parliament over the years, when issues of importance to local and regional governments have been under the spotlight and when it has been necessary to provide the specific local and regional government perspective.

CEMR's added value contribution to shaping EU policies has been formally recognised by the European Parliament following the adoption of its resolution in July 2018 that supports CEMR becoming a permanent consultant of the EU institutions when it is necessary for the sub-national level to be taken into account<sup>21</sup>.

At intergovernmental level, the Urban Agenda for the EU<sup>22</sup> also recognises the role of the associations representing urban authorities and in particular, CEMR and Eurocities. The Member States agreed to involve these two associations directly in further developments of the EU Urban Agenda. In that capacity, CEMR can both participate in, and propose the nomination of cities willing to engage in one of the thematic partnerships.

The CEMR structure allows for different representatives of the associations to play a particular role within the organisation.

### *The governing bodies*<sup>23</sup>

The CEMR is a representative and democratic political organisation. It has two governing bodies: the Policy Committee and the Executive Bureau.

The Policy Committee is the main decision-making body, composed of locally and regionally elected representatives nominated by the CEMR member/national associations. Around 170 members, elected for a renewable three-year mandate, usually gather twice a year to approve the budget, the annual work programme and decide upon the main policy lines of the organisation.

Each national delegation is assigned a given number of seats based on the size of the country's population. CEMR applies a gender equality policy that imposes to all of its members to nominate at least 40 % of each gender in their delegation. At present, CEMR's Policy Committee is composed of 47 % of women and 53 % of men which makes it the only European organisation of local and regional governments with such a gender equality standard.

The Executive Bureau members, i.e. CEMR's President, two Co-Presidents, the Executive Presidents, the Vice-Presidents, the Chair of the Financial Management Committee and the Secretary General, are appointed by the Policy Committee members. The Bureau carries out the Committee's decisions and is responsible for CEMR's work and policy between Committee meetings.

### *Expert groups and other working structures*

Following the priorities set by the governing bodies, the associations assign experts, and/or a general representative to contribute to the work of CEMR, which is managed by the Secretariat. Its work is structured within five thematic areas, which cover all relevant aspects of the lives of European citizens as well as the local and regional governments that represent them:

21 In the European Parliament resolution of 3 July 2018 on the role of cities in the institutional framework of the Union - PA\_TA\_PROV 2018/0273  
 22 In the Pact of Amsterdam  
 23 For more information, please consult CEMR website: [http://www.ccre.org/en/article/political\\_structure](http://www.ccre.org/en/article/political_structure)

- Governance, democracy and citizenship
- Environment, climate and energy
- Economic, social and territorial cohesion
- Local and regional public services management
- International engagement and cooperation

There are 15 expert groups and two committees involving elected representatives following specific topics. The expert groups in 2019:

- Expert group on governance, local democracy and citizenship
- Expert group on town twinning
- Task Force on Migration and Refugees
- Standing Committee for Equality of women and men in local life
- Expert Group on the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life
- Committee of young local and regional elected representatives
- Expert group on waste
- Expert group on the climate and energy transition
- Expert group on mobility
- Expert group on territorial cohesion
- Expert group on local finances
- Expert group on local and regional government as employers
- Expert group on public services and e-government
- Expert group on digitalisation
- Task Force on SDGs
- Expert group on research and studies

CEMR's structure allows for the nomination of politicians as spokespersons on specific topics. They are involved in the preparation and presentation of policy papers and express CEMR's concerns and views to the European institutions and within the wider global arena.

Specific strategies have been developed within each expert group to address the challenges under consideration and to best represent the local and regional government case, drawing on the evidence from research and studies, by lobbying, and undertaking joint projects.

The regularity and the work of the expert groups depend on the involvement, dedication and expertise of the associations, as well as on the legislative programme of the

European Union, and the interest in exchange of knowledge and experience.

### The international scene

CEMR is also the European section of the world organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through which European local and regional governments are represented on the international stage.

There is an increasing recognition of the local level by international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for European Cooperation and Development (OECD). The UN recognises local governments as key actors to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to tackle climate change.

CEMR leads PLATFORMA, the European coalition of local and regional governments and their associations involved in development cooperation. CEMR member associations are partners of PLATFORMA<sup>24</sup>.

## B. Committee of the Regions

**Creation: 1994**  
**Members: 350**  
**Countries represented: 28**  
**More info: [www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)**

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has 350 members representing local and regional governments from all 28 EU Member States. They gather in plenary sessions in Brussels five to six times a year to discuss political priorities and adopt opinions on EU legislation and policy. The working committees play an important role and this is where the detailed drafting of the reports takes place. In addition to CEMR's collaboration with the CoR, the involvement of the associations of local and regional governments in coordinating, assisting, advising or exchanging with CoR members supports and strengthens the CoR's work

In 26 out of the 28 Member States, local and regional government associations are in touch with their national delegation or individual members. The Hungarian National

Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ) and the Irish Local Government Management Association (LGMA) are not coordinating nor assisting their delegation.

In Italy, AICCRES does not officially coordinate a delegation or assist individual members of the Committee of the Regions, but it works with the members of the Italian delegation. In Belgium, none of CEMR's associations play an official role of this kind, but they have contact with their members, notably in Wallonia (the association is the Union of cities and municipalities of Wallonia, UVCW).

Five associations from non-EU countries are involved in the CoR's consultative committees: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia. The Serbian association, SKGO, does not formally coordinate a delegation, but contributes to all activities of the Secretariat, which is based in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. SKGO also assists the five individual members of the Joint Consultative Committee, CoR-Serbia, who are appointed by the SKGO Presidency. A similar Joint Consultative Committee is currently being negotiated for Turkey and the United Kingdom, taking into account the probable withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU.

The Moldavian association CALM, and the Georgian association NALAG, provide assistance to their members in the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), the political forum of local and regional governments from the European Union and the Eastern Partnership countries set up in 2011<sup>25</sup>. Ukraine is also part of CORLEAP.

The European Economic Area (EEA) European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Forum was set up by a decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States<sup>26</sup> as an informal body to involve elected representatives from local and regional governments in EEA matters. The Forum works closely with other EEA EFTA bodies and has established links with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union. Although the Icelandic (SAMBAND) and Norwegian (KS) associations are not mentioned specifically in the Standing Committee decision, they are de facto

24 For additional information on PLATFORMA, please consult the website: <http://platforma-dev.eu/>

25 Countries involved in the CORLEAP: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

26 The EFTA Member States are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

significantly involved in the work of the Forum. Their boards nominate members of the Forum and they have the main responsibility of organising its meetings.

### **Level of involvement of the associations in the work of the Committee of the Regions**

Not all associations have the same level of involvement in coordinating a delegation or individual members in the CoR.

Although members of the Committee of the Regions are formally nominated by their national governments, some associations are involved in the nomination process of their national CoR delegation. In France, several associations share the coordination of the French delegation. In Austria, both associations have the right to propose three members to the Austrian delegation. In Denmark, three members and three alternate members are proposed by the regional level (REGIONER). In Slovenia, the Association of Municipalities and Towns (SOS) proposes four members, five alternate members, and the national coordinator. In the UK, the English LGA proposes 16 full members, and 16 alternates; the Scottish COSLA proposes two full members and two alternates; and the Welsh and Northern Irish associations each propose one full and one alternate member.

In Romania, all three associations are heavily involved in CoR activities. The Romanian delegation has 15 members and 15 alternates. The Association of Romanian Municipalities (AMR) puts forward three members and three alternates. There is also an AMR representation office in Brussels that provides assistance to its members at the Committee of the Regions and attends the meetings in Brussels. The Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR) has three full members and three alternates in the European Committee of the Regions. The National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR) has six full members and six alternates.

Some associations play the role of coordinators: in Finland (the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities), in the Netherlands, in Lithuania, in Cyprus, in the UK (the LGA), in Romania both AMR and UNCJR, etc. Many are not the official coordinators but provide support to individual members

of the CoR upon their request, like the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR), the Polish ZMP, the Slovakian association of Towns and Communities (ZMOS), etc. In the UK, NILGA and WLGA assist their individual members respectively from Northern Ireland and Wales. The National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP) explained that it is part of a shared network, working together with the government and the permanent representation of Portugal in Brussels.

In total, directly or indirectly, 48 associations from 36 CEMR countries are coordinating or assisting a delegation or individual(s) at the Committee of the Regions.

## **C. Council of Europe: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

**Creation: 1994**  
**Members/Countries: 47**  
**More info: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)**

In all the 41 countries covered by the CEMR, at least one association is involved in the coordination or assistance of individual members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE or Congress); except for Ireland and Ukraine. Some members of the board of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) are members of the Congress. The achievements, decisions, issues raised at the sessions and meetings of the Congress are disseminated among the AUC members.

Regarding the number of members and substitutes coordinated by the national associations in the CLRAE, both the Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS) and the Flemish VVSG are represented by one member as well as one substitute. COSLA or AMR coordinate two members. The Maltese LCA coordinates three members as well as three substitutes, and the Serbian Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SKGO) delegates six members and six substitutes.

Six associations provide assistance to the members and/or substitutes in CLRAE: the Belgian VVSG and UVCW, the Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH), the two

national Danish associations, and the AMR of Romania.

14 associations provide the a secretariat for the members of their national delegations within the CLRAE. For instance, both Austrian associations act as the secretariat of the national delegation, together with the region of Tyrol. The secretary of the Romanian delegation is an employee of the National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR). The Georgian association, NALAG, serves as a national secretariat for the Georgian delegation to the Congress, and the secretary of the Georgian delegation is also a full-time staff member of NALAG. The Latvian Association communicates with the Secretariat of the Congress on administrative issues concerning members' involvement in Congress activities. The Serbian association, SKGO, provide the secretariat of the Serbian Delegation within the CLRAE, formally designated by the government of Serbia. The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM) prepares statements for individual members and prepares inputs for CLRAE reports on local democracy.

10 associations play a role in the designation of CLRAE representatives. This is the case for instance for the Belgian association UVCW, which designates one member and two substitutes, the German association DStGB, and the Icelandic association, SAMBAND, which nominates the whole Icelandic delegation to the Congress.

In total, directly or indirectly, 55 associations (out of 58) from 40 CEMR countries are coordinating or assisting a delegation or individual(s) at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

## **D. Other European networks or associations**

The members of the national associations of local and regional governments can also be part of other European networks, usually more focused in terms of representativeness (big cities, only maritime regions, etc.) or topics covered (energy, climate, etc.). There is a tradition of collaboration between networks, when combined forces can have a greater impact. CEMR cooperates with all of them where there are common interests or where joint lobbying action is required. To name but

a few examples, the Association of European Border Regions, the Association of European Regions, Climate Alliance, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Energy Cities, Eurocities, the European Association of Development Agencies, and the network of Local Governments for Sustainability are partners CEMR often cooperates with.

### **Association of European Border Regions**

**Creation: 1971**  
**Members: 10**  
**Countries represented: 39**  
**More info: [www.aebr.eu](http://www.aebr.eu)**

The Association of European Border Regions was created in 1971 to bring together ten border regions from around Europe. Its aim is to support cross-border cooperation and represent the interests of border and cross-border areas at European, national and regional levels.

### **Assembly of European Regions**

**Creation: 1985**  
**Members: 47**  
**Countries represented: 8**  
**More info: [www.aer.eu](http://www.aer.eu)**

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) was formed in 1985 prompted by politicians in favour of regionalism who gathered representatives from 47 regions in France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and the United Kingdom. The AER has since been advocating for regional rights. Today, the AER is composed of three committees focusing on territorial innovation and regional development, social policy and public health and culture, education and youth.

### **Climate Alliance**

**Creation: 1990**  
**Members: 1,700**  
**Countries represented: 26**  
**More info: [www.climatealliance.org](http://www.climatealliance.org)**

Climate Alliance is a network of 1,700 European cities and municipalities committed to reducing greenhouse gases and to act in solidarity with indigenous communities in the Amazon basin. Founded in 1990, its Brussels secretariat supports its members in reaching three main goals: reducing CO2 emissions by 10% every 5 years, ensuring

per capita emissions do not exceed 2.5 tonnes CO2 through renewable and efficient energy usage, to support climate justice in partnership with indigenous peoples through supporting their initiatives and refraining from consumption of unsustainably managed tropical timber.

### **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions**

**Creation: 1973**  
**Members: 160**  
**Countries represented: 25**  
**More info: [www.cpmr.org](http://www.cpmr.org)**

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) is a network of 160 Regions from 25 European countries. It acts as both a think tank and a lobby, focusing on blue growth and maritime policy as well as social, economic and territorial cohesion. Created in 1973, its principal activities centre around six Geographical Commissions covering Europe's maritime basin: the North Sea, the Atlantic Arc, the Balkans and the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean and European Islands.

### **Energy Cities**

**Creation: 1990**  
**Members: 1,000**  
**Countries represented: 30**  
**More info: [www.energy-cities.eu](http://www.energy-cities.eu)**

EnergyCities is the European association of local governments in energy transition. Founded in 1990, it represents 1,000 towns and cities across 30 countries. It aims to accelerate the shift towards sustainable power supply and to find innovative ways of reducing cities' energy consumption. Their three-tiered approach focuses on developing democratically managed energy sources, divesting financial investments from the fossil fuel industry and giving local governments more say in decision concerning the infrastructure, production and provision of energy.

### **Eurocities**

**Creation: 1986**  
**Members: 140**  
**Countries represented: 39**  
**More info: [www.eurocities.eu](http://www.eurocities.eu)**

Eurocities is a network regrouping 140 major cities in Europe. To become a full member, a city must have a minimum population of

250,000, play a central role across its region and encompass an international dimension. Founded in 1986, it intends to provide such cities with a networking platform where they can share best practices and participate in working groups related to European urban issues. A Brussels office monitors and seeks to influence EU policy in favour of city governments and works for their voice to be heard during decision making processes.

### **European Association of Development Agencies**

**Creation: 1992**  
**Members: 78**  
**Countries represented: 23**  
**More info: [www.eurada.org](http://www.eurada.org)**

The European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA), founded in 1992, brings together experts working on economic development from 23 European countries through a network of 78 members. Its areas of activity contribute to the European Commission's (EC) policies for innovation in SMEs and Smart specialisation strategies. EURADA is also involved in EC funded projects such as the European Migrant Entrepreneurship Network, Erasmus+ and three Interreg projects.

### **Local Governments for Sustainability**

**Creation: 1990**  
**Members: 160**  
**Countries represented: 35**  
**More info: [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)**

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) was founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. It brings together cities, towns and regions to support them in project preparation and advocates for urban sustainability policies. This covers a holistic set of fields ranging from climate change mitigation and adaptation, smart cities, and the circular economy to urban governance. It has over 160 members from more than 35 European countries.

# Conclusion

For local democracy, national governance or European governance: associations of local and regional governments are fundamental. They represent towns and regions, they are the governance level, which is the closest to citizens, where public services, legislation and policies have a direct impact on individuals, on the community, and on society.

Whether directly or not, whether alone or in cooperation with other associations, CEMR's member associations are key in uniting the voice, the needs, the interests and the knowledge of local and regional governments. Their structure, their nature, their organisation and their staff highlight the recognition of their importance and the need to improve the formalisation and the *de facto* effectiveness of their institutional role.

Their daily activities and missions demonstrate the need they are addressing. Their role in the legislative procedure and the consultation mechanisms is vital for the development and implementation of more pertinent and adequate policies and public action.

Common understanding and efficient governance in partnership is needed now more than ever. And their voice at the European and international levels needs to be heard, when so many decisions and objectives are interconnected in a horizontal as well as vertical way: as exemplified by the Sustainable Development Goals.

The aim of this study is to shed light on the national associations of local and regional governments (which are members of the CEMR) but also to call on strengthening their position, their structure and their capacities. They are major players in constituting and implementing the way we live together in a city, in a region, in a country, in Europe, and in the world.

**Local and regional  
government associations  
at a glance**





# 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.

**CEMR in Albania:** Albanian Association of Municipalities

## Albanian Association of Municipalities (SHBSH)

### Membership and coverage

- 61 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Albanian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in organic law

### Staff

3 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.aam.org.al](http://www.aam.org.al)





# Austria

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

**CEMR in Austria:** Association of Cities and Towns  
Association of Austrian Municipalities

	Association of Cities and Towns (STAEDTEBUND)		Association of Austrian Municipalities (GEMEINDEBUND)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 255 members (cities and towns)</li> <li>• 70 % of the Austrian population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 members (regional associations)</li> <li>• 70 % of the Austrian population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	20 employees (full-time)		14 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce		✓	✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓			✓
Research and studies	✓			✓
Publications		✓		✓
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.staedtebund.gv.at">www.staedtebund.gv.at</a>		<a href="http://www.gemeindebund.at">www.gemeindebund.at</a>	



# 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*).

## CEMR in Belgium: Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities<sup>26</sup>

Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region

Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities

Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia

	Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region (BRULOCALIS)		Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)		Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 members (communes, inter-communal associations)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Brussels population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 308 members (local authorities)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Flemish population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 262 members (cities and towns)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Walloon population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Created by a decision taken by the members</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	30 employees (full-time)		130 employees (full-time)		60 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce		✓	✓			✓
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building		✓	✓		✓	
Research and studies				✓	✓	
Publications	✓		✓		✓	
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.brulocalis.be">www.brulocalis.be</a>		<a href="http://www.vvsg.be">www.vvsg.be</a>		<a href="http://www.uvcw.be">www.uvcw.be</a>	

<sup>26</sup> The Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities, a national section of CEMR, is the federation of CEMR member associations of municipalities, cities and provinces of the three regions: BRULOCALIS for Brussels Capital Region, UVCW for Wallonia and VVSG for Flanders.



# 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 of the jurisdiction of the Republic of Srpska. The Republic of Srpska is composed of municipalities (*opština*) and the FBiH is composed of municipalities (*općina*) and counties (*kantoni*).

**CEMR in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska

	Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH)		Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 members (local authorities)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64 members (towns and municipalities)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Republic of Srpska's population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	8 employees (full-time)		9 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce				
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓		✓	
Research and studies		✓		✓
Publications		✓		✓
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.sogfbih.ba">www.sogfbih.ba</a>		<a href="http://www.alvrs.com">www.alvrs.com</a>	



# Bulgaria

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

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

## National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)

### Membership and coverage

- 265 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Bulgarian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

55 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.namrb.org](http://www.namrb.org)



# Croatia

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

## CEMR in Croatia: Croatian County Association

### Croatian County Association (HRVZZ)

#### Membership and coverage

- 21 members (counties and the city of Zagreb)
- 100 % of the national population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

4 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.hrvzz.hr](http://www.hrvzz.hr)



# Cyprus

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

## CEMR in Cyprus: The Union of Cyprus Municipalities

### The Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM)

#### Membership and coverage

- 39 members (municipalities)
- 71 % of the national population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

12 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications

More info

[www.ucm.org.cy](http://www.ucm.org.cy)



# Czech Republic

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

## CEMR in the Czech Republic: Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic

### Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR)

#### Membership and coverage

- 2,734 members (municipalities)
- 78.98 % of the Czech population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

56 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.smocr.cz](http://www.smocr.cz)



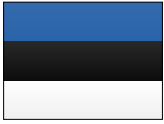


# Denmark

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

**CEMR in Denmark:** Danske Regioner  
Local Government Denmark

	Danske Regioner (REGIONER)		Local Government Denmark (KL)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 members (regions)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Danish population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98 members (municipalities)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Danish population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in none of the defined legal categories</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	170 employees (full-time)		400 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓		✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing		✓		✓
Training/ capacity building				✓
Research and studies		✓		
Publications		✓		✓
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.regioner.dk">www.regioner.dk</a>		<a href="http://www.kl.dk">www.kl.dk</a>	



# Estonia

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

**CEMR in Estonia:** Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities

## Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (AECM)

### Membership and coverage

- 74 members (municipalities)
- 99 % of the Estonian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

19 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies

Publications



More info

[www.elvl.ee](http://www.elvl.ee)



# Finland

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

**CEMR in Finland:** Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities

## Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA)

### Membership and coverage

- 311 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Finnish population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in multiple legal categories

### Staff

220 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

#### main



#### secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.kuntaliitto.fi](http://www.kuntaliitto.fi)



# France

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

**CEMR in France:** French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions  
French Association of Mayors<sup>27</sup>

## French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE)

### Membership and coverage

- 1,000 members (municipalities, intercommunalities, departments, regions)
- 76 % of the French population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

11 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

#### main



#### secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.afccre.org](http://www.afccre.org)

27 Associate member under an agreement with AFCCRE.



# Georgia

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

**CEMR in Georgia:** National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia

## National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)

### Membership and coverage

- 64 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Georgian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in the constitution

### Staff

16 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.nala.ge](http://www.nala.ge)



# Germany

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

**CEMR in Germany:** German Association of CEMR  
 German County Association  
 Association of German Cities  
 German Association of Towns and Municipalities

	German Association of CEMR (RGRE)		German County Association (DLT)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>800 members</li> <li>Umbrella association</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 members (regional associations)</li> <li>68 % of German population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of legal persons</li> <li>Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered association (<i>eingetragener Verein</i>)</li> <li>Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	3 employees (full-time)		25 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce			✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building				
Research and studies			✓	
Publications		✓		
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.rgre.de">www.rgre.de</a>		<a href="http://www.landkreistag.de">www.landkreistag.de</a>	

	Association of German Cities (DST)		German Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,400 members (local authorities)</li> <li>• 62 % of the German population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 members (11,000 municipalities)</li> <li>• 60 % of the German population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unregistered association (like political parties, trade unions or religious communities)</li> <li>• Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	120 employees (full-time)		30 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce				
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing		✓	✓	
Training/ capacity building				✓
Research and studies				✓
Publications		✓	✓	
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.staedtetag.de">www.staedtetag.de</a>		<a href="http://www.dstgb.de">www.dstgb.de</a>	





# Greece

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

**CEMR in Greece:** Central Union of Municipalities of Greece

## Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)

### Membership and coverage

- 13 members (regional associations of municipalities)
- 100 % of the Greek population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

23 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.kedke.gr](http://www.kedke.gr)



# 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*).

**CEMR in Hungary: Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities<sup>28</sup>**

## Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ)

### Membership and coverage

- 1,614 members (municipalities)
- 30 % of the Hungarian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in the constitution

### Staff

6 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.toosz.hu](http://www.toosz.hu)

28

There are seven member associations of the CEMR in Hungary, and the Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities is the CEMR contact point for all. The six other associations are: the Hungarian Association of Local Governments (MÖSZ), Hungarian Village Association (MFVSZ), Association of Small Cities (KÖÖÉSZ), National Association of Communes and Small Municipalities (KÖSZ), Association of Towns with County Rank (MJVSZ), National Association of County Local Governments (MÖÖSZ).



# Iceland

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

**CEMR in Iceland:** Association of Local Authorities in Iceland

## Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (SAMBAND)

### Membership and coverage

- 72 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Icelandic population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

28 employees (full-time)

### Activities

	main	secondary
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing		✓
Training/ capacity building		✓
Research and studies		✓
Publications		✓

More info

[www.samband.is](http://www.samband.is)



# 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.

**CEMR in Ireland:** Local Government Management Agency

## Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

### Membership and coverage

- 31 members (local authorities)
- 100 % of the Irish population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in a regulation or decision adopted by an executive body

### Staff

101 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.lgma.ie](http://www.lgma.ie)



# Israel

Israel is a unitary state composed of regional councils (*moatsa ezorit*), local councils (*moatsa mekomit*) and municipalities (*iria*).

## CEMR in Israel: Federation of Local Authorities in Israel

### Federation of Local Authorities in Israel (MASHAM)

#### Membership and coverage

- 257 members (local authorities and regional councils)
- 100 % of the Israeli population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

60 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.masham.org.il](http://www.masham.org.il)



# Italy

Italy is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*Comuni*), provinces (*province*), metropolitan cities (*Città metropolitane*) and regions (*Regioni*).

**CEMR in Italy:** Italian Association of Municipalities, Provinces and Regions

## Italian Association of local authorities (AICCRE)

### Membership and coverage

- 2,200 members (municipalities, cities, metropolitan cities, provinces and regions)
- 95 % of the Italian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in the Italian Civil code

### Staff

9 employees (part-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.aiccre.it](http://www.aiccre.it)



# Kosovo

The Republic of Kosovo is a decentralised unitary government. Kosovo is divided into two territorial levels: municipality (*Komunë* in Albanian and *Opština* in Serbian) and settlement (*fshat /selo*).

**CEMR in Kosovo:** Association of Kosovo Municipalities

## Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK)

### Membership and coverage

- 34 members (municipalities)
- 98 % of the population in Kosovo

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in regulations or decisions adopted by an executive body

### Staff

13 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

#### main



#### secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.komunat-ks.net](http://www.komunat-ks.net)



# 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 five planning regions.

**CEMR in Latvia:** Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

### Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS)

#### Membership and coverage

- 119 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Latvian population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in the constitution

#### Staff

35 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.lps.lv](http://www.lps.lv)





# Lithuania

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

**CEMR in Lithuania:** Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania

## Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (LSA)

### Membership and coverage

- 60 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Lithuanian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

18 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies

Publications



More info

[www.lsa.lt](http://www.lsa.lt)



# Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*municipalités*).

**CEMR in Luxembourg:** Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities

## Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL)

### Membership and coverage

- 102 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Luxembourgish population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

5 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



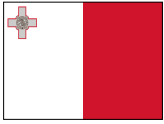
Research and studies

Publications



More info

[www.syvicol.lu](http://www.syvicol.lu)



# Malta

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

## CEMR in Malta: Local Councils' Association

### Local Councils' Association (LCA)

#### Membership and coverage

- 480 members (local councils and regional committees)
- 89 % of the Maltese population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

4 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

	main	secondary
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce		✓
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓	
Training/ capacity building		✓
Research and studies		✓
Publications		✓

More info

[www.lca.org.mt](http://www.lca.org.mt)



# 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.

## CEMR in Moldova: Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova

### Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM)

#### Membership and coverage

- 800 members (municipalities)
- 90 % of the Moldovan population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in multiple legal categories

#### Staff

10 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing

Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.calm.md](http://www.calm.md)



# Montenegro

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

## CEMR in Montenegro: The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro

### The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM)

#### Membership and coverage

- 23 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Montenegrin population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

11 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.uom.me](http://www.uom.me)



# 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*).

**CEMR in Netherlands:** Association of Provinces of the Netherlands  
Association of Netherlands Municipalities

	Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO)		Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 members (provinces)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Dutch population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 355 members (cities and towns)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Dutch population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Created by a decision taken by the members</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Created by a decision taken by the members</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	50 employees (full-time)		220 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓		✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing			✓	
Training/ capacity building				✓
Research and studies		✓		✓
Publications		✓	✓	
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.iponl.nl">www.iponl.nl</a>		<a href="http://www.vng.nl">www.vng.nl</a>	



# North Macedonia

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

**CEMR in North Macedonia:** Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia

## Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS)

### Membership and coverage

- 81 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Macedonian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

16 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing

Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.zels.org.mk](http://www.zels.org.mk)



# Norway

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

## CEMR in Norway: Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

### Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)

#### Membership and coverage

- 439 members (municipalities and counties)
- 100 % of the Norwegian population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Created by a decision taken by the members

#### Staff

250 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.ks.no](http://www.ks.no)





# Poland

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

**CEMR in Poland:** Association of Polish Counties  
Association of Polish Cities

	Association of Polish Counties (ZPP)		Association of Polish Cities (ZMP)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 307 members (counties)</li> <li>• 71 % of the Polish population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 201 members (cities and towns)</li> <li>• 72 % of Poland's urban population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	21 employees (full-time)		30 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce				
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓			✓
Research and studies		✓		✓
Publications		✓		✓
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.zpp.pl">www.zpp.pl</a>		<a href="http://www.zmp.poznan.pl">www.zmp.poznan.pl</a>	



# Portugal

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

**CEMR in Portugal:** National Association of Portuguese Municipalities

## National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)

### Membership and coverage

- 308 members (municipalities)
- 100 % of the Portuguese population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

24 employees (full-time)

### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.anmp.pt](http://www.anmp.pt)



# Romania

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

**CEMR in Romania:** National Union of County Councils of Romania  
Romanian Municipalities Association  
Association of Communes of Romania

	National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR)		Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR)		Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41 members (counties)</li> <li>• 91 % of the Romanian population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 109 members (municipalities and Bucharest sectors)</li> <li>• 50 % of the Romanian population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,750 members (communes)</li> <li>• 87 % of population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in a regulation or decision adopted by an executive body</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	12 employees (full-time)		15 employees (full-time)		8 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce			✓		✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building		✓	✓		✓	
Research and studies	✓			✓		✓
Publications		✓	✓			
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.uncjr.ro">www.uncjr.ro</a>		<a href="http://ww.amr.ro">ww.amr.ro</a>		<a href="http://www.acor.ro">www.acor.ro</a>	



# Serbia

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

## CEMR in Serbia: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia

### Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia (SKGO)

#### Membership and coverage

- 170 members (cities, municipalities and city municipalities)
- 100 % of the Serbian population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

66 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

##### main



##### secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.skgo.org](http://www.skgo.org)



# Slovakia

Slovakia is a unitary state composed of municipalities (*obec*) and self-governing regions (*samosprávny kraj*).

**CEMR in Slovakia:** Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia

## Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS)

### Membership and coverage

- 2,786 members (towns and city boroughs)
- 89 % of the Slovak population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in the constitution

### Staff

29 employees (full-time)

### Activities

	main	secondary
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing		✓
Training/ capacity building	✓	
Research and studies		✓
Publications		✓

More info

[www.zmos.sk](http://www.zmos.sk)



# Slovenia

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

**CEMR in Slovenia:** Slovenian Association of Urban Municipalities  
Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia

	Slovenian Association of Urban Municipalities (ZMOS)		Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 members (urban municipalities)</li> <li>• 35 % of the Slovene population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 175 members (municipalities and towns)</li> <li>• 80 % of the Slovene population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	3 employees (full-time)		7 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓			
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓		✓	
Research and studies		✓		✓
Publications		✓	✓	
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.zmos.si">www.zmos.si</a>		<a href="http://www.skupnostobcin.si">www.skupnostobcin.si</a>	



# 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*).

**CEMR in Spain:** Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces  
Association of Basque Municipalities

	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)		Association of Basque Municipalities (EUEDEL)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7,366 members (town councils, provincial councils and island councils)</li> <li>• 98 % of Spanish population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 256 members (local governments and inter-municipal cooperation bodies)</li> <li>• 99 % of the Basque population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	119 employees (full-time)		19 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce			✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing		✓	✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓		✓	
Research and studies		✓		✓
Publications		✓		✓
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.femp.es">www.femp.es</a>		<a href="http://www.eudel.eus">www.eudel.eus</a>	



# Sweden

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

## CEMR in Sweden: Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

### Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)

#### Membership and coverage

- 310 members (local authorities and regions)
- 100 % of the Swedish population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Created by a decision taken by the members

#### Staff

380 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main



secondary

Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce



Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.skl.se](http://www.skl.se)





# Turkey

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

## CEMR in Turkey: Union of Municipalities of Turkey

### Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB)

#### Membership and coverage

- 1,398 members (municipalities)
- 93 % of the Turkish population

#### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

#### Staff

163 employees (full-time)

#### Activities

Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests

main

secondary



Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce

Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing



Training/ capacity building



Research and studies



Publications



More info

[www.tbb.gov.tr](http://www.tbb.gov.tr)



# Ukraine

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

**CEMR in Ukraine:** Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils<sup>29</sup>  
Association of Ukrainian Cities

## Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)

### Membership and coverage

- 742 members (cities)
- 80 % of the Ukrainian population

### Nature of association

- Association of legal persons
- Enshrined in general law

### Staff

62 employees (full-time)

### Activities

	main	secondary
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce		✓
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓	
Research and studies		✓
Publications		✓

More info

[www.auc.org.ua](http://www.auc.org.ua)

<sup>29</sup> The association did not respond to the survey.



# United Kingdom

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

**CEMR in the United Kingdom:** Local Government Association  
 Convention of Scottish Local Authorities  
 Northern Ireland Local Government Association  
 Welsh Local Government Association

	Local Government Association (LGA)		Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 350 members (municipalities)</li> <li>• 99 % of the English population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 32 members (municipalities)</li> <li>• 76.4 % of the Scottish population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlimited company</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Created by a decision taken by the members</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	250 employees (full-time)		50 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce	✓		✓	
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓			✓
Training/ capacity building	✓			
Research and studies		✓		
Publications		✓		
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.local.gov.uk">www.local.gov.uk</a>		<a href="http://www.cosla.gov.uk">www.cosla.gov.uk</a>	

	<b>Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)</b>		<b>Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)</b>	
<b>Membership and coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 members (councils)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Northern Irish population</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 members (local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, national park authorities)</li> <li>• 100 % of the Welsh population</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature of association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in the constitution</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of legal persons</li> <li>• Enshrined in general law</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff</b>	9 employees (full-time)		56 employees (full-time)	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>	<b>main</b>	<b>secondary</b>
Influence governments through policy and campaigning / defend members' interests	✓		✓	
Negotiate the pay of local and regional governments' workforce		✓		
Exchange of good practices/ knowledge sharing	✓		✓	
Training/ capacity building	✓			
Research and studies		✓		
Publications		✓		
<b>More info</b>	<a href="http://www.nilga.org">www.nilga.org</a>		<a href="http://www.wlga.gov.uk">www.wlga.gov.uk</a>	

## *List of associations which took part in the study*

- **Albania**  
Albanian Association of Municipalities (SHBSH)
- **Austria**  
Association of Cities and Towns (STAEDTEBUND)  
Association of Austrian Municipalities (GEMEINDEBUND)
- **Belgium**  
Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region (BRULOCALIS)  
Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)  
Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia (UVCW)
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOGFBiH)  
Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska (ALVRS)
- **Bulgaria**  
National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)
- **Croatia**  
Croatian County Association (HRVZZ)
- **Cyprus**  
Union of Cyprus Municipalities (UCM)
- **Czech Republic**  
Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR)
- **Denmark**  
Danish Regions (REGIONER)  
Local Government Denmark (KL)
- **Estonia**  
Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities (AECM)
- **Finland**  
Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA)
- **France**  
French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE)
- **Georgia**  
National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)
- **Germany**  
German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (RGRE)  
German County Association (DLT)  
Association of German Cities (DST)  
Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB)
- **Greece**  
Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)
- **Hungary**  
Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ)
- **Iceland**  
Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (SAMBAND)
- **Ireland**  
Local Government Management Association (LGMA)
- **Israel**  
Union of Local Authorities in Israel (MASHAM)
- **Italy**  
Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)
- **Kosovo**  
Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKK)
- **Latvia**  
Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LPS)
- **Lithuania**  
Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (LSA)
- **Luxembourg**  
Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities (SYVICOL)
- **Malta**  
Local Councils Association (LCA)
- **Moldova**  
Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM)
- **Montenegro**  
Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM)
- **Netherlands**  
Association of Provinces of the Netherlands (IPO)  
Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)
- **North Macedonia**  
Association of Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (ZELS)
- **Norway**  
Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)
- **Poland**  
Association of Polish Counties (ZPP)  
Association of Polish Cities (ZMP)
- **Portugal**  
National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)
- **Romania**  
National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR)  
Romanian Municipalities Association (AMR)  
Association of Communes of Romania (ACOR)
- **Serbia**  
Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia (SKGO)
- **Slovakia**  
Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS)
- **Slovenia**  
Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (ZMOS)  
Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS)
- **Spain**  
Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)  
Association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL)
- **Sweden**  
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)
- **Turkey**  
Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB)
- **Ukraine**  
Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)
- **United Kingdom**  
Local Government Association (LGA)  
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)  
Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)  
Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

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## Disclaimer

The analysis, results, and recommendations are those of CEMR. They do not necessarily reflect the official position of any local or regional government, their associations or multilateral institutions or organisations whose names appear in this study.

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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# CEMR

**The Council of European Municipalities and Regions is the united voice of Europe's local and regional governments federated through 60 national associations.**

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

## Our mission

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

Founded in  
**1951**

**60**  
associations

**41**  
countries

**100,000**  
local and regional  
governments

## CEMR member associations

**Albania**  
SHBSH

**Cyprus**  
UCM

**Germany**  
RGRE  
DStGB  
DLT  
DST

**Kosovo**  
AKK\*

**North Macedonia**  
ZELS

**Slovenia**  
SOS  
ZMOS

**Austria**  
GEMEINDEBUND  
STAEDTEBUND

**Czech Republic**  
SMO ČR

**Latvia**  
LPS

**Norway**  
KS

**Spain**  
FEMP  
EUDEL

**Belgium**  
BRULOCALIS  
UVCW  
VVSG

**Denmark**  
KL  
REGIONER

**Greece**  
KEDE

**Lithuania**  
LSA

**Poland**  
ZMP  
ZPP

**Sweden**  
SKL

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
SOGFBiH  
ALVRS

**Estonia**  
AECM

**Hungary**  
TÖOSZ

**Luxembourg**  
SYVICOL

**Portugal**  
ANMP

**Turkey**  
TBB

**Bulgaria**  
NAMRB

**Finland**  
AFLRA

**Iceland**  
SAMBAND

**Malta**  
LCA

**Romania**  
ACOR  
AMR  
UNCJR

**Ukraine**  
AUC  
UAROR

**Croatia**  
HRVZZ

**Georgia**  
NALAG

**Ireland**  
LGMA\*

**Moldova**  
CALM

**Serbia**  
SKGO

**United Kingdom**  
LGA  
COSLA  
NILGA  
WLGA

**Israel**  
MASHAM

**Montenegro**  
UOM

**Slovakia**  
ZMOS

**Italy**  
AICCRE

**Netherlands**  
VNG  
IPO

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