



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



A EUROPE OF TOWNS AND CITIES

A practical guide to town-twinning



European Commission

A Europe of towns and cities

A practical guide to town-twinning

Prepared by the Secretariat-General of the European Commission under the direction of Barbara Lücke and Elisabetta Bellocchi.

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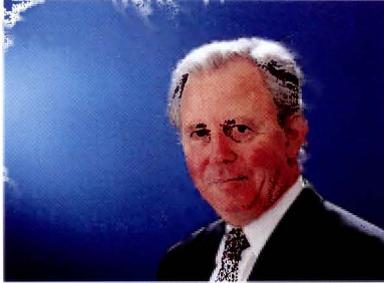
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Jacques Santer

President
of the European Commission

Preface

It is the citizens of Europe who will decide how the European Union will face the challenges of the 21st century. No debate on its future development can take place without involving civil society, whose full participation the European Commission is actively encouraging.

Getting to know and working with partners in other Member States is a valuable way of gaining greater insight into the issues involved in creating a more unified Europe. For over 40 years citizens of thousands of towns and villages have been doing just this, through their commitment to establishing and maintaining town-twinning links.

The town-twinning movement grew from the determination of ordinary men and women to do something at local level to break down the barriers between different countries. It has proved its strength by its ability to evolve and to adjust to changing circumstances. Further evidence of this is the interest shown in creating ties with towns in Central and Eastern Europe and the number of close links that have already been forged.

Since 1989, the European Commission has responded to the need for financial assistance for towns which face obstacles in setting up new twinning links or in expanding existing partnerships. Its priority is to help towns on the periphery of the Union and those in regions where the movement is still in its early stages. Town-twinning links provide an excellent springboard for the development of partnerships and collaboration of all kinds.

This guide gives an overview of regional and local administration in Europe. It also aims to alert towns to the various types of financial assistance available from the Community for transnational projects.

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Town-twinning and the European Union



After five decades, twinning schemes between European towns still generate lively interest. The initial concept has developed along with the need to exchange experiences in all areas of local life. Over the years, twinning schemes have continued to weave an extremely close-knit fabric within the European Union, a fabric which is growing stronger all the time, with applications coming from towns new to the scheme and from municipalities already twinned but seeking additional partners in other countries.

1. Towns and cities build an integrated Europe

The coming into force of the single market, in 1993, created a new dynamic in European relations and gave rise to a host of new opportunities: mobility and openness are now the motive forces which must give our continent fresh impetus and greater momentum, without which there can be no guarantee of progress, a sense of well-being, or even of peace itself. Fortunately, people are becoming increasingly aware that the future can no longer be viewed in terms of any one particular country, and that close cooperation with our neighbours is the only way forward.

The twinned towns, though, needed no particular anniversary to spur them into action for the European ideal. Their long history of exchanges has done a great deal to break the ground. Viewed in isolation, the twinning initiatives may seem rather small-scale and marginal; taken together, they amount to a movement of considerable substance.

The idea of twinning originated in Europe, and it is here that it has expanded most remarkably over the past 50 years, notably at the instigation of two major organizations: the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the United Towns Organization (UTO). There are at present over 10 000 municipalities in Western Europe involved in the scheme, ranging from villages to major cities.

We are at present witnessing a revival of interest in life at local level in all of our countries. One of the cornerstones of democracy is precisely the freedom of citizens to participate in managing the affairs which most directly concern them at the grass-roots level in our societies, that is, within the individual municipality. This is why local autonomy is absolutely essential if a town and its inhabitants are to flourish.

It is this awareness which is reflected in the concept of a people's Europe. The Union is doing its best to involve ordinary people and their elected representatives more closely in the Union venture, thereby

giving it the truly human dimension which is perhaps still too little in evidence. The introduction of the same European passport for all the Union's citizens is a symbolic example of the recognition of their common identity and direct involvement in the process of European integration, which should ultimately result in the same fundamental rights for all. Involving the population in a wide range of cross-border experiences is also an excellent means of increasing awareness of the European dimension, bringing the Union's work down to earth and making it accessible to all. The events organized by towns and their inhabitants through twinning schemes are a reproduction in miniature of the process of integration pursued by the Member States. Each twinning is a mini-Europe in itself, especially when it involves towns from more than two countries. Our towns really are building an integrated Europe.

2. Community action

The preamble to the Treaty of Rome declares that the Member States of the Community are 'determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'. This is the target of the actions being taken at Community level.



For a number of years now the Commission has been taking an interest in the links forged between European towns. So has the European Parliament, especially since the introduction, in 1979, of the election of its members by direct universal suffrage. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are rightly concerned to give ordinary people and their elected representatives a greater part to play in the life of the European Union.

The European Council (which brings the Heads of State or Government of the Member States together), at its meeting at Fontainebleau in January 1984, set up an *ad hoc* committee to identify what actions the Community could take to satisfy people's expectations and to propose measures for adoption designed to strengthen and promote the Community's identity and image in the eyes of its citizens and the world at large. The Adonnino report produced by the committee and named after its chairman stressed that 'solidarity between the citizens of the Member States and mutual understanding and cooperation — essential for the building of Europe — have been widely promoted and facilitated by the twinning of towns and cities, which has in many instances already been organized under the aegis of the representative international organizations of regional and local authorities'.

The European Parliament also looked at this question and in February 1988 adopted a twinning report on the initiative of one of its members, Mrs Nicole Fontaine. This report drew attention to the very considerable contribution twinning has made to creating a European awareness. Twinning, it maintained, popularizes the idea of European unification and is helping to fashion a European cultural fabric. The point was made, however, that problems of geographical distance, language barriers or the small size of municipalities frequently proved to be an obstacle to the spread of twinning. It was also pointed out that twinning schemes in the Community were unevenly distributed, with a concentration in the founding Member States and too few in the other Member States.

3. Aid for twinning schemes

What does the Community action on town-twinning consist of?

The Community action in favour of town-twinning aims to encourage the involvement of ordinary people and their elected representatives in European integration and to promote their sense of belonging to the European Union.



Types of actions co-financed by the European Union

- Exchanges between citizens from towns that are twinned or are setting up a new twinning scheme.
- Conferences organized by twinned towns;
- Training and information seminars for organizers of town-twinning schemes.

Geographical area

Grants are available for town-twinning schemes involving towns in the European Union and other European countries.

How does the programme work?

Every year the European Commission fixes its priorities for its town-twinning programme. The towns that wish to participate submit an application to the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, which selects the projects and awards the grant.

Set up a project following these guidelines

In the case of exchanges between citizens, priority is given to exchanges which help to prepare or set up new twinning schemes, multilateral exchanges involving groups of twinned towns in several countries, exchanges between towns disadvantaged because of their geographical location, exchanges between small towns, exchanges involving young or disadvantaged people, and exchanges concerned with specific themes. However, the following are not eligible for assistance: exchanges involving less than 10 participants, exchanges between towns less than 250 km apart, exchanges of a touristic or recreational character, and exchanges primarily involving local councillors or local officials.

In the case of conferences, priority is given to conferences on one of a number of specific subjects such as the fight against racism, life-long learning, social exclusion linked to drug abuse, poverty and unemployment, European citizenship, the role and importance of a town's international links, the European Union and its implication for local communities.

In the case of training and information seminars for organizers of town-twinning schemes, seminars must bring together different groups of twinned towns. Priority is given to seminars involving towns situated in countries or regions on the periphery of the European Union and which include participants for more than one country.

Submit an application

Request an application form from the Secretariat-General of the European Commission.

Send in the application form at least three months before the date on which the event starts.

In the case of exchanges between citizens and of conferences organized by twinned towns, an application form must be completed by the host town (or the town that organizes the conference) on behalf of all the participating towns.

For more information

Contact:

European Commission

Secretariat-General

Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200

B-1049 Brussels

Tel. (32-2) 295 26 85

Fax (32-2) 296 23 89

4. The golden stars of town-twinning

In 1993, the Commission decided to create a prize for the most merit-worthy twinning projects carried out by twinned towns which had received Community grants in the previous year. These awards, known as 'the golden stars of town-twinning', are awarded every year by the Secretariat-General of the Commission and go to towns which, through their twinning actions, have clearly demonstrated their commitment to European integration and contributed to bringing together people from both inside and outside the European Union, so forging closer links between the citizens of Europe. The



criteria for awarding the prizes are, in particular, involvement of young people; actions involving towns in more than two countries, schemes between towns in the marginal areas of Europe separated by a large distance, and themes featuring a high European value.

A panel, made up of representatives of the Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the United Towns Organization, chooses the 10 twinning projects which have best fulfilled the Community programme's criteria.

The prizes are awarded at an official ceremony held every year in a different European town (1993, Strasbourg (F); 1994, Lisbon (P); 1995, Dublin (IRL) and 1996, Senigallia (I). The list of prize-winning towns is given in Annex 1.)

The town-twinning concept



1. A convenient structure

There is a growing trend, which the development of the European Union has done much to bring about, for towns to join networks of transnational relations. Here, twinning supplies a convenient structure within which to foster relations with one or more partner towns in different countries. It is not, of course, the only channel for exchange and transnational cooperation, but it does have the particular advantage of combining bonds of friendship with extremely varied forms of exchange. As a long-term association, too, twinning is a way for the people living in partner towns to gradually get to know each other properly.

The task of reconciling France and Germany after 1945 was made much easier by the large numbers of twinning schemes between towns on either side of the Rhine. On a larger scale, the process of European integration in general benefits from the growing number of towns now twinned with each other throughout Europe.

At a time when the European Community is proceeding towards an even closer union between Member States, twinning is a valuable resource for this purpose which is ripe for further development.

2. An instrument of solidarity

'We are not forming coalitions between States, but union among people.' These are the words that Jean Monnet, one of the Community's founders, employed to convey the essence of European integration. The guiding principle has always been to bring together men and women from often different walks of life so that they can jointly manage their common interests.

The shared experience of the peoples of Europe generates greater mutual understanding and a greater tolerance of others. This creates a sense of belonging to a common community, which is in turn reflected in greater solidarity.

Twinning schemes are born of the same approach. The solidarity may be expressed at local level in joint efforts to find solutions to problems towns have to face in such areas as local government management, town planning and immigration. Getting involved in specific projects on the ground is the best way of generating solidarity in practical terms.

3. Putting theory into practice

There are several stages in the process leading to twinning.

Motivation and choice

The motivations behind a desire to twin with another town should be carefully considered because they can guide the choice of a partner town. Similar or complementary structural features are often the initial consideration. The number of people living in a future partner town needs to be given as much thought as its geographical location. The quest for a shared history or a particular sociocultural or linguistic context can also be factors in the choice. If there are no existing links of any kind and a town matching the desired profile cannot be found, the national and European twinning organizations can be contacted.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

14, rue de Castiglione
F-75001 Paris
Tel. (33) 144 50 59 59

United Towns Organization (UTO)

60, rue La Boétie
F-75008 Paris
Tel. (33) 153 96 05 80

Initial contacts and preparatory visits

When a partner town has been found, an initial meeting between the two municipalities should be arranged. In the first instance, a small delegation usually visits the chosen town to decide what form the twinning arrangement is to take and finalize the practical details. Exchanges of letters and contacts of various kinds round off the preparatory stage of the twinning process. An initial 'test' exchange is very often organized to coincide with a cultural or sporting event, a sightseeing trip or the like. In a sense, this is the 'courtship' period.

Certain practical questions have to be resolved before the twinning ceremony itself. These are not just financial matters but also call for total commitment and enthusiasm from the organizers in both towns. A few months usually elapse between the initial contacts with the partner town and the actual twinning ceremony. Proper preparation requires careful thought and planning, not only in the interests of organization, but also to secure maximum involvement

from the people living in the towns, which means that events with an educational tie-in need to be organized.

Supporting structure

There should be a specific structure responsible for organizing and promoting the twinning. This can be an integral part of the local administration or an independent association, usually known as the 'twinning committee'. Whatever form it takes, the important point is to involve as many local interests as possible, such as community, school or occupational groups catering for people of different age groups and backgrounds. It is good policy to include both official representatives of the town (councillors and civil servants) and people with an interest in making their contribution to the twinning arrangement.

The twinning committee is responsible for setting up and coordinating the programme of twinning activities, assessing its financial implications (notably travel and hosting expenses), seeking the requisite funds, acting as interlocutor for the population and the various groups involved in the scheme, and making sure that there is a long-term programme of exchanges. Its responsibilities are, in other words, very wide-ranging. An independent twinning committee representing a range of interests has the advantage of ensuring continuity regardless of local political change. Depending on the size of the towns involved and the number of twinning schemes in which a municipality is involved, it is often worthwhile setting up individual working committees.

Practicalities

There are certain practical questions to be answered when contemplating a twinning arrangement, mainly in the following areas:

Sources of funding

Twinning involves expenditure. Special resources therefore have to be found. Local public finance usually comprises the principal resource. The participants themselves can often raise money either from direct contributions or by organizing fund-raising events (such as tombolas and fairs), or indeed by soliciting donations or using professional advertising.

The creativity and generosity of the people in the towns has a major influence on the size of the twinning budget. Benefits in kind are often forthcoming (loan of premises, secretarial facilities or equipment).



Voluntary work in the form of translations, assistance and advice provided free of charge is also very much a part of the spirit of twinning.

Contributions may also come from outside the local area, such as grants from the various levels of the regional or national authorities, or from the European Commission under its twinning promotion programme and other programmes. Sometimes, for specific exchange projects, certain subsidies may, where appropriate, be obtained from specialized organizations.

Lodging with local people

Accommodation may at first seem a minor matter, but it has its part to play in making visitors from partner towns feel at home. Lodging with local families on a reciprocal basis is one of the principles of twinning. Staying in people's homes is not seen primarily as a means of keeping costs to a minimum; it is also, in fact mainly, a way of sharing the day-to-day lives of the people who live in the partner town. As well as being a chance to learn something of different customs, it creates the ideal setting for striking up new friendships. However, certain types of exchanges, or events which are well attended by people from the partner town, do sometimes mean that other forms of accommodation, such as hotels and youth hostels, have to be used.

Communication and information

Communication and information have a vital part to play in twinning, whose very existence hangs on the interest and involvement of local people. This is why it is so vitally important for the supporting structure to provide the necessary stimulus. The simplest and clearest way of conveying the twinning message is to put up a signpost on the road into town bearing the European emblem and the names of the partner towns.

Use of the media will vary according to the size of the town or village involved. If it is small, information on twinning activities can circulate directly from person to person. If it is larger, special campaigns will be required. To reach the maximum number of people, the municipal news-sheet, electronic display boards, the local press, local radio or television if any, or telematics systems (such as Minitel in France) can all be used. Stands representing the partner town can also be strategically placed at local fêtes, fairs and exhibitions.

In all cases, special twinning documentation should be drawn up. Brochures with a translation into the partner language are an aid to mutual understanding, as is the practice of putting out regular information on the partner town. Every available facility should be brought into play to help overcome any language barrier.

Twinning ceremony and oath

Twinning is finalized by the towns concerned giving an official commitment to each other. This takes place at a ceremony where the mayor of each town signs a twinning oath before the townspeople and their elected representatives, with as many people attending from the partner town as possible. This should be a solemn and festive occasion highlighting the European ideal. It is customary for the ceremony to be held first in the one town and then in the other, sometimes during the same year, but usually in two successive years. The twinning organizations such as the CEMR and the UTO can provide advice on organizing the event, particularly as regards the programme content and the symbols to be used. The words of the twinning oath stress the lasting links to be forged between the municipalities and their commitment to the building of Europe. (A model of the twinning oath is attached in Annex 2.)

4. A new dynamic

If a twinning arrangement is to be a success, the actual exchange schemes need to be organized. The scope for twin-town activities is virtually unlimited. Certain types of exchanges, such as educational, cultural or sporting events, are common.

There is, however, a growing trend to explore less traditional areas, showing that twinning schemes can be an evolving concept fostering all kinds of innovation and receptive to changes in society and developments in international relations. As such, they are instrumental in creating a new dynamic.

Types of exchange

There are several traditional forms of exchange found at the heart of a great many twinning arrangements. They are very often the foundation which gives a twin-town relationship its greatest appeal to ordinary people.

Education

A basic objective of twinning is to bring young people together to give them a greater awareness of the European dimension, thereby helping them to lay the foundations for their own future in a changing world, where international relations are playing an increasingly important role. The easiest way to get through to them is via schools and universities. Schools are very often paired for this purpose. School exchanges are clearly of educational value and also help to give pupils a firmer grasp of languages. Language learning must remain a major concern. When properly integrated into the curriculum, exchanges between educational establishments lend real substance to twinning.

Culture

Town-twinning schemes usually encourage a flourishing of cultural exchanges. From meetings between musical groups to theatrical productions by companies from partner towns, exhibitions of work by local artists, and meetings between stamp collectors, the list of ideas and achievements is a long one. Exchanges such as these promote an

awareness of the cultural background of the societies we live in, a factor which often determines individual behaviour and explains both the differences and the bonds between Europeans. Cultural ties enhance twin-town relationships and act as a catalyst in the process of integration.

Sport

Sport, particularly at amateur level, as is usually the case in exchanges within a twinning scheme, helps to bring people together and promote peace. This is even more true where team sports are involved and the spirit of solidarity is stronger than that of confrontation. The essential point is to stress the merits of participation and highlight the spirit of competition. This is why sport usually features so prominently in twinning activities. It also reaches a large number of people and does not require very complicated organization. Schemes can include competitions in all disciplines. A sort of mini-Olympics or *jeux sans frontières* might be one suggestion in the case of a town twinned with several partners. Joint beginners' or advanced classes in various sports are likely to attract a young following, during the school holidays for example. Sometimes races or rallies between twinned towns, whether on foot, by bicycle or whatever, can become events which fire people's imaginations and have a media impact which goes far beyond the town boundaries.





New ways forward

Other avenues for town-twinning are opening up with the greater power now exercised by local authorities. Changes now going on all over the world are bringing about a trend towards increasing decentralization. This is reflected in the new powers granted to local authorities, which are now involved in a great many areas.

For twinning schemes, this means an opportunity to devise projects which will keep pace with change and give the process fresh impetus. Twinned towns should be involved in analysing their common problems through exchanges of information and experience with a view to seeking solutions together. This implies a different approach to the concept of twinning, one which tends more towards activities focused on know-how, particularly in the social and economic fields. For example, ventures can be launched in the following areas:

- town and country planning;
- environmental protection;
- vocational training;
- integration of disabled people, immigrants, etc.;
- prevention of delinquency;

- combating drugs;
- childcare policies;
- application of new technologies;
- promotion of agricultural, industrial and commercial activities;
- combating unemployment.

Thinking in areas as varied as these is enhanced by twinning and the data which partner towns can supply. Comparing experiences and talking to partners give a more global view of the problems concerned and so may make for a better response. A comparative study of local council management, tax systems or the regulations in force in both countries is always very instructive and can act as a driving force for progress. The benefits are further increased when such an approach is pursued jointly with other twinned towns, perhaps in the same region, or as an exercise involving towns of a similar size or facing identical problems. The construction of networks between the twinned towns widens the scope for action and stimulates relations between towns.

This functional approach is the same as that adopted, on a different scale, by the European Union. Through practical achievements and by getting people to work together, it is a way of learning genuinely worthwhile lessons; at the same time, it firmly embeds integration in a newly found community of interests.

5. The twinning situation in Europe

Importance of twinning in each Member State

Member State	Number of municipalities (a)	Number of twinned municipalities (b)	(b) — (a) in %	Countries where most of the partner towns are located		
				1	2	3
Belgique/België (B)	589	392	67	F	D	NL
Danmark (DK)	275	231	84	S	FIN	D
Deutschland (D)	14 627	2 485	17	F	UK	I
Ellada (EL)	5 826	135	2	I	F	D
España (E)	8 097	410	5	F	P	I
France (F)	36 763	2 837	8	D	UK	E/I
Ireland (IRL)	118	120 (1)	—	F	UK	I
Italia (I)	8 097	711	9	F	D	E
Luxembourg (L)	118	29	24	F	D	B/I
Nederland (NL)	625	372	59	D	B	UK
Österreich (A)	2 354	352	14	D	I	F
Portugal (P)	4 525 (2)	132	3	F	E	D
Suomi/Finland (FIN)	455	370	81	S	DK	D
Sverige (S)	288	268	93	FIN	DK	D
United Kingdom (UK)	471(3)	1 124 (4)	—	F	D	NL

(1) Includes twinings other than those of counties, cities and other municipalities.

(2) Includes freguesias.

(3) District councils only (1995).

(4) Includes twinings other than those of district councils.

Number of twinning relationships

Member State	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK
B		4	140	4	6	280	4	31	9	69	6	2	2	1	31
DK	4		102	4	5	12	3	9	1	9	4	2	144	187	25
D	140	102		18	29	1855	7	285	14	201	200	21	69	55	484
EL	4	4	18		14	40	3	42	2	5	–	1	–	2	3
E	6	5	29	14		344	2	59	2	3	1	62	–	1	15
F	280	12	1855	40	344		112	352	20	39	30	97	4	5	894
IRL	4	3	7	3	2	112		11	1	3	–	2	–	–	18
I	31	9	285	42	59	352	11		9	17	35	8	3	7	31
L	9	1	14	2	2	20	1	9		5	4	3	–	–	3
NL	69	9	201	5	3	39	3	17	5		5	4	4	–	50
A	6	4	200	–	1	30	–	35	4	5		1	5	1	2
P	2	2	21	1	62	97	2	8	3	4	1		–	–	9
FIN	2	144	69	–	–	4	–	3	–	4	5	–		336	6
S	1	187	55	2	1	5	–	7	–	–	1	–	336		7
UK	31	25	484	3	15	894	18	31	3	50	2	9	6	7	
Total	589	511	3 480	138	543	4 084	166	899	73	414	294	212	573	602	1 578

Source: CEMR/CCRE (1995).

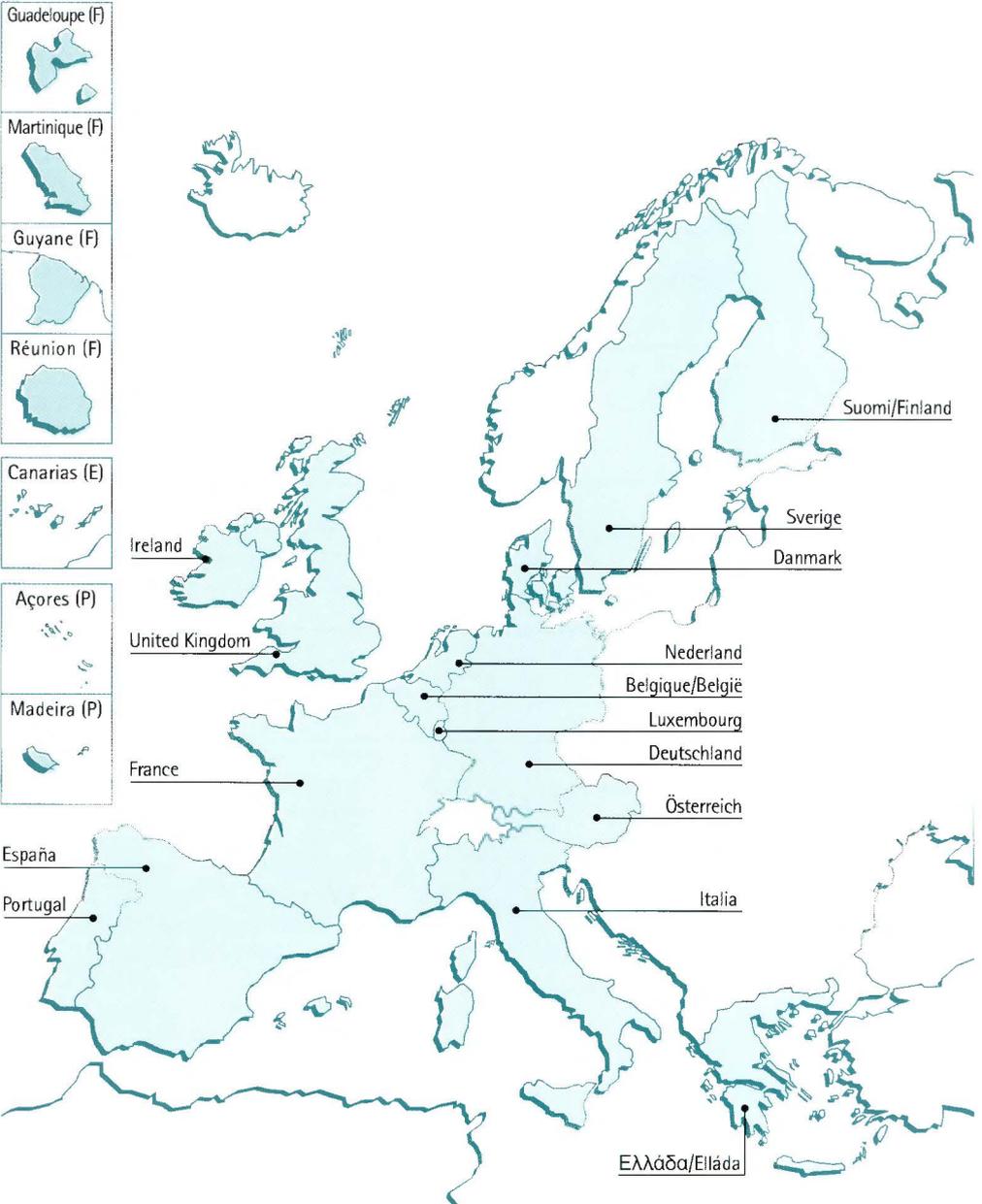
Regional and local administrative divisions by Member State



Member State	Population (million)	Administrative structure
Belgique/België	10.1	3 régions/gewesten 3 communautés/ gemeenschappen 10 provinces/provincies 589 communes/gemeenten
Danmark	5.1	14 amtskommuner 275 kommuner
Deutschland	81.6	16 Länder 323 Kreise 14 627 Gemeinden und Städte
Ellada/Eλλάδα	10.4	13 periferies 57 nomi 441 dimi 5 385 kinotites
España	39.2	17 comunidades autónomas 50 provincias – islas 8 097 municipios
France	58.0	26 régions 100 départements 36 763 communes
Ireland/Éire	3.6	8 regional authorities 34 counties and cities 84 other municipalities
Italia	57.5	20 regioni 102 province 8 097 comuni

Member State	Population (million)	Administrative structure
Luxembourg	0.4	3 districts 118 communes
Nederland	15.4	12 provincies 625 gemeenten
Österreich	8.0	9 Länder 2 354 Gemeinden und Städte
Portugal	9.9	Regiões 305 municípios 4 220 freguesias
Suomi/Finland	5.1	5 lääni/län 19 maakunnat/landskap 455 kunnat/kommuner
Sverige	8.8	23 län 288 kommuner
United Kingdom	58.3	4 nations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England 36 counties 355 districts • Wales 22 unitary authorities 833 community areas • Scotland 29 councils 3 islands councils • Northern Ireland 26 districts

EUROPEAN UNION





BELGIQUE/BELGIË

BELGIUM



Capital:	Bruxelles/Brussel (Brussels)
Surface area:	31 000 km ²
Population:	10 131 000
Density:	327 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 20 240
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Bicameral parliament Federal State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1831, amended in:

- 1970 to give recognition to the **communautés culturelles/ cultuurgemeenschappen** (cultural communities), now simply called **communautés/gemeenschappen**;
- 1980 to extend the powers of **communautés/gemeenschappen** created in 1970 and to set up the **régions/gewesten** (regions);
- 1988, 1989 and 1993 to give the State a federal structure.

Laws of 1836 on municipal and provincial institutions

Law of 1983 on the **deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft** (German-speaking community)

Laws of 1989 on the **Région de Bruxelles-Capitale/Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest** (Brussels Capital region) and the financing of the **communautés/ gemeenschappen** and **régions/gewesten**

The 1993 reform of the State finalized in principle the process of federalization begun some 20 years earlier. According to Article 1 of the Constitution, Belgium is a federal State composed of **communautés/gemeenschappen** and **régions/gewesten**.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration in Belgium:

- the **régions et communautés/gewesten en gemeenschappen** (regions and communities),
- the **provinces/provincies** (provinces),
- the **communes/gemeenten** (municipalities).

RÉGION/GEWESTEN (3) and COMMUNAUTÉS/GEMEENSCHAPPEN (3)

PROVINCES/PROVINCIES (10)

COMMUNES/GEMEENTEN (589)

The régions/gewesten and the communautés/gemeenschappen

It is a specific feature of the Belgian federal system that these two federal entities operate at the same level and that the areas they cover partially overlap. The **communautés/gemeenschappen** are local authorities holding full powers within a single language area (French, Dutch or German) and exercising certain powers over the administrative area of the bilingual Brussels Capital region.

Belgium consists of three **régions/gewesten**:

- the **Région de Bruxelles-Capitale/Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest** (Brussels Capital region),
- the **Vlaams Gewest** (Flemish region),
- the **Région wallonne** (Walloon region),

and three **communautés/gemeenschappen**:

- the **Communauté française** (French community),
- the **Vlaamse Gemeenschap** (Flemish community),
- the **deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft** (German-speaking community).

The **régions/gewesten** and **communautés/gemeenschappen** are administered by five bodies, each comprising a council and a government:

Conseil et gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale/Brusselse Hoofdstedelijke Raad en Brusselse Hoofdstedelijke Regering

(Council and government of the Brussels Capital region)

The **Région de Bruxelles-Capitale/Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest** was set up in 1989. It is administered by a **conseil/raad** of 75 members elected for a five-year term by direct universal suffrage, under an electoral system that takes account of the different language groups. The **conseil/raad** elects a five-member **gouvernement/regering** not necessarily from its own ranks. Furthermore, the **conseil/raad** elects three **secrétaires d'État/gewestelijke Staatssecretarissen** (State secretaries) on proposal of the regional government.

Vlaamse Raad en Regering

(Flemish Council and government)

The **Vlaamse Gemeenschap** and the **Vlaams Gewest** merged in 1980. The **Vlaamse Raad** (Flemish Council) is composed of 124 members. Of these, 118 are directly elected from the Flemish region. The other six are the first six from the Dutch-speaking group elected to the Council of the Brussels Capital region.

The **Raad** elects a **regering** (government) of a maximum of 11 members not necessarily from its own ranks.

Conseil et gouvernement de la Région wallonne

(Council and government of the Walloon region)

The institutions of the **Région wallonne** and the **Communauté française** have not merged. The **conseil de la région wallonne** is composed of 75 directly elected members.

The **conseil** elects, not necessarily from its own ranks, a government composed of a maximum of seven members.

Conseil et gouvernement de la Communauté française

(Council and government of the French-speaking community)

The **conseil de la Communauté française** consists of all the members of the **parlement wallon** and of 19 members designated proportionately amongst the political groups by and from among the French-speaking members of the **conseil de la Région Bruxelles-Capitale**.

The conseil elects from its own ranks or not a four-member government, including at least one elected representative from Brussels.

Rat und Regierung der deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft

(Council and government of the German-speaking community)

The **deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft**, comprising nine **Gemeinden** (municipalities) situated along the German border, is administered by a 25-member **Rat** (council) elected for a term of five years by direct universal suffrage. The **Provinzialratsmitglieder und Regionalratsmitglieder** (provincial and regional councillors) and the German-speaking representatives and senators who sit in the Federal Parliament act in an advisory capacity.

The **Rat** elects a three-member **Regierung** (government), not necessarily from its own ranks.

The provinces/provinces

Belgium consists of 10 **provinces/provinces** administered by a **conseil provincial/provincieraad** (provincial council) of 47 to 84

members elected by direct universal suffrage every six years. It elects from its own ranks a **députation permanente/bestendige deputatie** (provincial executive) of six members. The **gouverneur** (governor), who is a government official representing the State, chairs the **députation/deputatie** and is entitled to vote.

The **provinces/provincies** handle matters of provincial concern. Their administrative bodies exercise various powers conferred on them by law or decree.

The communes/gemeenten

Belgium has 589 **communes/gemeenten**, each administered by a **conseil communal/gemeenteraad** (municipal council) of 7 to 55 members elected for a six-year term by direct universal suffrage. The council elects 2 to 10 **échevins/schepenen** (aldermen) from its own ranks (except for the six **communes/gemeenten** on the outskirts of Brussels and in **Comines/Komen** and **Fourons/Voeren**, where they are directly elected by the people). The **échevins/schepenen**, together with the **bourgmestre/burgemeester** (mayor, burgomaster), form the **collège des bourgmestre et échevins/college van burgemeester en schepenen** (the corporation). The **bourgmestre/burgemeester** is appointed by the King and is generally a member of the political majority on the **conseil/raad**.

The **communes/gemeenten** handle matters of municipal concern and exercise various powers conferred on them by law or decree.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

In the **provinces/provincies** and **communes/gemeenten**, functions devolved by the State are performed primarily by the **gouverneur** and the **bourgmestre/burgemeester**. The **communes/gemeenten** are responsible, *inter alia*, for the register of births, marriages and deaths and for the municipal police force.

The **régions/gewesten** supervise the official acts of the **communes/gemeenten** and the **provinces/provincies**, apart from the German-speaking **Gemeinden** for which the Federal State remains responsible for organizing and exercising this supervision. The organization of this supervision, but not its exercise, belongs to the Federal State for the six **communes/gemeenten** on the outskirts of Brussels, for **Comines/Komen** and **Fourons/Voeren** and certain municipalities along the linguistic border. Conflicts between the State, the **communautés/gemeenschappen** and the **régions/gewesten** on matters of competence fall within the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration (scrutiny of legislative acts) and of the courts and the State Council (scrutiny of regulatory acts).

Economic affairs

The **régions/gewesten** have broad powers in relation to economic policy. The State retains jurisdiction over monetary and financial policy and economic organization.

The **communes/gemeenten** are responsible for supplying water, gas and electricity and for maintaining local roads. Main roads and motorways are the responsibility of the **régions/gewesten**.

Education and culture

The **communautés/gemeenschappen** have almost sole responsibility for these as well as for broadcasting.

Social affairs

Federal government remains responsible for labour affairs and social security, which includes unemployment allowances. The **communautés/gemeenschappen** are responsible for matters pertaining to health, family policy, the handicapped, senior citizens and child welfare. Welfare is distributed by public social assistance centres, which operate under municipal supervision.

Environment

The **régions/gewesten** are largely responsible for environmental protection.

Regional development

The **régions/gewesten** are responsible for regional development, although implementation is a municipal responsibility.

Financing

The **régions/gewesten** and the **communautés/gemeenschappen** are largely financed from national tax revenues. The **communautés/ gemeenschappen** also obtain finance from radio and television licences which they can increase and which is now a community tax.

The **provinces/provincies** and the **communes/gemeenten** are entitled to levy taxes and also receive grants from the **régions/gewesten**.



DANMARK

DENMARK



Capital:	København (Copenhagen)
Surface area:	43 080 km ²
Population:	5 100 000
Density:	118 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 25 310
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Unicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1953 (Article 82)

Law of 1995 on regional and local authorities

Law relating to the conurbation of Copenhagen

Laws of 1948 and 1979 concerning the **Faerøerne** (Faeroe Islands) and **Grønland** (Greenland)

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are two levels of regional and local administration in Denmark:

- the **amtskommuner** (districts),
- the **kommuner** (municipalities).

Two **kommuner**, Copenhagen and Frederiksberg, have the status of both **amtskommuner** and **primærkommuner** (primary municipality).

AMTSKOMMUNER (14)

KOMMUNER (275)

The amtskommuner and kommuner

Denmark has 14 **amtskommuner** and 275 **kommuner**. The Faeroe Islands and Greenland enjoy internal autonomy and do not belong to the European Union.

The **amtskommuner** and the **kommuner** are administered by **råd** (councils) elected by direct universal suffrage, using a system of proportional representation.

Elections for both administrative levels are held every four years in November. Nationals of other Member States of the European Union, Iceland and Norway have the right to vote. Other foreigners have the right to vote provided they have been permanently resident in Denmark for at least three years.

Each **råd** elects from its own ranks an **amtsborgmester** (district council chair) in the case of the **amtskommuner**, or a **borgmester** (mayor) in the case of the **kommuner**. The **amtsborgmester** or the **borgmester** chairs the meetings of the **råd** and the finance committee. They also head the administrative departments of the **kommune** or the **amtskommune**.¹ In addition to the finance committee, which is chaired by the **borgmester** or the **amtsborgmester**, the **amtsråd** (district council) or the **kommunalbestyrelse** (local council) can set up one or more standing committees. There is usually a social services committee, a technical committee, a committee for education and culture, an environment committee and, in the **amtskommuner**, a committee for hospital services. These committees each elect their own **formand** (chair).

Generally speaking, there is no ranking order among local authorities: official acts of the regional and local authorities are supervised directly by the Minister for the Interior in the case of the **amtskommuner** and by a four-member supervisory board elected among the members of the **amtsråd** in the case of the other **kommuner**. There are also a number of possibilities for appealing against decisions depending on the relevant legal framework.

The interests of regional and local authorities are represented at State level by two bodies: **Amtsrådsforeningen i Danmark** (Association of District Councils of Denmark) and **Kommunernes Landsforening** (National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark), which also serve as intermediaries between local authorities and the State.

¹ Esbjerg, Odense, Århus and Aalborg are **magistratskommuner** (municipal corporations). In these **kommuner**, **rådmænd** (aldermen) are elected each of whom heads one of the various administrative departments; Copenhagen is also a **magistratskommune**, but also has its own statute.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

Regional and local authorities exercise no State functions, with the exception of marriages, which the **kommuner** perform together with the Lutheran Church. Similarly, the police force is a State force.

Economic affairs

The **kommuner** are responsible for supplying water, gas and electricity. The **kommuner** and the **amtskommuner** are allowed to participate in economic activities (financial aid and capital shares in public and private enterprises, employment subsidies). They share responsibility for road maintenance and running local public transport. Town planning falls to the **kommuner**. The remaining tasks of regional planning are shared, but regional and local authorities do not control land use.

Education

The **kommuner** are responsible for the staff and buildings of nursery and primary schools while the **amtskommuner** are responsible for secondary schools. The **amtskommuner** also have responsibility for secondary school curricula within the framework of general directives issued by Parliament.

Culture and recreation

Cinemas, theatres, libraries and sports facilities are the responsibility of the **kommuner**.

Social affairs

The State has transferred many responsibilities in this area to the local and regional authorities:

- the **kommuner** are responsible for social services, social welfare and public health;
- the **amtskommuner** are responsible for setting up and running their own hospitals and for providing free healthcare by general practitioners and specialists.

In practice, the **kommuner** are responsible for all social services. The **amtskommuner** are responsible for specific cases, for example, for residential institutions for persons with a serious physical or mental handicap.

Environment

In general, the **kommuner** are responsible for the environment, but the **amtskommuner** take charge of cases requiring special handling, for example supervision of factories causing serious environmental pollution. The two levels of local administration jointly hold certain responsibilities for protected areas and nature parks; the **kommuner** are more specifically responsible for consumer protection. Other aspects of environmental policy are the responsibility of the **amtskommuner**.

Financing

The **amtskommuner** and the **kommuner** are entitled to levy income and property taxes. These raise one half of their revenue. In addition, they receive a general government grant and State refunds for social welfare, etc. About a quarter of local authorities' income arises from their own income-generating operations.

The law also provides for a system of financial equalization to balance out economic differences between the various regional and local authorities.



DEUTSCHLAND

GERMANY



Capital:	Berlin
Surface area:	357 000 km ²
Population:	81 553 000
Density:	228 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 22 630
Structure:	Parliamentary republic Bicameral parliament Federal State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

The Basic Law of 1949 (particularly Articles 20, 28, 30, 31, 70 and 83)

The **Länder** Constitutions, which independently regulate regional and local administration within each **Land** of Germany.

On 3 October 1990, the two Germanies were united and the five reconstituted **Länder** of eastern Germany joined the Federal Republic of Germany.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration:

- the 16 **Länder** (federal states),
- the 323 **Kreise** (districts),
- the 116 **kreisfreie Städte** (towns with autonomous administration) and 14 511 **kreisangehörige Gemeinden** (municipalities which are part of districts).

LÄNDER (16)

KREISE (323)

GEMEINDEN and STÄDTE (14 627)

The Länder

Under the Federal Constitution, the **Länder** have the status of states. By approving the Basic Law of 1949, they formed the Federal Republic of Germany.

Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen are **Stadtstaaten** (city states), being both **Länder** and **Städte** (cities).

The other **Länder** are divided into **Kreise** (local administrative districts having legal status), which are in turn divided into **Gemeinden** (municipalities).

The **Regierungsbezirke** (administrative regions), which exist only in some **Länder**, are regional administrative bodies of an intermediate level between the **Landesregierung** (state government) and the **Landkreise** or **kreisfreie Städte**. They are administered by a **Regierungspräsident** (a regional commissioner who is a civil servant of the **Land**).

Each of the **Länder** has its own constitution, internal sovereignty and legislative and administrative powers.

Each **Land** is organized on similar lines and comprises:

- a **Landtag** (state parliament) or **Bürgerschaft** (city parliament) in the **Stadtstaaten**, which is elected by direct universal suffrage and has a single chamber. The **Freistaat Bayern** (Free State of Bavaria) is an exception, having a second chamber which acts in an advisory capacity;
- a **Landesregierung** (state government) whose chief minister — **Ministerpräsident**, **Regierender Bürgermeister** (governing mayor) or **Bürgermeister** (mayor) in the **Stadtstaaten** — is elected by the **Landtag** or the **Bürgerschaft**.

Each **Land** has its own courts.

As the **Länder** enjoy internal sovereignty, the federal government has no right of control over the official acts of the **Länder**; it is, however, entitled to monitor the implementation of federal laws by the **Länder**.

The **Länder** are represented at federal level by the **Bundesrat** (second chamber of parliament), consisting of three to six government representatives from each **Land**. Through their executive branches, the **Länder** therefore have a direct say in the drafting of national legislation.

The Kreise

The 237 **Kreise** (districts) in western Germany are administered by a **Kreistag** (district council) of 20 to 80 members.

In most of the **Länder**, the **Kreistage** are elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of four years. They generally meet at least six times a year.

In most of the **Länder**, the **Landrat**, the chief executive of the **Kreis**, is elected by direct universal suffrage. In others the **Kreistag** elects a **Landrat** who is not necessarily a member of the **Kreistag**.

The **Kreistag** also elects from among its own ranks a standing administrative committee, a **Kreisausschuß**, chaired by the **Landrat**.

In western Germany, out of the 237 **Kreise**, there are 91 **kreisfreie Städte** (towns with autonomous administration), whose authorities exercise the functions of both **Gemeinden** and **Kreise**.

In eastern Germany, out of the 86 **Kreise**, there are 24 **kreisfreie Städte**.

The Gemeinden

The 8 513 **Gemeinden** (municipalities) in western Germany are administered differently in each of the **Länder** but can be subdivided into three groups:

Rheinland-Pfalz and the Saarland

The **Bürgermeister** (mayor) and **Beigeordnete** (aldermen) are elected by the **Stadtrat** (town council). The mayor, assisted by the aldermen, is responsible for the administration and also chairs the council.

Schleswig-Holstein and Hessen

A **Stadtverordnetenversammlung** (town council), representing the citizens, elects a **Magistrat** (collegiate executive) which has collective responsibility for the administration. This ensures that representation of the people and administration are kept quite separate.

Bayern and Baden-Württemberg, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Niedersachsen

The **Gemeinderat** (municipal council) and the **Bürgermeister** are both elected by direct universal suffrage. This makes the position of the **Bürgermeister** particularly important since it involves both chairing the **Gemeinderat** and being in charge of the administration.

In the five Länder of eastern Germany

In 1993 and 1994, all five new **Länder** of eastern Germany adopted municipal constitutions that provide for the direct election of a full-

time mayor who is in charge of the administration of the municipality and is the head of the municipal civil servants.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

The **Länder** have general legislative powers in their own areas of responsibility, except in cases where the Basic Law provides for intervention by the Federal State. In certain areas such as education and culture, and the police, the **Länder** have sole power.

The Basic Law guarantees municipal independence by laying down the right of municipalities to deal independently with all matters relating to the local community, within the framework of the Law. The tasks of the municipalities are of three types:

- free and voluntary — where the **Gemeinde** decides alone on whether and how it will undertake the task;
- mandatory — where the **Gemeinde** is required to execute the task;
- those executed on behalf of other authorities — tasks in areas where responsibility lies with the federal or **Land** authorities and which have devolved to the municipalities.

Financing

The Basic Law enshrines the principle that tax revenues are shared out between the federal government and the **Länder**. The **Länder** levy their own taxes (13% of their revenue) and receive a share of federal taxes (70% of their revenue). A fiscal equalization fund balances revenues as between the prosperous and less prosperous **Länder**.

The Basic Law stipulates that the **Länder** must provide regional and local authorities with sufficient resources. The **Gemeinden** receive the bulk of their resources from the Federal State and **Länder** and very little from local taxes.



ΕΛΛΑΔΑ/ELLADA

GREECE



Capital:	Athina (Athens)
Surface area:	132 000 km ²
Population:	10 442 000
Density:	79 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 8 150
Structure:	Parliamentary republic Unicameral parliament Unitary State in the process of decentralization

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1975 (particularly Articles 101 to 106)

Law of 1972 on the organization of the **nomos** (prefecture) of **Attica** (Athens region)

Law 1622 of 1986, implemented by Laws 2218 and 2240 of 1994, on the regional administration

1995 **Kodikas dimon kai kinotiton** (Municipal Code)

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration in Greece:

- the 13 **periferies** (regions),
- the 57 **nomi** (54 prefectural authorities and three expanded prefectural authorities: Athens-Piraeus, Kaválla-Xanti-Drama, Rodopi-Evros),
- the 441 **dimi** (urban municipalities) and 5 385 **kinotites** (rural municipalities)

The **nomi**, the **dimi** and the **kinotites** are decentralized authorities. Greece also has one autonomous **kinotita** (community), the community of the Mount Athos monasteries: European Union legislation applies here only in part.

PERIFERIES (13)

NOMI (57)

DIMI (441) and KINOTITES (5 385)

The periferies

The 13 **periferies** (regions) have no legal personality; their powers are devolved by the State. They are administered by a **genikos grammateas** (secretary-general), appointed by the President on the Prime Minister's proposal and with the consent of the government, who is the head of all the region's services and can be considered the executive body of the regional administration as well as being the representative of the central government in the region.

The **genikos grammateas** presides over a **periferiako simvoulío** (regional council) which is the decision-making body of the region. It is composed of the prefects in the region, a representative of each **dimos** and **kinotita** in the region, and representatives of the regional branches of various organizations.

The nomi

The **nomi** (prefectures) are the second tier of local self-government and are financially and administratively autonomous. They have elected organs: a **nomarchis** (prefect) elected every four years, a **nomarchiako simvoulío** (prefectural council) which is made up of between 21 and 37 members, and the **nomarchiakes epitropes** (prefectural committees), which must have at least three members. The main responsibilities of the prefectural council are the development of the **nomi** and the running of services for the local authorities which are members of the **nomi**.

The dimi and kinotites

The **kinotites** and **dimi** (rural and urban municipalities) constitute the decentralized level of the State. The **dimi** are, as a general rule, the chief towns in the **nomi** and the most important urban centres. The **kinotites** are generally villages with over 1 000 inhabitants. Both types of municipalities are administered by a **simvoulío** (council) elected for a four-year term by direct universal suffrage.

The **dimotiko simvoulío** (municipal council) and the **dimarchos** (mayor) are directly elected. The **dimarchos** is whoever heads the list of candidates of the party which wins the elections. The **dimotiko simvoulío** elects a **proedros** to lead it. In the **kinotites**, the offices of **proedros kinotitas** (municipal council chair) and **dimarchos** are combined, held by the candidate who heads the winning list.

In the **dimi**, the **dimotiko simvoulio** appoints a **dimarchiaki epitropi** (municipal committee) consisting of the **dimarchos** or **antidimarchos** (deputy mayor) and three to six members depending on the size of the **dimotiko simvoulio**. The **dimarchiaki epitropi** assists the **dimarchos** in his or her duties.

The State (the central government), through the **peripheriakos dieftintis** (the director of the region), supervises the legality of the acts of the **dimi** and the **kinotites**. The director of the region is a senior civil servant, appointed in each **nomos** by the Minister for the Interior, who performs every function that has not been devolved to the prefectural authority, as well as supervising the local authorities' organization (first degree of local authority).

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The administration of all local affairs is the responsibility of the **dimi** and **kinotites**. Those functions which are devolved from the State are performed by the **genikos grammateas**, the **nomarchis** and the **dimarchos**. The **kinotites** are responsible for the register of births, marriages and deaths.

Economic affairs

The **periferies** have been given responsibility for matters of economic and social planning. The **kinotites** and the **dimi** are in charge of gas and water supplies, public transport management and local road maintenance. The **kinotites** may create or participate in the management of public enterprises. They may become involved in creating and protecting employment.

Education

The **kinotites** and the **dimi** are responsible for the maintenance of nursery, primary and secondary school buildings, as well as of the music and professional schools.

Culture and recreation

The **dimi** and the **kinotites** are responsible for theatres, sports facilities, libraries, museums and art galleries.

Social affairs

The **dimi** and the **kinotites** are responsible for social assistance, subsidized housing, old people's homes, social centres for disabled people and for drug addicts.

Environment

The **dimi** and the **kinotites** are responsible for parks, nature areas and waste disposal.

Financing

Regional and local authorities are financed in two ways: by direct taxation (these taxes are generally collected by central government on behalf of the local authority), and by a proportional allocation of national taxes and the distribution of grants through individual ministries to finance specific projects.



ESPAÑA

SPAIN



Capital:	Madrid
Surface area:	506 000 km ²
Population:	39 170 000
Density:	77 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 10 900
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Bicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Based on the Constitution of 1978 (Articles 2, 137, and 140 to 158)

Statutes of autonomy of the **comunidades autónomas** (autonomous regions), adopted between 1979 and 1983, and reformed in 1994 to enlarge their powers

Law of 1985 establishing local powers and laying down the basic legal system governing them, amending the legislation of 1945-55 and 1975, 1977 and 1981

A royal legislative Decree of 1986 revising existing legislative provisions to strengthen the **comunidades autónomas**, which have legislative power over the local system

Laws of 1980 on the financing of the **comunidades autónomas**, and the Law of 1989 on local finance

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are two levels of regional and local administration in Spain:

- the autonomous level which coincides with the **comunidades autónomas** (autonomous regions),
- the local level, made up of **provincias** (provinces), **islas** (islands) and **municipios** (municipalities).

COMUNIDADES AUTÓNOMAS (17)

PROVINCIAS (50) – ISLAS

MUNICIPIOS (8 097)

The comunidades autónomas

In accordance with the statutes of autonomy, Spain is composed of 17 **comunidades autónomas**. The territories of Ceuta and Melilla (North Africa) have the same organization and the same responsibilities and powers as **comunidades autónomas**, while maintaining their status of **municipios**.

The **comunidades autónomas** are defined as regional authorities under public law which have political autonomy, legislative powers and their own governmental bodies.

In practice, the institutional structure is the same for all the **comunidades autónomas**, even if the terminology differs. The basic model is as follows:

- The **asamblea** (legislative assembly) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of four years and is composed of a varying number of **diputados regionales** (regional councillors). The **asamblea** is the legislative body of the **comunidades autónomas** and supervises the acts of the **consejo de gobierno** (regional executive council).
- The **consejo de gobierno** is the executive body of the **comunidad autónoma**. It takes its decisions on a collective responsibility basis and is politically answerable to the **asamblea**. The **consejo de gobierno** is chaired by the **presidente de la comunidad autónoma** (president of the autonomous region). The **presidente** is elected by the **asamblea**, directs and coordinates the work of the **consejo de gobierno** and represents the **comunidad autónoma vis-à-vis** the State.

The provincias

Spain is divided into 50 **provincias** (provinces). The **provincias** are local authority areas with their own legal personality and are made up of groups of **municipios**. They are also administrative divisions set up to carry out functions on behalf of central government. They are governed and administered by a **diputación provincial** (provincial council), the total number of **diputados** (members) being proportional to the population. The **diputados** are elected by the **concejales** (councillors) of the **municipios** which make up the **provincia**. A **gobernador civil** (governor) represents the State in each **provincia** and heads all the departments of the national administration.

The islas

The Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands are regional authorities. The **comunidad autónoma** of the Canary Islands comprises two **provincias**. The interests of each island are represented by the **cabildo** (island council). The **comunidad autónoma** of the Balearic Islands consists of only one **provincia** and its interests are represented by the **consejos insulares** (island councils).

The municipios

Spain comprises 8 097 **municipios** (municipalities). The **municipio** is a local authority with legal personality, governed and administered by an **ayuntamiento** (municipal council).

The **ayuntamiento** consists of **concejales** (councillors) elected by universal suffrage; their number depends on the population of the **municipio**.

The **concejales** elect, among their members, an **alcalde** (mayor), who chairs the **ayuntamiento** for a four-year term.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The State is responsible for registering births, deaths and marriages. The **municipio** has its own municipal police which exercise their functions in cooperation with the State police and, where they exist (Catalonia, Basque Country), with the police of some autonomous regions.

Economy

The **municipios** are responsible for supplying water, gas and electricity. Urban transport is run by the **municipios** and regional

transport (including railways) by the **comunidades autónomas**. The two levels share responsibility for maintaining roads. **Comunidades autónomas** are consulted during the preparation of the national budget and also draft their own plans.

Education

The **comunidades autónomas** have full responsibility in matters of education. Local authorities have responsibility for children's education.

Culture and recreation

Cinemas, theatres and sports facilities are run by the **municipios** and **comunidades autónomas**. Museums are managed by the **comunidades autónomas**.

Social affairs

The **municipios** are in charge of old people's homes; the **provincias** have no specific responsibilities in relation to social security; the **comunidades autónomas** with a high degree of self-government are responsible for health services. Hospital management is divided between the three levels. Employment policy is managed by the State.

Environment

All three devolved levels share responsibility for environmental protection.

Financing

The **comunidades autónomas** are financed by direct taxation, by allocations from certain national taxes, by State appropriations, and by an interregional compensation fund. Over 70% of the revenue of the **comunidades autónomas** comes from the State, except in the case of **Navarra** (Navarre) and the **País Vasco** (Basque Country) which are completely autonomous even with respect to the levying of taxes traditionally collected by the **provincias**.

The State provides more than 75% of the resources of the **diputaciones provinciales**.

The **municipios** derive almost 50% of their revenue from direct taxes, trading taxes, and property taxes. The other 50% derives directly from the State and from the **comunidades autónomas**.



FRANCE



Capital: Paris
Surface area: 544 000 km²
Population: 58 027 000
Density: 107 inhabitants/km²
Per capita GDP: ECU 20 240
Structure: Parliamentary republic
 Bicameral parliament
 Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1958, particularly Articles 34 and 72

Law of 10 August 1871 on the **conseils généraux** (general councils)

Law of 5 July 1972 on the organization of the **régions**

Law of 1982 on the rights and freedoms of regional and local authorities

Laws of 1983 as amended concerning the functions of regional and local authorities

Law of 5 January 1988 on the improvement of decentralization

Law of 6 February 1992 on the territorial administration

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration in France:

- the **régions** (regions),
- the **départements** (departments),
- the **communes** (municipalities).

There are, in addition, the **territoires d'outre-mer** (overseas territories) and the **collectivités territoriales** (regional authorities) of Mayotte and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, which enjoy internal autonomy and are not part of the European Union.

RÉGIONS (26)

DÉPARTEMENTS (100)

COMMUNES (36 763)

The régions

Each of the 26 **régions**, of which 22 are in metropolitan France and 4 are overseas (Guyane, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Réunion), is administered by a **conseil régional** (regional council) elected for a six-year term by direct universal suffrage. The council elects from its own ranks a **président**, who is the executive of the **région**, and between 4 and 15 **vice-présidents**. The **conseil régional** is supported by an economic and social committee consisting of representatives of trade unions, employers' associations and organizations of the self-employed.

The départements

There are a total of 100 **départements** (of which four are overseas, serving as the seat of the four overseas regions), together with Paris, which is both a **département** and a **commune**. They are administered by a **conseil général** (department council) elected for a term of six years by direct universal suffrage, whereby half of the **conseillers généraux** (councillors) face election every three years. The **conseil général** elects a **président**, who is the executive of the **département**, as well as 4 to 10 **vice-présidents**.

The communes

There are 36 763 **communes**, of which 90% have fewer than 2 000 inhabitants. France is the only large country in the European Union which has not merged its smaller **communes**. Intermunicipal cooperation, however, is encouraged and today there are 756 associations of municipalities, four associations of towns, nine urban communities and 17 896 intermunicipal associations. The **communes** are governed by a **conseil municipal** (municipal council), whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term. They may range in number from 9 (for **communes** with fewer than 100 inhabitants) to 69 (for **communes** with more than 300 000 inhabitants). Paris, Lyons and Marseilles have a special status (Paris: 163 members; Marseilles: 101 members; Lyons: 73 members). The **conseil municipal** elects a **maire** (mayor) from among its own members, plus **adjoints** (deputies) whose number may not exceed 30% of the total number of members. The **conseil municipal** is required

to meet at least four times each year. The **maire** is both the chief executive of the **commune** and a representative of central government.

The **maire** or the **président du conseil général ou régional** may delegate some of his or her functions to deputies and **vice-présidents** under his or her own supervision and on his or her own responsibility. He or she may also revoke such arrangements.

Regional and local authorities, and particularly the **communes**, often exercise their powers through joint bodies, which helps to offset the negative effects of their being dispersed.

In parallel with the regional and local authorities, central government administration is organized on a regional and local basis. External departments of the ministries, such as those attached to the **préfectures** (prefectures) and **sous-préfectures** (sub-prefectures), come under the authority of regional and departmental **préfets** (prefects) or **sous-préfets** (sub-prefects). Certain administrative functions, however, come under separate departments (administration of finance, national education, application of work legislation). The **préfets** and heads of these government departments exercise powers devolved by the State.

There is no ranking order as between local authorities. The **préfet** checks official acts of the regional and local authorities after they have been adopted to make sure that they are lawful, and may refer them to the administrative tribunal in the event of any dispute. Control of budgets is exercised by the **préfet** who may also refer the matter to the regional boards of auditors.

In accordance with the Constitution, the interests of regional and local authorities are represented at national level by the Senate, whose members are elected by, among others, the representatives of the **communes**, **départements** and **régions**.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The register of births, marriages and deaths is maintained by the **communes**. The municipal police force is headed by the **maire**, while the national police force is run by the central government.

Economic affairs

The **communes** are responsible for supplying water, gas and electricity. The **régions**, **départements** and **communes** may take measures to promote economic development. They may set up mixed investment companies. The **région** adopts the regional development plan and concludes a contract concerning the State-**région** plan with the State. The **départements** exercise various powers in regard to rural development. Town planning is the job of the **communes**.

Responsibility for running regional and local public transport is shared between the **régions** (agreements with the French railways), the **départements** and the **communes**. Road maintenance is divided, depending on the type of network involved, between the State, **départements** and **communes**. The **régions** are allowed to participate in investments.

Education

The **communes** are in charge of erecting and maintaining nursery and primary school buildings, the **départements** for **collège** (private secondary school) buildings, and the **régions** for **lycée** (public secondary school) buildings. The State is responsible for universities, but **régions** may be asked by the State to make a financial contribution. The **régions** are responsible for vocational training for young people between 16 and 26 years of age. The State sets school curricula and manages the teaching staff.

Social affairs

Social welfare is primarily the responsibility of the **département**, which provides care for children, the elderly and the handicapped, as well as medical care and help with reinsertion.

Environment

Environmental protection is the overall responsibility of the State; the **régions** manage regional nature parks and the **départements** are responsible for landscape protection. The **communes** and **départements** are becoming increasingly involved in problems of waste disposal and water purity.

Financing

The **communes**, **départements** and **régions** each levy four direct taxes: a property tax on land with buildings and on land without buildings, a trading tax, and a tax on residential accommodation. Some groups of **communes** are also entitled to levy taxes.

Each level of regional and local authority also has its own specific resources and receives appropriations from the State.

Each **commune** receives overall appropriations for operating and capital expenditure and decentralization grants; it also levies local taxes (a local capital expenditure tax).

The **régions** are given funds for vocational training, an investment appropriation for **lycées** and a general appropriation for decentralized expenditure. They also levy taxes on driving licences and vehicle registration certificates.

The **départements** receive general appropriations for operating and capital expenditure, a specific appropriation for capital expenditure on private secondary schools, and an appropriation for decentralized expenditure. They levy taxes on motor vehicles (road fund licence), on electricity and on income deriving from conveyance transactions.

Moreover, all regional and local authorities receive reimbursements from the VAT Compensation Fund. Each of these authorities is also empowered to raise loans.



IRELAND/ÉIRE



Capital:	Dublin
Surface area:	70 300 km ²
Population:	3 577 000
Density:	51 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 13 070
Structure:	Parliamentary republic Bicameral parliament Unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

The Constitution of 1937 makes no specific reference to local government, but does provide for the creation and recognition of subordinate legislatures to that of the central government. The main legislative powers concerning local government are to be found in the following laws:

Local Government Act 1898, which provided for the establishment of the existing system's **counties** and **towns, boroughs** and **urban districts**;

County Management Act 1940;

Local Government Act 1941;

Local Government (Financial Provisions) Act 1978;

Local Government Act 1991;

Local Government Act 1994.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration in Ireland:

- the **regional authorities** (8),
- the **counties** and **cities** (34, of which 29 **county councils** and five **county borough councils**),
- other municipalities (84, of which five **borough corporations**, 49 **urban district councils** and 30 **boards of town commissioners**).

The principal level of local government is at county and city level. The eight regional authorities were established in 1995 to provide a mechanism for coordinating the activities of their constituent local authorities and other State agencies.

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (8)

COUNTIES and CITIES (34)

Other MUNICIPALITIES (84)

The counties/cities

There are 29 **county councils**, and five **county borough councils** (cities of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford). Each is administered by a **county** or **city manager** who reports to an elected council of 15 to 52 members elected every five years by direct universal suffrage. The **councils** also elect their **cathaoirleach** and **leas-cathaoirleach** (chairman and vice-chairman) every year. The cities of Dublin and Cork elect a **Lord Mayor**. The cities of Galway, Limerick and Waterford elect a **mayor**.

The boroughs, urban districts and towns

There are five **borough corporations**, 49 **urban district councils** and 30 **boards of town commissioners**. This system is presently under review by a Town Government Review Commission.

- At the lowest level come the **boards of town commissioners**. Any urban area, once it reaches a population of 1 500 may apply to the Minister for the Environment for the right to hold elections to such a board. Their functions are very limited.
- The **urban district councils** form an intermediate level. The electorate of a town may, through the council, ask the Minister to make it an **urban district**. The **districts** have a wider range of functions, but many are dependent on their **county council** for the actual provision of services.
- The **borough corporations** are urban areas with an historical basis for their local authority. They provide much the same range of service as the urban district councils.

All the **councils** are elected by universal suffrage. The **boards of town commissioners** and almost all **urban districts** have nine members. They elect a **chairman** each year. The **boroughs** have 12 members and elect a **mayor** each year.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Irish local authorities are responsible for major infrastructural services, such as roads construction and maintenance, water supply and sewerage, and provision and management of social housing. Local authorities also have a number of regulatory functions in relation to environmental protection, physical planning, road transportation and safety, building and safety, and fire prevention.

The local authorities are responsible for the general development of their areas. They have powers of general competence to act in the community interest and they also provide protective, recreational and amenity services. They also have limited responsibility for agriculture, education, health and welfare.

The Department of the Environment is responsible for the supervision of the activities of the regional and local authorities. A Devolution Commission is presently examining the possibility of devolving a range of services from the central authorities to the local authorities.

Financing

Total overall expenditure by Irish local authorities accounts for approximately 5% of GDP and 11% of total public expenditure.

Current expenditure by local authorities is funded by means of three different sources:

- government grants/subsidies;
- charges for goods/services;
- local taxes.

Approximately 50% of **county council** expenditure is accounted for by way of government grants. The cities receive approximately 25% of their income in the form of grants as do the other urban authorities.



ITALIA

ITALY



Capital:	Roma (Rome)
Surface area:	301 300 km ²
Population:	57 504 000
Density:	191 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 14 250
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Bicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

The Constitution of 1948

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are three levels of regional and local administration in Italy:

- the **regioni** (regions),
- the **province** (provinces),
- the **comuni** (municipalities).

REGIONI (20)

PROVINCE (102)

COMUNI (8 097)

The regioni

The regioni (regions) were first established by the Constitution of the Republic in 1948 in order to introduce a degree of devolution.

Italy now has 20 regional authorities:

- 15 ordinary **regioni**. They were provided for in the Constitution, but only began functioning in 1972;
- five special-status **regioni**: Sicilia (Sicily), Sardegna (Sardinia), Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. These **regioni**, which are situated on the periphery of Italian territory, owe their existence to special historical and cultural factors. They have more extensive legislative and administrative powers than ordinary-status **regioni**.

The **regione** is an autonomous unit of local administration. Its authority is exercised through a legislative body, the **consiglio regionale** (regional council), and an executive body consisting of the **giunta** (regional executive) and the **presidente della giunta** (chair of the regional executive).

The **consiglio regionale** in the ordinary status **regioni** is elected for a five-year term and comprises at least 30 **consiglieri** (regional councillors) (for **regioni** with fewer than one million inhabitants) and a maximum of 80 (for **regioni** with over six million inhabitants).

The **consiglio regionale** elects its own **presidente** (chair of the regional council), and a **giunta** (regional executive) which consists of the **presidente della giunta regionale** (chair of the regional executive) and the **assessori** (regional assessors).

In the special-status **regioni**, the **consiglio regionale** has a fixed number of **consiglieri** (Sicilia and Valle d'Aosta) or a number determined in proportion to the population (Sardegna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige).

The province

The **provincia** is an autonomous local authority, covering a number of municipalities. It comes between the **regione** and the **comune**. There are 102 **province**, each of which is administered by a **consiglio provinciale** (provincial council), a **giunta provinciale** (provincial executive) and a **presidente della provincia** (chair of the provincial executive).

The **consiglio provinciale**, which is the decision-making body of the **provincia**, is made up of councillors whose number is proportional to the population. It is elected for a five-year term under a majority system.

The **giunta provinciale** is the executive body of the **provincia** and is presided over by a **presidente della provincia** who is elected directly by the voters. Two of the **province**, Trento and Bolzano, have special status and powers.

The comuni

The 8 097 comuni are politically and administratively autonomous local authorities, each run by a **consiglio comunale** (municipal council), **giunta comunale** (municipal executive) and **sindaco** (mayor).

The **consiglio**, which is made up of between 12 and 60 **consiglieri** (councillors) according to the population of the municipality, is the legitimate representative of the people and is elected by the electorate of the **comune**; its functions are primarily deliberative and advisory.

The **giunta comunale**, consisting of between two and eight **assessori** (assessors) and chaired by the **sindaco**, is the executive body of the **comune**. The **sindaco**, elected directly by the voters, heads the administration of the **comune** and also represents the central government.

The system of supervision for the activities of regional and local authorities is as follows:

- the State supervises the activity and legislative and administrative decisions of the **regioni**;
- the State supervises the activity and administrative decisions of the **province** and the **comuni** through the **regioni**.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The **regioni** have administration functions in the same areas as they have legislative powers except for exclusively local matters, which can be devolved by legislation to the **province**, **comuni** or other local bodies.

Economic affairs

The **comuni** are responsible for supplying water, gas and electricity, and environmental protection. The **regioni** and **comuni** are

allowed to hold shares in enterprises. The **regioni** may also distribute aid and pursue an employment policy. The **comuni**, **province** and **regioni** run public transport and maintain the roads. The **regioni** are involved in national planning. Town planning falls to the **comuni**, **province** and **regioni** which also oversee land use.

The **province** are responsible for economic and local planning.

Education

The **comuni** are responsible for managing nursery, primary and compulsory secondary schools; the **province** and **regioni** are in charge of non-compulsory secondary school administration.

Culture and recreation

The **comuni** are responsible for theatres and sports facilities.

Social affairs

The **comune** is the local authority responsible for social affairs within its territory. The **regioni** are also involved in setting up and running social services.

Environment

Responsibilities for the environment are divided among the three levels of regional and local administration.

Financing

The regional and local authorities are financed by taxes levied directly by the **comuni** and **regioni**, but mostly by a share of the taxes levied by the State, which are pooled in a special fund.



LUXEMBOURG



Capital:	Luxembourg
Surface area:	2 586 km ²
Population:	400 000
Density:	155 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 31 860
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1868

Law of 1900 on the associations of **communes**

Law of 1988 on the **communes** and the **districts**

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are two levels of local administration in Luxembourg:

- the **districts** (districts),
- the **communes** (municipalities).

DISTRICTS (3)

COMMUNES (118)

The districts

The three **districts** are devolved subdivisions of the State, administered by a **commissaire de district** (district commissioner) who is a State civil servant appointed by the government. The commissioner has two main functions: to serve as an intermediary between the municipalities and central government and to be officially responsible for certain aspects of supervision of the municipalities, with the exception of Luxembourg City, which comes directly under the Minister for the Interior.

The communes

The 118 **communes** are governed by:

- a **conseil communal** (municipal council) elected by direct universal suffrage,
- a **bourgmestre** (mayor) appointed by the Grand Duke, and
- a **collège des bourgmestre et échevins** (council of the mayor and aldermen, municipal executive).

Aldermen are appointed by the Grand Duke in the towns and by the Minister for the Interior in the other municipalities.

Communes bearing the title of town are so designated by law. The **bourgmestre** chairs the **conseil communal** and the **collège des bourgmestre et échevins** (council of aldermen); the latter has executive powers.

The **conseil communal** may set up advisory committees consisting either of members of the **conseil** or of experts in the matter in hand, whose task is to advise it. The **conseil** meets at least once every three months. Municipal administration is managed by a **secrétaire** (secretary) and by a **receveur** (registrar) responsible for managing municipal finances; both are appointed by the **conseil communal**.

Central government supervises the official acts of the **communes**: certain acts require approval, such as the budget (final adoption by the Minister for the Interior), the construction of municipal buildings and the recruitment of municipal staff. Unlawful acts or those contrary to the general interest may be suspended by the Minister for the Interior or declared null and void by the Grand Duke.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

In the **communes**, functions devolved by the State are performed by the **bourgmestre** and the **collège des bourgmestre et échevins**. The **communes** are responsible for maintaining the register of births, marriages and deaths; the **bourgmestre** acts as registrar. The **bourgmestre** is responsible for law enforcement and applying police regulations. In **communes** with their own police stations, police inspectors are responsible, under the **bourgmestre**, for ensuring that local police regulations and ordinances are enforced.

Economic affairs

The **communes** are responsible for supplying water. They may make land available to enterprises which are creating employment and may provide indirect aid to others. Local road maintenance is the responsibility of the **communes**. Planning permission is granted by the **bourgmestre**, who heads the planning authority, whereas town planning as such is controlled by the **conseil communal** under a Law of 1937 on urban renewal. Decentralized economic planning does not exist.

Education

Nursery and primary school education is in the hands of the **communes**, as is the maintenance of school buildings.

Culture and recreation

Theatres and sports facilities are the responsibility of the **communes**.

Social affairs

Various social services are provided by the **communes**, which are required to run a social welfare office.

Environment

The **communes** are responsible for regulating waste disposal.

Financing

The sources of **commune** revenue, each representing about a third of the total budget income, are:

- a trade tax, which is a municipal tax levied on behalf of the **communes** by the central tax authorities;
- the percentage due to the **communes** of the revenue from three taxes imposed by the State (VAT, personal income tax, and road fund tax);
- independent resources (such as property rates, water, gas, electricity, public transport, purification and municipal services).



NEDERLAND

THE NETHERLANDS



Capital:	Amsterdam
Seat of government:	Den Haag (The Hague)
Surface area:	42 000 km ²
Population:	15 423 000
Density:	367 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 19 560
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Bicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1814

Law of 1993 on provincial organization

Law of 1994 on municipal organization

Regional and local divisions and institutions

There are two levels of local government in the Netherlands:

- the **provincies** (provinces)
- the **gemeenten** (municipalities).

The Netherlands Antilles have internal autonomy. There are also devolved authorities of the State, **waterschappen** (district water boards) which are responsible for water management. The **provincie** of Friesland has certain special powers, in particular with respect to culture.

PROVINCIES (12)

GEMEENTEN (625)

The provinces

The 12 **provincies** date back to the creation of the **Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden** (United Republic of the Netherlands) in the 17th century, and are therefore of fundamental historical importance. They are administered at two levels:

- a **provinciale staten** (provincial council), elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term, and
- a **Commissaris der Koningin** (Royal Commissioner), head of the executive and State representative in the **provincie**.

The **provinciale staten** has between 39 and 83 members and meets at least twice a year. It elects from its own ranks a **gedeputeerde staten** (provincial executive) of at least three and at most nine members.

The **gedeputeerde staten** is responsible for running the everyday affairs of the **provincie** and for drafting decisions to be taken by the **provinciale staten**. It may set up standing or *ad hoc* committees, some of whose members may be chosen from outside the **provinciale staten**.

The **provinciale staten** and **gedeputeerde staten** are chaired by the **Commissaris der Koningin**, who is appointed by the Cabinet after consultations with the **provinciale staten**.

The **Commissaris** has a casting vote in the event of a tie in the **gedeputeerde staten**.

The gemeenten

Central government in the Netherlands has adopted a policy of deregulation and decentralization. In other words, it is planning either to privatize or to decentralize tasks that at present it carries out itself.

As decentralization requires municipalities with a minimum number of staff and some financial resources, there is a tendency to merge smaller municipalities and to strengthen cooperation between municipalities.

In 1956, there were still 1 000 municipalities in the Netherlands. Today, there are 625, and in the next 10 years it is expected that a further 150 small municipalities will disappear.

The administrative set-up in the 625 **gemeenten** is comparable to that of the **provincies**:

- a **gemeenteraad** (municipal council) elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term, and
- a **burgemeester** (mayor) appointed by the Queen, after consultations with the **gemeenteraad**, for a six-year term.

The **gemeenteraad** comprises from 9 to 45 members and meets at least six times a year. It elects from its own ranks a **college van burgemeester en wethouders** (council of mayor and alderman, municipal executive), which consists of two to nine **wethouders** (aldermen) responsible for running the everyday affairs of the **gemeente**.

The **wethouders** are jointly and severally answerable to the **gemeenteraad**, which can deprive them of office.

The **gemeenteraad** may set up standing or *ad hoc* committees.

The **gemeenteraad** and the **college van burgemeester en wethouders** are chaired by the **burgemeester**. He or she acts in an advisory capacity in the **gemeenteraad** and has a casting vote in the event of a tie in the **college van burgemeester en wethouders**. The **burgemeester** is answerable to the **gemeenteraad** but cannot be dismissed from office by it.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

One of the tasks of the **provincie** is to oversee the **gemeenten**. Central government supervises both authorities, directly in the case of the **provincies** and via the **gedeputeerde staten** in the case of the **gemeenten**.

The **provincies** are represented at national level by the **Eerste Kamer van Staten-generaal** (First Chamber of the States-General), whose members they elect.

Functions devolved by the State are performed by the **provinciale staten** and the **gemeenteraad**. Tasks can also be delegated to the **gedeputeerde staten** and to the **Commissaris der Koningin** as well as to the **college van burgemeester en wethouders**. In matters concerning the implementation of legislation, only the **provin-**

ciale staten and the **gemeenteraad** are responsible. Maintaining the register of births, marriages and deaths is the responsibility of the **gemeenten**. The municipal police force is headed by the **burgemeester**.

Economic affairs

The **gemeenten** and the **provincies** share responsibility for the supply of water, gas and electricity. Their involvement in economic activities is as follows: the **gemeenten** may take part in employment support schemes; the **provincies** and the **gemeenten** are entitled to hold shares in public and private enterprises. The **gemeenten** sometimes run public transport; they share responsibility for road maintenance with the **provincies**. Town planning falls to the **gemeenten**, which supervise land use. Economic planning is divided between the two levels.

Education

The **gemeenten** are responsible for managing State primary and secondary school buildings and grounds.

Culture and recreation

Theatres are the responsibility of the **gemeenten** and the **provincies**. The **gemeenten** are responsible for sports facilities.

Social affairs

The **gemeenten** oversee social assistance and subsidized housing. Setting up and managing public hospitals and public homes for the elderly is the shared responsibility of the **gemeenten** and the **provincies**.

Environment

The task of environmental protection falls to the **provincies**, while water purification is carried out by the **gemeenten**.

Financing

Dutch regional and local authorities are financed primarily by two funds, the **gemeenten** fund and the **provincies** fund, which draw on tax revenue collected at national level. Around 30% of **gemeenten** revenue derives from the **gemeenten** fund. In addition, there are special grants from the State (up to 60% of the **gemeenten** revenue). The **provincies** also receive road maintenance grants. Regional and local authorities levy certain taxes directly, such as stamp duty on provincial acts and property rates.



ÖSTERREICH

AUSTRIA



Capital:	Wien (Vienna)
Surface area:	84 859 km ²
Population:	8 040 000 inhabitants
Density:	95 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 22 140
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Bicameral parliament Federal State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Articles 95 to 106 of the Austrian Constitution (1920) deal with the law-making and administrative powers of the **Länder**. The special status of the capital, Vienna, is dealt with in Articles 108 to 112. Also relevant are the constitutional amendments made between 1962 and 1994, which added Articles 115 to 120, 23c, 23d and established the legal identity of municipalities and their administrative autonomy and, finally, their role in relation to the EU legislation.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

In Austria there are two levels of regional and local administration:

- the **Länder** (states),
- the **Gemeinden** and **Städte** (municipalities and towns).

Between these two levels, there are the **politische Bezirke** (political regions), which are indirectly mentioned in the Constitution (Articles 78, 81, 109 and 116) and which oversee the activities of the **Gemeinden**. They are essentially decentralized organs of the **Länder**.

LÄNDER (9)

GEMEINDEN and STÄDTE (2 354)

The Länder

According to Article 2 of the Constitution, Austria is a Federal State composed of nine autonomous **Länder** including Vienna, which has 1.5 million inhabitants (one fifth of the entire Austrian population). The **Länder** have their own legislative and administrative powers and are entitled to establish their own constitutions within

the framework of the Federal Constitution. As a rule, the institutions of the **Länder** are the following:

- a **Landtag** (parliament) which is unicameral and elected every five years or every six years (according to its Constitution) under a proportional representation system;
- a **Landesregierung** (government), elected by the **Landtag** and responsible to it. The **Landesregierung** is headed by a **Landeshauptmann** (chief minister), elected by the **Landtag** from the members of the **Landesregierung**.

Legislation at **Land** level is the responsibility of the **Landtag**, but the federal government (**Bund**) has a right of veto (although this is only the power to send a law back for reconsideration). The **Länder** are represented in the **Bundesrat** (upper house of parliament), where each **Land** has delegates in proportion to its population.

The Gemeinden and Städte

There are 2 354 **Gemeinden** and **Städte** (municipalities and towns). These have been mentioned in the Constitution only since 1962 and do not form part of the Federal State's general administration, being autonomous administrative entities.

The decision-making body of the **Gemeinde** is the **Gemeinderat** (municipal council), elected every five or six years under a proportional system. The **Bürgermeister** (mayor) is elected either by the **Gemeinderat**, amongst its members, or directly, depending on the different legislation of the **Länder**. Within a **Gemeinde** or a **Stadt**, it is the **Bürgermeister** who holds executive power, assisted in his or her functions by the **Gemeindevorstand/Stadtsenat** (municipal board/town senate) elected by the council.

With the approval of the federal government, towns with more than 20 000 inhabitants (**Städte**) can adopt their own charter; in which case, they are no longer subject to the administrative control of the **politischer Bezirk**.

The **Gemeinden** and **Städte** do not have any legislative power but they can be authorized to make orders and to raise taxes in their own sphere.

As laid down in the Federal Constitution (Article 115), the interests of **Gemeinden** and **Städte** are represented respectively by the **Österreichischer Gemeindebund** (Association of Austrian Municipalities) and by the **Österreichischer Städtebund** (Association of the Austrian Towns).

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

In the field of administration, a distinction has to be made between the **Länder's** own executive powers and 'Indirect federal administration' where the **Landeshauptmänner** and the organs subjected to them exercise the executive power of the **Bund**. The federal government can, under certain conditions, also delegate to the **Länder** executive powers in matters which the Constitution states to be of its exclusive responsibility.

The **Gemeinden** are, among others, responsible for the register of births, deaths and marriages.

Law and order is the responsibility of the Minister for the Interior. There are two police forces: the federal police and the federal gendarmerie, both organized at national level. The **Gemeinden**, however, have responsibility for some public security at local level. The urban police (**Strassenpolizei**) and the fire brigade (**Feuerpolizei**) are directly responsible to the **Bürgermeister**.

Economic affairs

The **Gemeinden** are independent economic entities allowed to own every kind of property and to undertake economic activities, as well as to raise taxes.

Economic planning is the responsibility of the **Bund** and the **Länder**. The **Länder** can, for example, make planning decisions in the fields of agricultural, industrial and tourist development.

The **Bund** and the **Länder** share responsibility for the supply of electricity.

The **Gemeinden** are responsible for commercial licences and can set up a special corps of inspectors (**Marktpolizei**) to police this. Regional planning and town planning are carried out by the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden**. The latter have a corps of inspectors (**Baupolizei**) who ensure that building regulations are respected.

Education

School authorities exist at **Land** and **Bezirk** levels, but in both cases come under the authority of the Federal Ministry of Education, which heads the entire system. The federal government is responsible for policy and also lays down the guidelines as to how schools are to be organized. Questions concerning school hours, property and the maintenance of the buildings are the responsibility of the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden** under the supervision of the different school authorities which put into practice the directives of the Ministry of Education on these matters. The responsibilities of the various regional and local authorities vary, therefore, according to the type of school and of the legislation of the different **Länder**.

Culture and recreation

Theatres, leisure and sports centres and libraries are managed by the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden**. Cultural institutions of particular importance and prestige come under the responsibility of the **Bund**.

Social affairs

The most important social services, such as hospitals, retirement homes and rehabilitation centres, are generally managed by the **Länder** and also by several **Gemeinden**. The **Gemeinden**, however, run the first-aid service and public emergency services through a corps (**Gesundheitspolizei**) directly responsible to the **Bürgermeister**.

The **Länder** can delegate to the **Gemeinden** the management of particular social services (social assistance, centres for drug addicts, maternity centres, etc.).

Environment

Environmental protection policy is subject to federal and **Land** legislation. Forest rangers (**Flurschutzpolizei**) come under the control of the **Bürgermeister**. Nature parks are managed by the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden** conjointly.

The **Länder** are mainly responsible for nature protection and prevention of cruelty to animals; almost all other environmental affairs are the responsibility of the federal level.

Financing

The system of financing the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden** is mixed, part of the money coming from a share of **Bund** tax revenues and part from their own taxes. The Federal Constitution lays down that tax revenues of the **Bund** must be divided between the **Bund**, the **Länder** and the **Gemeinden**, according to a proportion fixed periodically by an appropriate federal law (**Finanzausgleichgesetz**). The amount allocated to the **Gemeinden** is negotiated between the **Bund**, the **Länder**, the Association of Austrian Municipalities and the Association of Austrian Towns, although the final decision rests with the Federal Parliament. The **Länder** and the **Gemeinden** also have the constitutional right to raise their own taxes.

On average, 40% of the income of municipalities comes from municipal taxes and 60% from federal finance.



PORTUGAL



Capital:	Lisboa (Lisbon)
Surface area:	92 389 km ²
Population:	9 920 000
Density:	107 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 7 800
Structure:	Parliamentary republic Unicameral parliament Unitary State in the process of decentralization

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1976 (Articles 237 to 265), as amended particularly by the constitutional Law of 8 July 1989 (Articles 227 to 265)

Law (No 100/84) of 29 March 1984 on the **municípios** and the **freguesias**

Law of 1987 on local finance

Statute governing the territory of **Macau** (Macao)

Political and administrative statute of the **Região autónoma dos Açores** (autonomous region of the Azores)

Political and administrative statute of the **Região autónoma da Madeira** (autonomous region of Madeira)

Regional and local divisions and institutions

As soon as the regionalization for which the Constitution provides has been carried through, there will be three levels of local administration in Portugal:

- the **regiões** (regions),
- the **municípios** (municipalities),
- the **freguesias** (parishes), a submunicipal division.

Until the **regiões** are set up, the **distritos** (districts) are being retained as decentralized organs of central government, although they are by law no longer regarded as regional divisions. A regional administrative level has already been established for Madeira and the Azores, which enjoy a certain amount of internal autonomy. Macao, a Chinese territory under Portuguese administration, does not belong to the European Union.

REGIÕES

MUNICÍPIOS (305)

FREGUESIAS (4 220)

Portugal is a unitary but decentralized State. Decentralization takes three forms:

- political decentralization for the **regiões autónomas**;
- administrative decentralization, as yet to be defined by law, for the future **regiões administrativas** (administrative regions);
- existing administrative decentralization in the case of the **municípios** and **freguesias** throughout the country.

The regiões

The regiões autónomas

Political decentralization derives from the fact that there are two **regiões autónomas**, **Madeira** and **Açores** (Azores), which have political and administrative statutes along with government institutions of their own:

- an **assembleia legislativa regional** (regional legislative assembly) elected by direct universal suffrage with proportional representation, and
- a **governo regional** (regional government) responsible to the **assembleia legislativa regional**.

In these two **regiões autónomas**, the sovereignty of the republic is represented by a **Ministro da República** (Minister for the Republic) who is appointed by the Head of State on the government's proposal.

The *regiões administrativas* on the mainland

The Constitution of 1976 provides that the mainland territory is to be divided into **regiões** which must be established in two stages:

- first, approval by the **Assembleia da República** (Parliament) for the establishment of the **regiões administrativas**;
- second, the establishment of each **região administrativa**.

The representative institutions of the **regiões administrativas** are to be the **assembleia regional** (regional assembly) and the **junta regional** (regional executive). Each **região** also has a government representative.

The *municípios* and *freguesias* throughout the country

The *municípios*

The 305 **municípios** are local authorities whose representative bodies are the **assembleia municipal** (municipal assembly) and the **câmara municipal** (municipal council).

The **assembleia municipal** consists of the **presidentes das juntas de freguesias** (presidents of the parish executive councils) and a number of elected members which must be three times larger than the number of the members of the **câmara municipal**, and always larger than the number of the **presidentes das juntas de freguesias**.

The **câmara municipal**, consisting of a **presidente da câmara** (mayor) and **vereadores** (councillors), is the executive body of the **município**. It is directly elected by universal suffrage.

Elections to the **câmara municipal** and to the **assembleia municipal** are held at the same time, the post of **presidente da câmara** (mayor), being filled by the candidate at the head of the winning list.

The **assembleia municipal** may set up a consultative body, a **conselho municipal** (municipal advisory board), which makes sure that the economic, social, cultural and professional organizations in the **município** are properly represented.

The freguesias

The 4 220 **freguesias** have the following representative bodies: the **assembleia de freguesia** (parish assembly), elected by direct universal suffrage by voters resident in the **freguesia**, and the **junta de freguesia**, elected by secret ballot from among the members of the **assembleia**.

The **junta de freguesia** is the executive body; its **presidente** is the candidate at the head of the winning list in the **assembleia** elections. **Freguesias** with fewer than 200 inhabitants do not have an **assembleia de freguesia**; the electorate itself forms an **assembleia** and directly elects its **junta**.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The **freguesias** are responsible for running and conserving their own assets; the **municípios** have powers with regard to the administration of property within their jurisdiction.

Economic affairs

The **municípios** are responsible for the distribution of water and electricity. They can promote economic activity by holding shares in enterprises which have an interest for the municipality. They also have powers with respect to urban development and town planning.

Education

The **municípios** are responsible for maintaining nursery and primary school buildings and for school transport.

Culture and recreation

The **municípios** are responsible for libraries, municipal museums and local sports facilities.

Environment

The **municípios** have powers in the fields of environmental protection and quality of life of their citizens.

Financing

The **municípios** have their own assets and financial resources. Their revenues thus include income derived from the management of their assets and from charges for the use of municipal services, as well as from a number of local taxes.

In addition to their own resources, the **municípios** receive money from the State amounting to more than 40% of their income.

The **municípios** also have their own regulatory powers and are subject to administrative supervision by the **Ministério do Equipamento, do Planeamento e Administração do Território** (Ministry of the Interior) and the Ministry of Finance.



SUOMI/FINLAND



Capital:	Helsinki
Surface area:	338 000 km ²
Population:	5 099 000
Density:	15 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 18 860
Structure:	Democratic republic Unicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1919, particularly Sections 50 and 51;

Åland Self-Administration Law of 1991

Local Administration Law of 1995

Law of the Urban Community of Helsinki

Of particular importance is the recent Regional Development Act of 1994, which reformed the regional administration and aimed to increase the regions' own responsibilities and authority in regional development and decision-making, transferring many tasks relating to regional development from provincial governments to regional councils.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

In Finland there are two main levels of local administration:

- the **maakunnat** (regions),
- the **kunnat** (municipalities).

MAAKUNNAT (19)

KUNNAT (455)

The maakunnat

Finland's regional administration is composed of two different branches: the State district administration, **lääni** (provinces and other State districts), and the municipality-based regional administration, **maakunnat** (regions).

The five **lääni** (provinces) can be considered as regional arms of the central government and are subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, although operationally they are also units directed by other ministries. They have their own administration headed by a governor (**maaherra**) appointed by the President of Finland. The **lääni** are non-political administrative bodies, since their officers are not elected but nominated by the central government. The provinces mainly have a decreasing monitoring and controlling task over the opera-

tions of regions and municipalities and the responsibility of ensuring the conformity of local legislation with State legislation.

The other main branch of Finland's regional administration is represented by the 19 **maakunnat** (regions) which are joint municipal authorities formed and principally founded by their municipalities.

The **Ahvenanmaa/Åland** archipelago has a special self-government status, in view of the Swedish population which lives there.

The **maakuntavaltuusto** (the council of regional council) is the highest decision-making body of the region. Its members are elected by the members of the municipal councils for a four-year term, which coincides with the municipal election period. Most of the regional council members are also members of municipal councils and derive their mandates from municipal elections. The regional council consists of 20 to 100 members, depending on the number of member municipalities; representation and voting rights are proportionate to the population of the member municipalities and are stipulated in the region's charter. The council elects a **puheenjohtaja** (chair) from among its members, and the **maakunnanhallitus** (board of the regional council), which is an executive and administrative organ. Its members, who can vary from 10 to 20, are elected along party lines so as to be politically representative of the region.

The kunnat

Finland is divided into 455 **kunnat** (municipalities), which vary greatly in terms of size and population. The more urban of them are designated **kaupungit** (cities).

The highest decision-making body of the **kunta** is the **kunnanvaltuusto** (municipal council), directly elected every four years by proportional representation, with 17 to 85 members depending on the population of the municipality. The municipal council elects its own **puheenjohtaja** (chair) and appoints an executive body, called the **kunnanhallitus** (municipal board), which prepares and executes the council's decisions. The council also appoints a number of committees to carry out administrative tasks.

The head of the municipal administration is the **kunnanjohtaja** (mayor or municipal manager), who is appointed for an indefinite period of time by the municipal council. The **kunnanjohtaja** represents the municipality before the administrative and judiciary authorities and is subject to the control of the municipal board. A municipal manager can be elected chairman of the municipal board, if appointed for a fixed time amongst the councillors.

For the management of certain joint activities, such as regional planning, special nursing and the care of the mentally handicapped, the municipalities can establish joint municipal boards.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

The **Kunnat** are responsible for the administration of their localities independently of the State and for carrying out such other duties as prescribed by law.

At present, no regional entity has general functions. The **maakunnat** have only two significant statutory duties: they are responsible for regional physical planning (Building Act), and for general regional policy planning and the preparation of regional development programmes (Regional Development Act).

All the public services, both at local and at regional level, are provided by the municipalities (or by joint municipal boards) and by the State.

The register of births, deaths and marriages is the responsibility of the State in cooperation with the parishes. The police force, even at local level, is under the control of the State.

Economic affairs

The **Kunnat** provide basic services for community residents such as water and sewerage, energy supply, waste management and district

heating. Some of the services are sometimes organized jointly by several municipalities. Road construction and maintenance are the responsibility of the municipalities; the State is responsible for the main roads and highways.

The **Kunnat** are responsible for traffic policy and for land use planning at local level. Long- and medium-range regional land use is governed by statutory regional planning.

Education

The **Kunnat** are responsible for arranging general education. They run comprehensive schools, upper-secondary schools and vocational institutes. They also provide for pre-school education and for adult education. Local authorities pay for tuition, materials and school meals, and for transport if the journey to school is over 5 km. They receive aid from the State to maintain schools. The amount depends on their means and can be as high as 100%.

The universities are State owned and come directly under the Ministry of Education; they are, however, self-governing.

Culture and recreation

At local level, cultural and leisure-time services are provided by the **kunnat**, which are responsible for town theatres and sports facilities, libraries, museums and art galleries. At regional level these responsibilities are shared by the State.

Social affairs

General and specialized medical care, both at local and at regional level, is a municipal service. Local authorities are also responsible for providing childcare, care of the elderly and the disabled, socially targeted housing and income support for those in need. They are also responsible for the first-aid service and for dental care.

Environment

In environmental matters, the supreme authority is the municipal council, which lays down the general outlines of environmental po-

licy. This includes environmental hygiene, control of foodstuffs and poisons, occupational health, and veterinary medicine. Municipal supervision of environmental health also covers drinking water, clean air and noise control. Every community of over 3 000 people has to set up a special environmental protection committee. At regional level, environmental supervision is shared between the regional councils and the State. A nationwide system has been introduced for the disposal of problem wastes.

Financing

Finland's municipalities have the right to tax their citizens. The local tax rate is set by the municipal council, and the central government cannot interfere with this decision. The average local tax rate is 17 to 18% of income. Local taxes are collected by the State, which passes them on to the municipalities; they account for about 40% of municipal revenues. The municipalities cannot introduce new kinds of tax without being authorized by the legislator.

The central government gives financial assistance to local authorities in exchange for the local provision of statutory services. State grants account on average for 30% of municipal revenues.

The districts and regions have no right to levy taxes and do not receive any direct form of subsidy by the State. Their activities are financed by the municipal budgets.



SVERIGE

SWEDEN



Capital:	Stockholm
Surface area:	450 000 km ²
Population:	8 816 000 inhabitants
Density:	20 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 19 780
Structure:	Constitutional monarchy Unicameral parliament Decentralized unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Constitution of 1974

Of particular importance are the Local Government Act of 1953, the Instrument of Government of 1974 and the Local Government Act of 1991, which all reformed the functions and tasks of local government in a decentralist direction.

Regional and local divisions and institutions

In Sweden there are two levels of regional and local elected administration:

- the **landsting** (county councils),
- the **kommuner** (municipalities).

LÄN (23)

KOMMUNER (288)

The landsting

In Sweden, there is a difference between the geographical and the administrative division of the country. From a geographical point of view, Sweden is divided into 23 **län** (counties or regions), but administratively it is divided into 22 **landsting** (county councils). The Isle of Gotland is a **län** but it has no separate county council, its municipal council being responsible for the tasks usually assigned to county councils. The cities of Malmö and Göteborg, even though they belong to the **län** of Skåne and Göteborg och Bohus respectively, do not come under their respective county councils; their municipal councils are themselves responsible for the tasks usually handled by county councils. The administrative bodies at regional level are the **landsting** and the county administrative boards.

The **landstingsfullmäktige** (council of the **landsting**) is the decision-making body of the **landsting** and is elected every four years; the number of its members varies from 45 (Kronoberg) to 149 (Stockholm). The **landstingsfullmäktige** is presided over by the **landstingsfullmäktiges ordförande** (chair), elected from amongst its members.

The **landstingsfullmäktige** elects the **landstingstyrelse** (cabinet or bureau) with executive functions, presided over by the **landstingstyrelsens ordförande** (chair), who can be considered the head of the county council's administration. Generally, the **landstingstyrelse** has 15 to 17 members.

Beside the **landsting**, and separate from them, there are the county administrative boards which operate as a regional arm of central government in the 23 **Län**. These are the **länshövding** (governor or prefect) and the **länsstyrelse** (or prefecture). The **länshövding** is appointed by the government for a period of six years, generally from amongst politically involved persons. The **länsstyrelse** is led by a council presided over by the **länshövding**. The county administrative boards have responsibility for a number of government activities in the **län**, including regional supervisory and judicial functions.

The kommuner

There are 288 **kommuner**. The differences among Swedish **kommuner** in terms of territory and population are great. Kiruna, the biggest **kommun** in terms of territory, covers nearly 20 000 km², while the geographically smallest, the Stockholm suburb of Sunbyberg, covers only 9 km².

Every **kommun** has a decision-making body called a **kommunfullmäktige** (municipal council), whose members are directly elected by the people at general elections every four years, on the same day as the parliamentary election. The **kommunfullmäktige** meets 4 to 10 times a year and the number of its members varies from 31 (Bjurholm) to 101 (Stockholm), according to population, local traditions and political agreements.

The council is presided over by a **kommunfullmäktiges ordförande** (who has mainly representative functions) and elects the **kommunstyrelse**, composed of 15 to 17 members, which can be

described as the ‘council’s cabinet’. The **kommunstyrelse** has executive functions, coordinates the work of the other committees, and prepares the decisions of the **kommunfullmäktige**.

The chair of this executive committee, called a **kommunstyrelsens ordförande**, can be compared to a mayor.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

Administration

Public functions in Sweden have gradually become decentralized but the State adopts the laws that establish the basic framework of local government activities. It also provides guidance and supervision to local governments through its power to issue ordinances and regulations and to examine the legality of local decisions through the Administrative Court of Appeal and the Supreme Administrative Court, and also through the monitoring of local government by State agencies. Individuals can appeal against decisions made by municipalities; these appeals are examined in the county administrative board.

The Local Government Act of 1991 gave municipal and county councils freedom to decide on their local structure.

Economic affairs

The **kommuner** are entrusted with land-use planning, mainly for housing and industrial construction. Each **kommun** has a committee responsible for the supervision of construction activity and the issue of building permits. The **kommuner** also make dwellings available under their own auspices by establishing municipal housing companies or foundations.

Each **kommun** is responsible for streets and parks, as well as for water and for district heating systems and other energy supply facilities.

Public transport at regional level is under the responsibility of the **landsting**.

Education

The **kommuner** are responsible for operating the compulsory comprehensive schools, the adult education system and most of the upper-secondary schools. The **kommuner** are also responsible for an extensive pre-school network for children under five years of age. Higher education and research fall into the State's field of responsibility.

Culture and recreation

The **kommuner** build and operate sports facilities, youth recreation centres and libraries. They also provide financial and other support for various cultural activities and subsidize the work of voluntary associations.

Cultural activities, including music and theatre, however, also receive financial and organizational support from the **landsting** which, in addition, is responsible for county museums and libraries.

Social affairs

The most important body in the field of social affairs is the **kommun**. The **kommuner** are responsible for childcare, care of the elderly and the disabled, including the provision of housing, such as kindergartens, retirement homes and whole buildings or individual apartments that offer varying degrees of extra services. As for individual and family welfare, the **kommuner** are responsible for helping people who cannot otherwise support themselves and for part-time assistance. The healthcare system is the most important responsibility of the **landsting**. The **kommuner** are responsible for public emergency services and for primary healthcare, hospitalized housing, etc. Dental care and psychiatric care are the responsibility of the **landsting**.

Environment

Environmental issues are dealt with at regional and local level. The **länsstyrelse** is responsible at the regional level for environmental

monitoring and planning, environmental control, registers and analyses, and for landscape protection. The **landsting** deals with the development of environmental health, medical skills, voluntary activities and public information.

The **kommuner** are responsible for local environment protection. They are required to take steps to avert or eliminate unsanitary conditions and to prevent diseases. The municipal committee responsible for these tasks is expected to participate in the community planning process, to arrange for monitoring pollution, and to keep track of hygienic standards in homes, stores, restaurants, etc. The **kommuner** also provide for street cleaning and refuse collection.

Financing

Swedish regional and local authorities derive their revenues from various types of source:

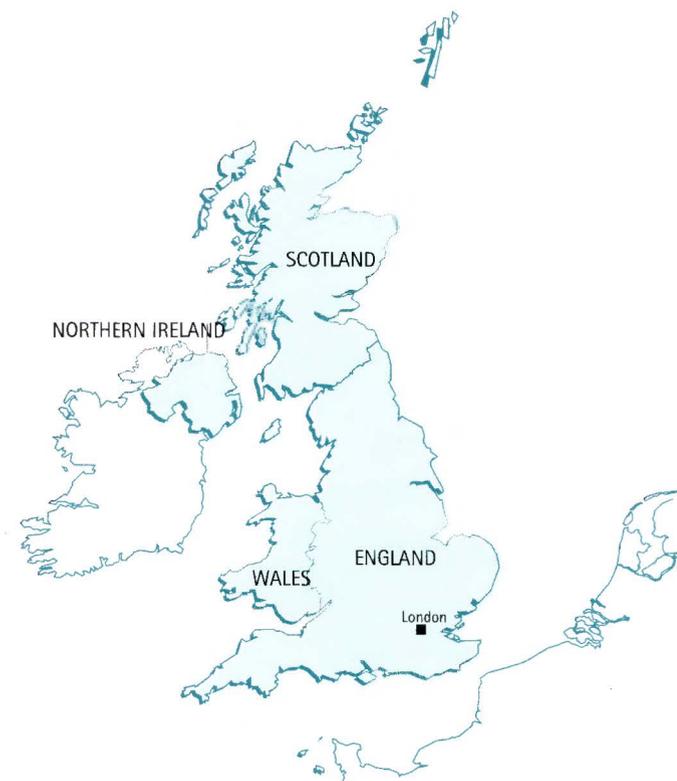
- local taxes of their own;
- special-purpose State grants;
- tax equalization grants;
- borrowing;
- block grants from the State;
- sales revenues;
- fees (or healthcare co-payments).

The tax revenues of the **kommuner** and the **landsting** may come either from their own tax bases or via State grants. The only taxes that municipal and county councils can raise themselves are on the income of their inhabitants. In the average municipal budget, tax and State grants provide 80 to 85% (on average, 63% from taxes and 16% from grants) of current revenues, and fees account for 15%. For the **landsting**, the balance is 75% tax, 7% State grants and 3% fees.

The balance between taxes and fees depends largely on what kind of activities the municipalities and county councils are responsible for.



UNITED KINGDOM



Capital:	London
Surface area:	244 100 km ²
Population:	58 276 000
Density:	239 inhabitants/km ²
Per capita GDP:	ECU 14 430
Structure:	Parliamentary monarchy Bicameral parliament Unitary State

Source: Eurostat 1995.

Legislation on local government

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972

Local Government Act 1973 (Scotland)

Local Government Act 1974, relating to England and Wales

Local Government Acts of 1972, 1980 and 1985

Local Government Finance Act 1982

Local Government Act 1985, introducing new arrangements for the major conurbations

Local Government Finance Acts of 1988 and 1992, setting up national non-domestic rates and the council tax

Local Government Act 1992, providing for reorganization in particular areas following a recommendation by the independent Local Government Commission

Local Government (Wales) Act 1994

Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994

Regional and local divisions and institutions

The United Kingdom comprises:

- **England,**
- **Wales,**
- **Scotland,** and
- **Northern Ireland.**

There are regional and local divisions within each individual **nation**. Apart from England, each of the constituent parts is represented in London by a **Secretary of State**.

England

There are three levels of local government in England:

- the **county**,
- the **district**,
- the **parish**.

COUNTIES (36)

DISTRICTS (355)

PARISHES

England is divided into 36 **counties** and 355 **districts**, including the **City of London**. The Local Government Association (LGA) represents local governments *vis-à-vis* the central government and international institutions.

The counties

Counties are run by a **county council** elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. The **council** appoints one of its members to serve as **chairman** for one year.

County councils can also set up committees on technical matters.

One **county council**, the Isle of Wight, also carries out the district council functions in its area.

The districts

In England, the **districts** break down as follows:

- 286 **non-metropolitan districts**,

- 36 **metropolitan districts**,
- 32 **London boroughs** plus the **City of London**.

Districts are administered by a **district council** elected by direct universal suffrage for four years. Each council appoints its own **mayor** if a **borough**, or **Lord Mayor** if a city, to serve for one year. These titles have no effect on the way in which the **districts** or their office-holders carry out their duties, but they do have considerable ceremonial significance.

In England, the **London boroughs** elect all their members once every four years while the **metropolitan districts** elect one third of their members each year. The **non-metropolitan districts** may choose which of these two patterns to follow.

Local government in the **Isles of Scilly** is in the hands of the **Council of the Isles of Scilly**. This **Council** has both **county** and **district** powers and responsibilities.

Under the Local Government Act 1992, the Local Government Commission can carry out reviews to consider the structure which will best provide effective and convenient local government and follow local community interests and identities.

The Commission can recommend the creation of unitary authorities, which carry out both **county** and **district** functions in their areas; 14 have been set up so far (including one unitary county). A further 13 will take effect from April 1997 and 19 from April 1998.

The parishes

Parishes in England operate at a submunicipal level and their councils too are elected by direct universal suffrage. What makes this submunicipal level of local government so important is the fact that British **districts** cover larger populations than is the case in other Member States of the European Union.

Wales

In Wales there are two levels of local government:

The **unitary authorities**:

- the **counties**,
- the **county boroughs**;

The **community councils**

UNITARY AUTHORITIES (22)

COMMUNITY AREAS (833)

The unitary authorities

On 1 April 1996 local government in Wales was reorganized and the former two-tier structure, comprising eight **county councils** and 37 **district councils**, was replaced by 22 new **unitary authorities**.

The statutory basis for the reorganization was the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. In addition to this legislation, Wales also remains bound by previous local government legislation applying to England and Wales.

Ten of the 22 new authorities have the status of **county** and predominantly cover large rural areas of Wales, whilst the remaining 12 are **county boroughs** and cover smaller, more urbanized parts of the country. The different designation has no bearing on the powers or functions of the local authorities.

The chairman of a **county borough council** is entitled to be called **mayor** or, if it is a city, **Lord Mayor**. These titles have no effect on the way in which the appropriate **unitary authorities** carry out their duties, but they do have considerable ceremonial significance.

The **unitary authorities** are elected by direct universal suffrage for a four-year term. They have a total of 1 273 members, ranging from 33 in the smallest authority to 83 in the largest. At the all-Wales level, this means a ratio of one member per 1 745 electors.

The newly established Welsh Local Government Association represents local government in its discussions with central government and international institutions.

The community councils

Wales is divided into 833 **community areas** and in 734 of these **community** or **town councils** have been created to represent **communities** at a very local level, and often to provide local facilities. **Communities** vary widely in scale — populations vary from about 150 to more than 20 000 people.

The **councils** are represented through the **Wales Association of Town and Community Councils** and/or the **National Association of Local Councils**.

Scotland

There is a single-tier of local government in Scotland:

- the **councils**, and
- the **islands councils**.

COUNCILS (29)

ISLANDS COUNCILS (3)

The current structure of 29 single-tier **councils**, replacing the 53 districts and nine regional councils, came into effect on 1 April 1996. There are also three **islands councils** responsible for the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland, giving a total of 32 **councils**.

The 1994 Act requires **councils** to prepare decentralization schemes to ensure that service delivery is organized and decisions are taken at the most local level. Schemes must be prepared for public consultation no later than 1 April 1997. Schemes may include area committees with a focus on greater local involvement and decision-making, local access for information points on councils' services, and a greater role for **community councils**.

All the **councils** in Scotland are elected by direct universal suffrage for a three-year term. Each **council** elects its own **convener** and **depute-convener** whose term of office may not extend beyond the next ordinary election of the **council**. **Council** standing orders may provide for the earlier removal of the **convener** or **depute-convener** if the council so decides.

The **conveners** of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow are known as the **Lord Provost**. No other council may use this title without the consent of the Secretary of State. Outwith this constraint, councils may use whatever title they choose for their **convener** or **depute-convener**. As in England and Wales, these titles are primarily of ceremonial significance.

In terms of administration, Scotland is governed from Edinburgh by the **Scottish Office**. Scottish local authorities are represented by the **Convention of Scottish Local Authorities** (COSLA).

Northern Ireland

DISTRICTS (26)

Northern Ireland has a single-tier system of regional and local government, comprising 26 **districts**.

Each **district** is run by a **council** elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of four years. A **council** appoints its own **chairman**

annually. If the **district** has **borough** status, the **chairman** has the ceremonial title of **mayor**.

Like the other parts of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland has an organization representing local government, the **Association of Local Authorities in Northern Ireland**.

Functions and financing of regional and local authorities

Functions

In England, the **counties** take responsibility for the fire service, economic planning, primary and secondary schools, and the social services. They are also represented on the autonomous police authorities.

The **metropolitan districts** and the **London boroughs** are more specifically responsible for education and social services.

The **districts** are responsible for town planning, sports facilities and benefit housing.

The **parishes** have very local responsibilities for matters such as car parks, lanes and green areas.

In Wales each **unitary authority** is responsible for all local government services within its area, including education, local highways, local tax collection, personal social services and environmental health. **Community councils** have certain minor statutory powers, but few statutory duties: they have an important role as the voice of their communities, speaking on behalf of their communities to other decision-makers.

In Scotland, the **councils** are responsible for all local government services except for:

- water and sewerage, where public water authorities — the North of Scotland, West of Scotland and East of Scotland Water Authorities — now have responsibility; and

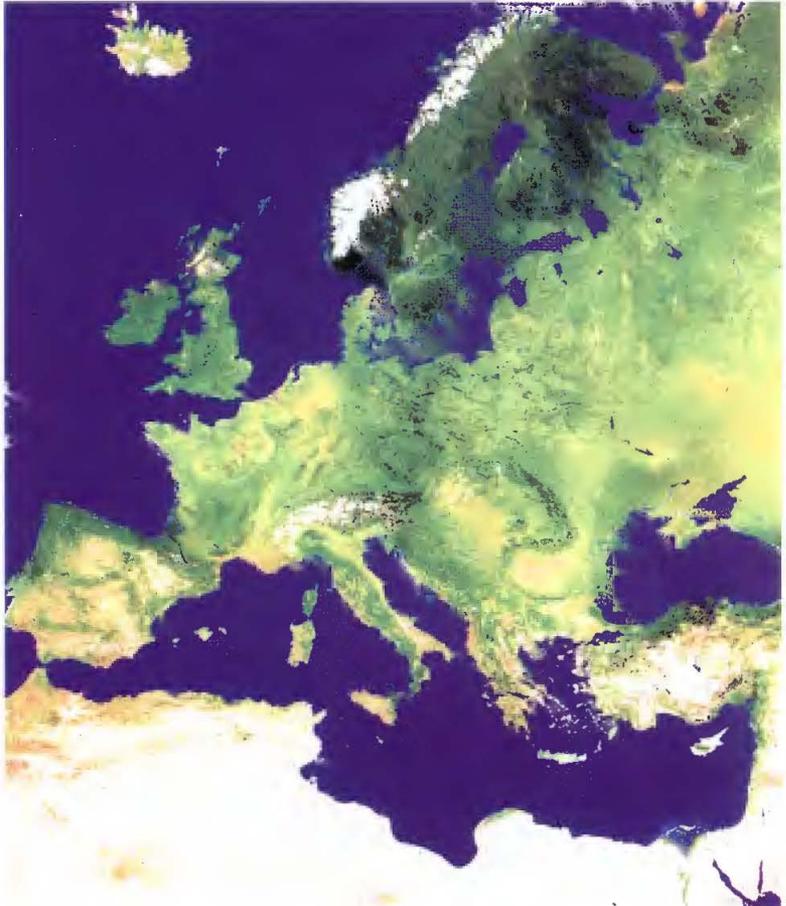
- the reports to children's panels, responsibility for which now lies with the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration.

In Northern Ireland, the **districts** have relatively few powers. The great majority of tasks are carried out by devolved central government agencies.

Financing

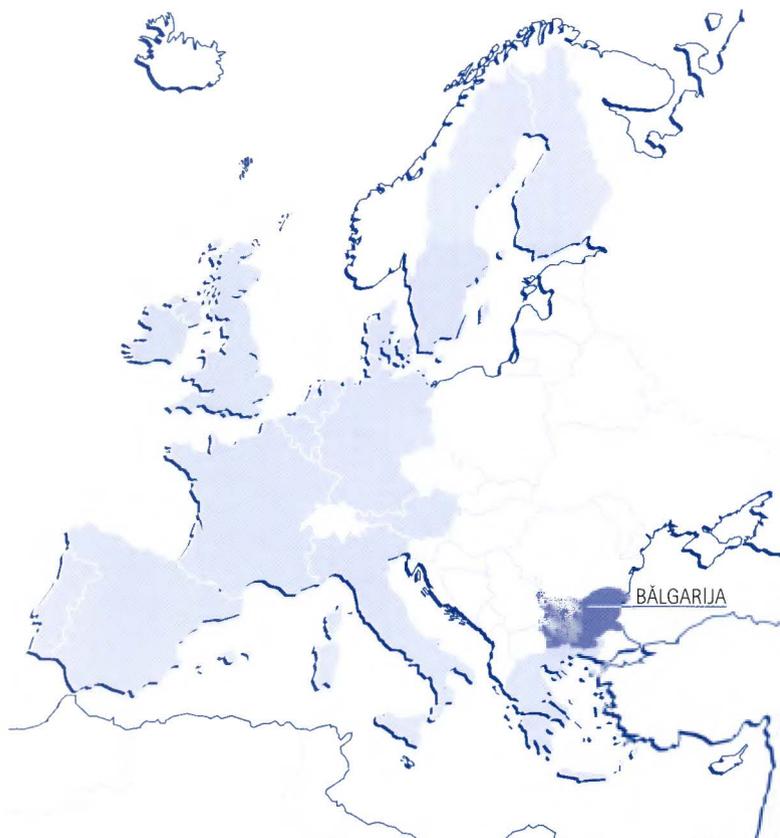
Local government authorities are financed by direct taxation and by State subsidies. Grants are negotiated annually by the government and the associations of local authorities.

Regional and local administrative divisions of other European countries



BÄLGARIJA

BULGARIA



Capital:	Sofia
Surface area:	110 994 km ²
Population:	8 500 000 inhabitants
Density:	77 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

According to the Constitution, which came into force on 13 July 1991, the National Assembly is the legislature of the State. It is composed of 240 members, elected in general elections every four years. Its more important functions are to pass, amend and rescind laws, approve the State budget, elect (or dismiss) the chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), and ratify international agreements.

The President of the Republic is the Head of State who, with the Vice-President, is directly elected for a five-year term. Both are eligible for only one re-election to the same office. The President is responsible for appointing the Prime Minister designate, who must then attempt to form a government. Usually priority is given to the leader of the party with the highest number of seats in the National Assembly. The President has other important institutional duties, being commander-in-chief of the armed forces, presiding over the Consultative National Security Council and retaining certain emergency powers. The President's actions must be countersigned by the Prime Minister, except in cases explicitly mentioned in the Constitution.

The Council of Ministers is the principal organ of executive power. It supervises the implementation of State policy and the State budget, exercises guidance over the State administration and the armed forces, and is responsible for maintaining public order. It is headed and coordinated by the Prime Minister, who is responsible for the overall policy of the government. The Council of Ministers must have the confidence of a majority in the National Assembly.

Local government

The 1991 Constitution provides for the division of the country into regions and municipalities. Municipalities are the basic administrative territorial unit at which local self-government is practised. Their highest decision-making body is the municipal council, which is elected every four years. The council elects the mayor, who can be considered the principal agent of executive power at local level. There are nine regions (including the capital Sofia as a separate regional unit). Each regional government is headed by a regional governor who is appointed by the Council of Ministers and is responsible for regional policy, the implementation of State policy at local level and the harmonization of local and national interests.

ČESKÁ REPUBLIKÁ

CZECH REPUBLIC



Capital:	Praha (Prague)
Surface area:	78 864 km ²
Population:	10 300 000 inhabitants
Density:	131 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Bicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

According to the Constitution, which was adopted on 16 December 1992, the Czech Republic is a sovereign, unified and democratic law-governed State. All State power belongs to the people, who exercise it through the intermediary of legislative, executive and judicial bodies.

Legislative power is vested in two chambers — the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies has 200 members, elected for a term of four years. The Senate has 81 members, elected for a term of six years. Every two years, one third of the senators are elected. Members of both chambers are elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. The powers of the legislature are to enact the Constitution and laws, approve the State budget and the State financial account, ratify international agreements and the electoral law, and supervise the activities of the government.

The President of the Republic is the Head of State. He or she is elected for a term of five years by Parliament at a joint session of both chambers and may not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. The President appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister, as well as the other members of the government, initials laws, convenes sessions of the Chamber of Deputies, and represents the State in external affairs.

The Council of Ministers is the highest organ of executive power. It is composed of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and ministers and is answerable to the Chamber of Deputies.

Local government

The Czech Republic has an administrative division consisting of 76 **okres** (districts). Local government is vested in self-governing municipalities totalling at present 6 233. The capital city — Prague — and three cities — Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň — have a special statute.

The 1992 Constitution lays down that the country should be divided into several regions comprising a second tier of self-government, but the details of the new territorial administrative reform have not yet been finalized.

ΚΥΠΡΟΣ/ΚΙΒΡΙΣ

CYPRUS



Capital: Nicosia
Surface area: 9 251 km² (whole territory)
Population: 730 000 (not including recent settlers from Turkey estimated at 40 000 to 60 000)
Density: 78 inhabitants/km²
Structure: Republic
Presidential democracy
Unicameral parliament
Unitary State

The State

Cyprus became an independent State in 1960 with the entry into force of three main treaties and a constitution.

According to the provisions of the 1960 Constitution, executive power was to be shared between a Greek-Cypriot President and a Turkish-Cypriot Vice-President, each elected by their respective communities for a five-year term, and a Council of Ministers composed of seven Greek-Cypriots and three Turkish-Cypriot ministers.

The Head of State and the official representative of the nation, both in domestic and in foreign affairs, is the President; the Vice-President, who acted as the Turkish counterbalance to the President, had the right to be present at all official functions and could veto any law passed by the House of Representatives and any decision of the Council of Ministers concerning foreign affairs, defence and security. Numerous other provisions of the Constitution guaranteed the rights of both communities.

The 1960 Constitution provided that the legislative power be exercised by the House of Representatives made up of 50 members, 70% of whom were elected by the Greek community and 30% by the Turkish community. Each of the two communities also elected a communal chamber with legislative and administrative powers in certain restricted matters such as religion, education and culture and the imposition of personal taxes or fees to provide for the needs of the institutions under the control of each community.

It is important to note, however, that the withdrawal, in 1963, of the Turkish-Cypriot officials from the organs of the Republic and the events of 1974, which led to 37% of the island's territory passing out of the hands of the central government, resulted in the application of the doctrine of necessity and the modification of the 1960 Constitution to take account of this abnormal situation. Consequently, the government of the Republic of Cyprus (which exercises *de jure* — but not *de facto* — jurisdiction over the whole territory of Cyprus as the internationally recognized and legitimate government of the island), consists of a Greek-Cypriot President and members of the Council of Ministers, and the House of Representatives has 56 Greek-Cypriot deputies, with 24 unoccupied seats reserved for Turkish-Cypriot deputies.

In 1983, the Turkish-Cypriots declared their own 'State' (government, parliament, regional authorities, etc.) in the northern part of the island which was immediately declared legally invalid by the UN Security Council. This State is recognized by Turkey only.

Local government

There are three types of local administration: the municipal councils, which are the local government bodies for district towns and a number of large villages and, for the remaining small villages, the improvement boards and the village commission. These are independent and there is no hierarchical relationship between them. Their members are elected by citizens aged 18 or older.

After the displacement of one third of the population from the north of the island in 1974, the government-controlled areas have accommodated this population in four district towns and their suburbs.

EESTI

ESTONIA



Capital:	Tallinn
Surface area:	45 226 km ²
Population:	1 500 000 inhabitants
Density:	34 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic
	Parliamentary democracy
	Unicameral parliament
	Unitary State

The State

In August 1991, Estonia announced the *de facto* restoration of its independence. On 28 June 1992, a national referendum adopted a new Constitution, based on that of 1938. Estonia's first free and fair national elections since 1940 were held in September 1992, and the second in March 1995.

According to the Constitution's provisions, legislative power belongs to the **Riigikogu** (Parliament), which is composed of 101 deputies, elected for a four-year term under a system of proportional representation. The **Riigikogu** adopts laws and resolutions on any areas that affect the life of the nation. It also adopts the national budget on the proposal of the President.

The Head of State is the President, who is elected by the **Riigikogu** every five years in a secret ballot and may be re-elected only once. The President represents Estonia in international relations, calls elections to the **Riigikogu**, nominates a candidate for the post of Prime Minister, subject to the **Riigikogu** approval, and initiates any amendments to the Constitution. The President is the supreme commander of the defence forces.

The government, made up of the Prime Minister and ministers, exercises the executive power. It implements national and foreign policies, executes parliamentary decisions, directs the work of governmental institutions, and submits the draft national budget for the approval of Parliament.

Local government

Estonia has a single level of local government, made up of 255 municipalities (47 towns and 208 rural municipalities). The 15 **maakonds** (counties) into which the country is divided are a tier of the central government. Each **maakond** has an administration, headed by a governor. The municipalities have a council and a municipal government, presided over by a mayor. The capital city, Tallinn, has been divided into eight city districts, with limited powers of self-government.

HRVATSKA

CROATIA



Capital:	Zagreb
Surface area:	56 638 km ²
Population:	4 700 000 inhabitants
Density:	85 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Presidential democracy Bicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

Formal independence was proclaimed on 8 October 1991, after the declaration of dissociation from the former Yugoslavia in June 1991.

According to the Constitution, promulgated in December 1990, legislative power rests with the **Sabor** (Assembly), the bicameral parliament consisting of the **Zastupnički Dom** (Chamber of Representatives), and the **Županski Dom** (Chamber of Counties). The **Zastupnički Dom** is composed of not less than 100 and no more than 160 members, and its main prerogatives are to approve laws, adopt the budget, decide about war and peace, and exercise control over the action of the government. The **Županski Dom**, which consists of three representatives from each Croatian county, has the right of legislative initiative and can give opinions on issues that are before the Chamber of Representatives. To be adopted, laws must receive the approval of the **Županski Dom**; if this vote is negative, the proposed law must return to the first chamber for reconsideration. Both chambers are elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of four years.

Executive power is vested in the President of the Republic and in the government. The President of the Republic is the Head of State and represents the country at home and abroad. The President's general constitutional tasks are to ensure the observance of the Constitution and to guarantee the existence and unity of the Republic, but there are also other important prerogatives and powers. The President appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister and other ministers, attends and chairs their meetings, calls general elections and, in certain cases, may dissolve the Chamber of Representatives. The President also appoints and recalls diplomatic representatives, is the supreme commander of the armed forces and, in case of war or immediate danger, can issue decrees which have the force of law. The President is directly elected by the people by universal suffrage for a term of five years.

The government, which consists of the Prime Minister and the other ministers, shares the executive power with the President. It implements laws and regulations that have been adopted by the **Sabor** (Assembly), issues decrees and proposes the draft budget. It has the power of legislative initiative. It is responsible for all its activities to the President of the Republic and to the Chamber of Representatives.

Local government

The territorial system of the Republic of Croatia is made up of 20 **županije** (counties), 70 **grad** (cities) and 419 **općina** (municipalities) and the capital, Zagreb, has a special status of county.

The representative bodies of the counties are the **županijska skupština** (county assemblies), each with 40 members, with the exception of Zagreb City whose assembly has 60. Half the members are elected at the county level, and the other half at the constituency level. The law provides for participation of ethnic and national communities or minorities in representative bodies at all territorial levels.

Elections of members of the representative bodies of local self-government are called by the government every four years.

Municipal prefects and mayors are elected by their respective municipal and city councils by a majority of votes.

County prefects are elected by their respective county assemblies by majority vote and subject to confirmation by the President of the Republic on a proposal from the government.

ÍSLAND

ICELAND



Capital:	Reykjavik
Surface area:	103 000 km ²
Population:	270 000 inhabitants
Density:	3 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Republic of Iceland was formally proclaimed at Thingvellir on 17 June 1944. Iceland has a written Constitution. The President is elected by popular vote for a term of four years, with no term limits. He or she personifies the integrity of the nation but is to remain apolitical, except in cases when the political parties have difficulties in forming a government, or fail to solve a government crisis. The **Althing** (Parliament) is a legislative body of 63 members elected for a four-year term by popular vote. Anyone who is eligible to vote can run for a parliamentary seat, with the exception of the President and the judges of the Supreme Court. After new elections, the President calls in the leaders of the political parties for discussions and then gives the floor to one or more in succession to form a cabinet. A cabinet of ministers stays in power until the next general elections. The ministers are *ex officio ipso* members of the **Althing**. If this is not already the case, they take a seat on the ministerial bench with the full rights of a member, except the right to vote.

Local government

The country is divided into **sysla** (provinces), **hérað** (districts) and **sveitarfélag** (municipalities). There are 170 municipalities, of which 139 are considered rural and 31 have the status of towns (urban municipalities) or villages. However, there is no difference in the legal status of rural and urban municipalities. **The sveitarfélag** are governed by local governments elected every four years. There are 20 **hérað**, but most of them have very limited power. Each **hérað** has a council and some of them several committees, which can be considered as intermunicipal boards where the **sveitarfélag** cooperate in a number of activities, such as fire services, refuse collection, planning and building controls. The **hérað** are further grouped together to form **sysla**, over each of which a centrally appointed chief official presides. Local government elections are conducted on the basis of proportional representation.

LATVIJA

LATVIA



Capital:	Riga
Surface area:	64 589 km ²
Population:	2 600 000 inhabitants
Density:	39 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic
	Parliamentary democracy
	Unicameral parliament
	Unitary State

The State

After independence from the former Soviet Union, the authority of the 1922 Constitution was re-established by the Constitutional Law of 21 August 1991.

Legislative power rests with the **Saeima** (Parliament), as well as with the people (legislative referendum). The Parliament is unicameral and consists of 100 deputies elected every three years by universal and direct vote. Apart from the general legislation attribution, the **Saeima** ratifies international agreements, and decides on the strength of the armed forces in time of peace and also decides on the draft central government budget.

The President of the Republic is the Head of State and represents the country in international relations. He or she is elected by the **Saeima** by secret ballot with a majority vote of at least 51 of the 100 deputies. The presidential term is three years, renewable consecutively only once. The President can propose laws, promulgates laws passed by the **Saeima** and can veto them, but only once. The President has the right to convoke extraordinary meetings of the government and to preside over such meetings and can propose a referendum on the dissolution of the **Saeima**.

The Cabinet of Ministers and the president of the Cabinet of Ministers (or Prime Minister) form the government, which is the central policy-making and executive body. The number of ministers, the scope of their activities and the mutual relations among governmental departments are determined by law. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President of Latvia and is the main politically responsible person. The Prime Minister and the government must receive the confidence of Parliament.

Local government

There is a two-tier system of local government, consisting of 69 towns and 492 **pagasts** (rural municipalities) as the first tier, and 26 **rajons** (districts or regions) as the second. The two tiers, however, are not hierarchical, but represent a functional division of labour. In addition, there are seven cities (called 'Republican cities') which combine these two levels into one, thereby fulfilling the functions of both first-level and second-level local government. Each type of local government has a council, directly elected under a proportional system. The organizational structure of local government bodies is determined by the 1994 Law on self-government and by the charter which each local government body adopts.

LIETUVA

LITHUANIA



Capital: Vilnius
Surface area: 65 300 km²
Population: 3 800 000 inhabitants
Density: 58 inhabitants/km²
Structure: Republic
Parliamentary democracy
Unicameral parliament
Unitary State

The State

The Constitution of Lithuania was adopted in a national referendum on 25 October 1992, two years after the country achieved its independence from the former Soviet Union. According to its provisions, legislative power belongs to the **Seimas** (Parliament), made up of 141 members, elected every four years on the basis of universal and direct suffrage. The **Seimas** convenes for two regular four-month sessions every year; its main responsibilities are to enact laws, supervise the activity of the government, approve the State budget, establish taxes and ratify or denounce international treaties. The **Seimas** also has other institutional duties, such as appointing judges to the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, and establishing or abolishing government ministries upon the recommendation of the government.

The Head of State is the President of the Republic, elected by universal and direct suffrage for a five-year term, renewable only once. The President, in conjunction with the government, decides on basic issues of foreign policy and implements them, signs international treaties and submits them for ratification to the **Seimas**, appoints or recalls, upon the approval of the **Seimas**, the Prime Minister, and removes ministers upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The President also appoints and recalls Lithuania's diplomatic representatives in foreign countries.

Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers (government) consisting of the Prime Minister and other ministers. The Prime Minister, who is appointed by the President of the Republic on the approval of the **Seimas**, proposes the nomination of the ministers; the whole government must receive the confidence of the **Seimas**. The Council of Ministers administers the affairs of the country, implements laws and resolutions of the **Seimas** as well as presidential decrees, coordinates the activities of ministries and other governmental institutions, and has the right to submit legislative proposals to the **Seimas**.

Local government

The status of local government in Lithuania is guaranteed by the Constitution, which gives local authorities the right to exercise decision-making powers and to levy taxes. This is done through directly elected municipal councils and their executive boards and committees.

In accordance with a reform that entered into force in 1995, there is only one level of elected local government, the **savivaldybe**. There are 56 such local authorities — 12 municipalities and 44 regional local authorities — ranging from 2 000 to 600 000 inhabitants. These are also grouped into 10 counties, but these are not elected authorities. Counties have governors who are appointed by the central government and carry out government policy at local level. Municipal and central government activity is coordinated through county councils, made up of the county governor, vice-governor and the mayors of the municipalities in the county. County councils have no decision-making powers.

A second part of this reform will be implemented within a few years and will reintroduce a second, lower level of the elected local government.

MAGYARORSZÁG

HUNGARY



Capital:	Budapest
Surface area:	93 033 km ²
Population:	10 374 000 inhabitants
Density:	111 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Constitution of the former Hungarian People's Republic dating from 1949 is still in force, although it has been amended several times. Essential amendments were made in October 1989 when the Republic of Hungary was proclaimed. Preparatory work for a new Constitution is now in progress.

The highest organ of State authority is the **Országgyűlés** (National Assembly). This determines the structure, orientation and conditions of the government, enacts the Constitution, passes laws and decides on the State budget and the socioeconomic plan. It also elects, among others, the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. It is made up of 386 members, elected every four years: 176 deputies are elected directly to represent individual constituencies, 152 according to a system of proportional representation of parties, and the remaining 58 on a national list on the basis of a nationwide summary of surplus votes. Eight seats are reserved for representatives of the ethnic minorities.

The President of the Republic is the Head of State, with the general function of embodying the unity of the nation and supervising the democratic operation of the mechanism of the State, but he or she also has other important responsibilities: the power to initiate legislation, conclude international treaties, call general and local elections and convene the National Assembly. The President is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He or she is elected by the National Assembly for a period of four years and may be re-elected for a second term.

Executive power is vested in the government, consisting of the Prime Minister — elected by the National Assembly on the recommendation of the President of the Republic — and the other ministers who are appointed by the President of the Republic upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The government ensures the enforcement of the laws and the fulfilment of economic plans. It has the power to issue decrees and annul or modify decisions taken by any subordinate body. The Council of Ministers is responsible to the National Assembly.

Local government

Hungary is divided into a **főváros** (capital city), 19 **megye** (counties), 206 **város** (cities) — of which 22 larger cities (those with more than 50 000 inhabitants) have separate county status — and 2 954 **község** (communities). The capital city is divided into 23 **fővárosi kerület** (districts). Districts may also be formed in cities.

The organs of self-government are the councils (capital council, capital district council, county councils, city councils and community councils). They are headed by a mayor or a president. The councils are representative bodies and are elected every four years. The rights of self-government are equal for every local government.

Local self-government allows local communities to conduct local public affairs, through direct participation or through their own elected local government in an autonomous and democratic way. There is effectively no hierarchical control by the central State authority over local government organs but the Offices of Public Administration of the Capital and the Counties exercise supervision over the legality of their discretionary decisions.

Each tier of local government is regarded as equal and independent. However, the National Assembly may dissolve a local council if it is operating in contravention of the Constitution.

MALTA



Capital:	Valletta
Surface area:	316 km ²
Population:	382 500 inhabitants
Density:	1 210 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Independence Constitution of 1964 was substantially amended on 13 December 1974, to bring into effect a Republican Constitution, under the terms of which Malta became a democratic and fully independent republic within the British Commonwealth. The new Constitution provided for the creation of the office of a president to replace that of governor-general.

The President is elected every five years by the House of Representatives (Parliament) and is the Head of State and represents the Republic at international level, although it is the Prime Minister who negotiates international agreements. The President appoints the Prime Minister, choosing from among the members of the House of Representatives, and the other ministers on the Prime Minister's advice.

The Cabinet is the highest executive body of the State. It consists of the Prime Minister and such a number of other ministers as recommended by the Prime Minister.

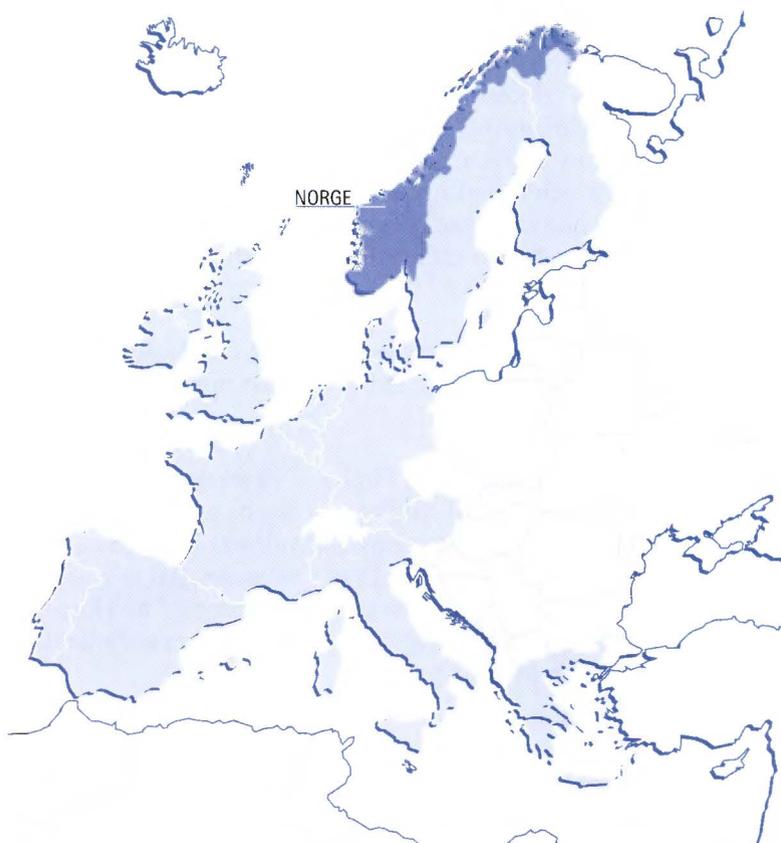
Legislative power is vested in the House of Representatives, elected every five years by universal suffrage on the basis of proportional representation. Under a constitutional amendment adopted in 1987, a party receiving more than 50% of the total votes cast in a general election obtains a majority of seats in the Parliament. The House of Representatives consists of such a number of members as Parliament by law determines from time to time.

Local government

The Local Councils Act of 1993 regulates the 67 councils which now handle basic services within all local communities. Councils are elected for three years; each year elections take place in a third of the councils. The council elects its mayor from among its members. The council secretary, who is appointed by the council, is its senior executive, administrative and financial official.

NORGE

NORWAY



Capital:	Oslo
Surface area:	323 877 km ²
Population:	4 300 000 inhabitants
Density:	13 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Constitutional monarchy Parliamentary democracy Modified unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Norwegian Constitution was promulgated on 17 May 1814. According to it, Norway is a free, independent, indivisible, inalienable kingdom; its form of government is a 'limited and hereditary monarchy'. Executive power is vested in the monarch, legislative power in the **Storting** (Parliament), and judicial power in the judiciary.

The monarch exercises power through the **Statsråd** (State Council), which is composed of a Prime Minister and not less than seven other Councillors of State (18 at the present time), all of them at least 30 years of age. The government submits the budget and introduces bills in the **Storting**, through a State Councillor. Formally, the King or Queen appoints the government, but since the introduction of the parliamentary system in 1884, it is the practice for them to act in accordance with the will of the **Storting**.

The **Storting** is elected every four years by universal suffrage and may not be dissolved within that period. It has 165 members, who elect one quarter of their own body to constitute the **Lagting** (upper house); the other three quarters comprise the **Odelsting** (lower house). The reason for this division is the procedure for dealing with parliamentary bills. Bills must be submitted to both bodies consecutively and, after being approved, must be signed by the monarch before entering into force.

The **Storting** is subdivided into 13 permanent committees, each of which prepares suggestions for the Parliament. All State expenditures have to be approved by a vote of the **Storting**, which also fixes the central government's revenue from taxes, customs tariffs and other duties.

Local government

Norway is divided into 18 **fylkeskommuner** (county municipalities) and 435 **kommuner** (municipalities). The capital, Oslo, has a double status of **fylkeskommune** and **kommune**. The decision-making body of the municipality is the **kommunestyre** (municipal council), elected every four years by universal suffrage with proportional representation. It elects the mayor from among its members. The decision-making body of the **fylkeskommune** is the **fylkesting** (county council), elected in the same way and at the same time as the municipal council. It nominates a county mayor from among its members.

POLSKA

POLAND



Capital:	Warszawa (Warsaw)
Surface area:	312 683 km ²
Population:	38 000 000 inhabitants
Density:	122 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Presidential democracy Bicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Constitution, adopted in 1952, was amended in 1989 to establish an upper legislative chamber, and again in 1990, to permit the holding of direct presidential elections. In 1992, Parliament voted a procedural law for the drafting of a new Constitution. An interim 'Small Constitution' came into force principally to regulate relations between the legislative and the executive power until the new Constitution is ready.

The present institutional situation in Poland is as follows.

Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, the bicameral parliament of Poland, which is composed of the **Sejm** (lower chamber) and the Senate (upper chamber). Both chambers are elected for a four-year term. The **Sejm** is made up of 460 deputies. Its main powers are to adopt laws and decide on the national socioeconomic and State financial plans. The task of the Senate, which consists of 100 members, is to review the laws voted by the **Sejm**; it can amend them or reject them completely. The decision of the Senate, however, can be overridden by a qualified majority vote of two thirds of the **Sejm**. The Senate also holds the right of legislative initiative.

The Head of State is the President of the Republic, who is elected directly by the people by universal suffrage for a five-year term. The President has considerable powers. The President's constitutional duties include monitoring observance of the Constitution and defending the security and the inviolability of the State. The President has the power to call parliamentary and local elections and choose the candidate for the office of chairman of the Council of Ministers. Executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers.

Local government

In Poland, there is only one tier of self-government represented by the 2 456 municipalities into which the country is divided; 850 of these have a status of town or town-rural areas, while the remaining are rural municipalities (without any town within their boundaries). The capital city of Warsaw is divided into 11 municipalities and has a special structure. Each municipality is headed by a local council, directly elected by the people, which is autonomous within the scope of powers vested in it by law.

ROMÂNIA

ROMANIA



Capital:	București (Bucharest)
Surface area:	237 500 km ²
Population:	23 490 000 inhabitants
Density:	99 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy with strong presidential power Bicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

In 1989, radical changes were made to the Constitution of 1965 and on 8 December 1991 a national referendum approved a new Constitution based on that of France's Fifth Republic. Under its provisions, Parliament is the supreme representative body of the people and the sole legislative authority of the State. It consists of the Chamber of Deputies (328 seats) and the Senate (143 seats), both elected by universal and direct suffrage for a four-year term.

Parliament, which meets in two ordinary sessions every year, passes constitutional, organic and ordinary laws, approves the State budget, and votes confidence in the government. Individual deputies and senators can propose laws. Bills or legislative proposals must be approved by a majority vote in each chamber.

The President of the Republic is elected for a four-year term by universal and direct suffrage and may be re-elected only once. The President designates a candidate for the office of Prime Minister and appoints the government after a vote of confidence by Parliament. He or she may preside over the meetings of the government when it is debating matters of national interest with regard to foreign policy, defence, public order, and, at the request of the Prime Minister, in other instances as well. The President has the power to sign international treaties negotiated by the government. The President may also dissolve Parliament (but only in certain specific cases), call a referendum on important matters, and is commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

The government, which consists of the Prime Minister and the other ministers, is the highest organ of executive power. It ensures the implementation of domestic and foreign policy and the general management of public administration.

Local government

In Romania the basic principle of local government is local autonomy and the decentralization of public services. The lowest tier of local government is the local council of a city or commune. Its members, as well as the mayor, are elected by the voters in the relevant area. A prefect is appointed for each county by the central government as its representative at local level and has the power to challenge acts of all tiers of local government. At present, Romania has 41 administrative divisions (counties), as well as the municipality of Bucharest, the capital, which is itself divided into administrative sectors.

SHQIPËRIA

ALBANIA



Capital:	Tiranë
Surface area:	28 748 km ²
Population:	3 300 000 inhabitants
Density:	115 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

On 28 December 1991, the **Kuvendi Popullor** (People's Assembly) adopted the Law on the major constitutional provisions, which can be considered an interim organic constitutional legislation, declaring invalid the former Constitution of 1976. A further package of constitutional laws was approved by the **Kuvendi Popullor** during 1992. The sole law-making body and the supreme body of State power, the **Kuvendi Popullor** is elected every four years and is composed of at least 140 deputies. It decides on important matters of domestic and foreign policy, approves the State budget and is competent to modify or amend the Constitution. Some of its other prerogatives are to elect the President of the Republic, the members of the Supreme Court and the Attorney-General, and to control the activity of State radio and television.

The Head of State is the President of the Republic, elected in a secret ballot by the People's Assembly with a qualified majority of two thirds. The presidential term is five years, renewable only once. The principal duty of the President is to guarantee the observance of the Constitution. The President appoints the chairman of the Council of Ministers and performs the duties of the People's Assembly when the legislature is not in session. He or she is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

The supreme executive body is the Council of Ministers, composed of the chairman, vice-chairman and the ministers. It directs and coordinates the whole activity of the State and implements and puts into practice the laws adopted by the People's Assembly as well as presidential decrees. The Council of Ministers must receive the confidence of the legislature.

Local government

Following the fall of the old regime, the administrative territorial structure of Albania was the subject of some important changes. Until 1991, the country was divided into 26 **rrethe** (districts) and 140 **lokaliteteve** (communities); in July of that year a reform of the local government system took place: the new district of Kavajë was created, and multiparty executive committees, directly elected by Albanian citizens, replaced the former people's councils as the municipalities' main decision-making bodies. At the present time, there are 36 **prethet** (counties), 45 **bashki** (town municipalities) and 316 **komune** (municipalities).

SLOVENIJA

SLOVENIA



Capital:	Ljubljana
Surface area:	20 256 km ²
Population:	2 000 000 inhabitants
Density:	99 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic
	Parliamentary democracy
	Unicameral parliament
	Unitary State

The State

A new Slovenian Constitution was enacted on 23 December 1991, after the separation from the former Yugoslavia.

Under its provisions, the President of the Republic is the Head of State, who is directly elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, renewable only once. The President convenes Parliament, calls elections to the National Assembly, nominates the candidate for Prime Minister, accredits ambassadors and is commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

There is a unicameral legislature, the **Državni Zbor** (National Assembly) composed of 90 members: 38 of them are directly elected by universal suffrage, 50 selected by an electoral commission on the basis of proportional representation, and two are non-elected representatives of the country's Hungarian and Italian minorities. The **Državni Zbor** is elected every four years and holds effective legislative power. There is also a **Državni Svet** (National Council) which has mainly advisory functions; it may, however, veto decisions of the National Assembly. The National Council has 40 members (22 directly elected and 18 appointed by an electoral college to represent various social, economic, trading, political and local interest groups).

The government is the highest executive body. Its composition must be approved by the National Assembly and it is responsible to it for its activity. The Prime Minister must be able to command a parliamentary majority.

Local government

The system of local government in Slovenia was restructured in 1994 when the number of **občine** (municipalities), which are the basic units of local government, was increased to 147. The Constitution of 1991 allows the **občine** to form regions under the provision of a special law.

SLOVENSKO

SLOVAKIA



Capital:	Bratislava
Surface area:	49 035 km ²
Population:	5 300 000 inhabitants
Density:	108 inhabitants/km ²
Structure:	Republic Parliamentary democracy Unicameral parliament Unitary State

The State

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic was adopted on 1 September 1992 and entered into force on 1 January 1993.

According to its provisions, the supreme legislative power is vested in the National Council (Parliament), whose 150 members are elected for a four-year term in general, equal and direct elections. The National Council adopts the Constitution and both ordinary and constitutional laws, approves the budget and gives consent to international agreements. It elects, and can recall, the President of the Republic and establishes ministries and other bodies of State administration.

The President of the Republic, who is elected by the National Council by a three-fifths majority every five years, is the Head of State. He or she is responsible to Parliament and may not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. The President represents the Slovak Republic internationally and negotiates and ratifies international agreements, and is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The President has the power to convene constituent sessions of the National Council and to dissolve it.

The highest organ of executive power is the government, composed of the Prime Minister, Vice-Premiers and the other ministers. The ministers are appointed by the President of the Republic, on the Prime Minister's recommendation and can be revoked individually. The government is the organ which adopts the basic economic and social policy provisions and decides the main questions of internal and international policy. It has the power to issue decrees and to submit bills to the National Assembly, to whom it is responsible.

Local government

The Slovak Republic is divided into 36 **okres** (administrative districts). Before 1990, there were also three larger regions, called **kraj**. After the collapse of the old regime, however, this regional division disappeared. Two cities (the capital, Bratislava, and the city, Košice) have a special statute. At the present time, there are plans to reintroduce a regional tier of government, but the studies have not yet been completed.

Community assistance and local involvement



1. Regional policy and the Community's structural instruments

The entry into force of the Single European Act in 1987 marked the start of a new phase for the Community's structural policies. The Single European Act went beyond the stimulation of free trade and made provision for greater 'economic and social cohesion' within the European Community, i.e. reducing regional imbalances.

The Structural Funds

The Single European Act entailed a thorough revision of the rules under which the three Structural Funds (the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the EAGGF Guidance Section for agricultural structures) operated.

The Structural Funds are as follows:

- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was established in 1975 to reduce regional imbalances by granting investment aid to infrastructure development and to production industries.
- The European Social Fund (ESF), established by the Treaty of Rome in 1958, supports vocational training measures, the retraining of workers and, more recently, employment for young people.
- The Guidance Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) has, since 1964, supported operations helping to improve production and distribution conditions for agricultural goods.
- Since 1993, the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) has assisted the adjustment of the fisheries sector.

In December 1992, the European Council decided to allocate a sum of ECU 144 000 million to the established Structural Funds for the period 1994-99. It also decided to create the Cohesion Fund to which it allocated ECU 15 000 million for the period 1993-99 with the aim of promoting economic and social cohesion by co-financing projects in the field of environment and transport in the least-favoured Member States (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain).

The Structural Funds' operations are now concentrated on a limited number of objectives. Some apply to the Community as a whole, while in other cases the focus is on particular geographical areas.

These objectives are:

- Objective 1: promoting development in regions which are lagging behind;
- Objective 2: conversion of industrial areas in decline;
- Objective 3: combating long-term unemployment; occupational integration of young people and of those threatened with exclusion from the labour market;
- Objective 4: the adaptation of workers to changes in industry and production systems;
- Objective 5a: adjustment of agricultural structures;
- Objective 5b: development of less-favoured rural areas;
- Objective 6: development of regions with a very low population density.

To achieve these objectives, the Structural Funds have to coordinate their interventions among themselves and with the Member States. This is the role of the so-called Community support frameworks which, for each region, lay down the development priorities, the means to achieve them and the budget.

Relations between the Commission and the Member States are governed by the principle of subsidiarity, which is enshrined in the

Treaty of Maastricht. In general terms, this means that a higher authority may not and must not act if an objective can be achieved satisfactorily at a lower level. One consequence of this is that it is up to the appropriate authorities at national level to select the projects to be financed and to supervise their implementation.

The principles behind the reform represented a solid effort to upgrade the effectiveness of the Community's structural measures. The following aspects are particularly worthy of note:

- a focusing of Structural Fund aid on the least-favoured regions;
- a Community-level approach to national development priorities;
- greater involvement of national, regional and local authorities in the preparation and implementation of measures;
- more emphasis on multiannual programming and greater coordination of Structural Fund measures in this context.

The reform also enabled new ideas and measures on regional planning to develop at European level in the run-up to the internal market, particularly interregional and cross-border cooperation.

Loan instruments

The reform of the Structural Funds has also provided the Community with specific instruments with which to propose whatever measures it considers necessary to promote regional development at European level.

The Community can grant loans via:

- the European Investment Bank (EIB) for investments in industrial or regional schemes;
- the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom).

European Investment Bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the European Union's long-term lending institution. Established in 1958 under the Treaty of Rome and owned by the EU Member States, its task is to support, with long-term loans, capital investment that promotes the balanced development of the Union.

It finances projects:

- promoting the economic development of the Union's less-favoured regions;
- developing the Union's transport and telecommunications infrastructure;
- protecting and improving the environment, promoting urban development, and safeguarding the Union's architectural and natural heritage;
- helping the security of energy supplies;
- enhancing the international competitiveness of the Union's industry and its integration at a European level;
- supporting the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The EIB is also called on to provide financing within the framework of the EU's cooperation and development aid policies.

To finance its lending, the EIB borrows on capital markets, mainly through public bond issues, where it has 'AAA' credit rating. Working on a non-profit-making basis, the Bank passes on the benefits of this excellent standing to project promoters.

Over the years, the EIB has steadily adjusted its activities to match the priorities of the European Union and changing world economic trends. It makes loans for a wide range of projects across all economic sectors and its lending is not tied to any predetermined geographical or sectoral quota but depends on the viability of projects put forward and their consistency with the Union's policies.

At the same time, the Bank's primary mission — which remains as relevant today as in 1958 — is to promote the balanced economic development of the less-favoured regions. On average, between two and three thirds of the EIB's lending has been in areas eligible for structural support measures. To put recent years in perspective, the total volume of capital investment which the Bank has helped to finance in the European Union between 1991 and 1995 amounts to over ECU 250 billion, or some 5% of gross fixed capital formation within the Union (the share in the Cohesion Fund countries — Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain — being much higher). This regional development lending supports a wide variety of basic infrastructure investment in both the public and private sectors, mostly in the Objective 1 areas.

The Bank liaises closely with the European Commission to dovetail its loans with the Structural Fund measures. EIB loans may be used in association with national or EU grant aid, in particular assisted areas.

The EIB pays special attention to activities by SMEs and small and medium-sized ventures, especially in infrastructure and (urban) environment, by regional and local authorities. For reasons of operational efficiency, it is not possible to fund these through individual loans. The EIB deploys indirect, decentralized financing facilities, so-called 'global loans', made available to some 130 financial intermediaries working at national, regional or local level.

2. Community programmes, initiatives, action plans and networks

A great many Community operations in the Member States are likely to be of interest to those active at local level. These operations vary considerably. Below is a list of the forms of assistance available, followed by fact sheets giving technical details of each programme.

Regional development and cooperation, environment

Innovative actions for regional development

URBAN

Directoria

TACIS city-twinning programme

Europartenariat

Interprise

EC business and innovation centres (BICs)

Leader II

SMEs

REGIS II

Interreg II

Rechar II

Resider II

RETEX

Konver

PESCA

LIFE

Environmental education

Environmental information

Education, employment, social affairs, culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Socrates

Youth for Europe III

Tempus

Horizon

NOW

Youthstart
Integra
ADAPT
Kaleidoscope
Raphael
MEDIA II
Ariane
Eurathlon

Information

Euro Info Centres
European documentation centres
Info-points Europe
European depository libraries
Rural information carrefours
Urban FORUM for sustainable development
Eurojus
Team Europe
Access to European Commission documents
Europa — The server of the European Union
Visits to the European Commission in Brussels
Commission patronage
Administrative in-service training



Regional development and cooperation, environment

Innovative actions for regional development

URBAN

Directoria

TACIS city-twinning programme

Europartenariat

Interprise

EC business and innovation centres (BICs)

Leader II

SMEs

REGIS II

Interreg II

Rechar II

Resider II

RETEX

Konver

PESCA

LIFE

Environmental education

Environmental information

Innovative actions for regional development

For 1995-99, the Article 10 budget of the European Regional Development Fund amounts to about ECU 400 million for actions that will be grouped around four themes:

- interregional, intra (Recite II, PACTE) and extra-Community (ECOS, Ouverture II) cooperation (ECU 180 million);
- innovation for regional and local development (ECU 90 million);
- urban policy (ECU 80 million);
- spatial planning (ECU 45 million).

For information, please contact:

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

 **URBAN****Aim**

URBAN is intended to help in finding solutions to economic and social problems caused in certain depressed areas by the crisis.

Eligible actions

- Supporting schemes for economic and social revitalization, renovation of infrastructures and facilities and environmental improvement.
- Launching of new economic activities, employment for local people and facilities in the health and safety fields.

Funding

ECU 600 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Limited number of areas situated in conurbations with more than 100 000 inhabitants, suffering from a high rate of unemployment and a lack of social facilities (preferably in Objective 1 regions).

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Directoria

Since 1993, the European Commission has organized the Directoria Convention for Regional Authorities. Traditionally a platform for meeting and bilateral exchange between local and regional authorities and the Commission, Directoria has been, since the end of 1995, the mechanism through which pilot projects on regional cooperation are developed in response to calls for proposals under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation.

Objectives

- To enable the Commission to inform regional authorities on calls for proposals related to Article 10.
- To compare experiences of cooperation projects with case studies of completed projects.
- To offer the relevant authorities the opportunity to identify project partners and to help them organize multiregional pilot projects.

Target groups

Directoria meetings welcome officials from regional and local authorities and from representative organizations of public and private social and economic partners.

Documentation and registration forms are available from:

Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

Preferably address your request by fax to:
'Directorate-General XVI, Article 10 ERDF'
Fax (32-2) 295 01 38



TACIS city-twinning programme

Aim

The TACIS city-twinning programme has been developed to help underpin the evolution of democratic structures and effective administration at local level in the newly independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. It does this by encouraging cooperation between local government bodies from the newly independent States and Mongolia and from the European Union.

Eligible actions

- Privatization.
- Administrative reform.
- Management of social services in the context of economic reform.
- Public/private partnership.
- Environmental issues etc.

Funding

ECU 7.3 million.

Duration

1995-97

Beneficiaries

Participants will be senior and middle managers, and some elected municipal representatives, from about 90 cities and regional governments of States in the NIS. The partners will be cities and regional authorities from the European Union Member States.

Contact

TACIS City-Twinning Programme Secretariat
c/o Eurocities
Square de Meeûs/Meeûsquare 18
B-1050 Brussels





Europarteneriat

Aim

To stimulate the development of disadvantaged regions through the enhancement of cooperation and partnership between SMEs in these regions and similar or complementary businesses located elsewhere in the European Union or in third countries (EFTA, Central and East European countries, the Mediterranean basin).

Eligible actions

Co-financing of the costs of preparation, organization, execution and evaluation of a Europarteneriat event, based on a specification established by the Commission.

Funding

Normally two thirds of the local budget up to an amount of approximately ECU 2 million.

Duration

Organization of two actions per year.

Beneficiaries

SMEs located in the region where the event takes place (usually areas eligible under Objective 1, 2 or 5b).

European contact

European Commission
Directorates-General XVI and XXIII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Aim

Interprise is an initiative which aims to encourage partnership between industries and/or services in Europe, to stimulate contacts between company managers, and to develop cooperation agreements between small and medium-sized business.

Eligible actions

The projects should include at least three regions from three Member States of the Union; it may be extended to non-member countries. A project must involve at least 15 to 20 enterprises from each region.

Funding

The maximum for an Interprise event is ECU 50 000.

Duration

Organization of around 40 events per year.

Projects should be initiated by organizations such as local, regional or national development agencies, chambers of commerce, European business and innovation centres, Euro Info Centres, private consultants, etc.

Beneficiaries

Local, regional or national development agencies, European business and innovation centres, Euro Info Centres, private consultants.

European contact

European Commission
 Directorate-General XXIII
 Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



EC business and innovation centres (BICs)

Aim

To stimulate and regenerate the local economies in areas with industrial potential relevant to regional policy, via the creation of innovative firms and the development of existing firms.

Eligible actions

Projects for the establishment and organization of business and innovation centres, according to the Community model.

Funding

40 to 50% of the cost of establishment and organization of a BIC.

Duration

Approximately two years.

Beneficiaries

Regional and local consortia of public and private actors in economic development, including, for example, public bodies, chambers of commerce, financial institutions, associations of enterprises, universities, and research and technology centres.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

 **Leader II****Aim**

To promote local and innovative approaches to rural development.

Eligible actions

There are four main categories of eligible actions:

- acquisition of skills;
- rural innovation programmes, capable of serving as models and being transferred elsewhere;
- transnational cooperation;
- networking.

Funding

ECU 1 775.15 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Rural areas in regions eligible under Objectives 1 and 5b. A maximum of 10% of funds allocated to Objective 5b areas under Leader II may be used outside Objectives 1 and 5b regions, in adjoining rural areas.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General VI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



SMEs

Aim

The purpose of the SME initiative is to assist small and medium-sized businesses, whether industrial or in the services sector, particularly in the Objective 1 regions, to adjust to the single market and become competitive on international markets.

Eligible actions

- Development of cooperation and networks among SMEs.
- Access to new public and private markets in the Community or elsewhere.
- Increasing cooperation between research centres, universities, training centres and SMEs for purposes of research and technological development.

Funding

ECU 1 080 million, of which ECU 830 million must go to Objective 1 regions.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

SMEs and producers' cooperatives situated in areas eligible under Objective 1, 2 or 5b.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



REGIS II

Aim

To foster closer integration into the Union of the most remote regions, i.e. the French overseas departments, Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands. To contribute towards the development of these regions and to give them full access to the transnational cooperation networks.

Eligible actions

REGIS II has five main areas of intervention:

- diversification of economic activity (agricultural production, tourism, energy, small businesses, coastal areas, waste treatment);
- consolidation of links with the rest of the Union (transport infrastructure, telecommunications, transfer of know-how);
- cooperation among the most remote regions (joint schemes, development of services, small-scale, interregional transport infrastructure);
- precautions against natural disasters;
- vocational training (creation of self-employed activities, training, occupational integration of young people, return of long-term unemployed to the job market).

Funding

ECU 600 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

French overseas departments (Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique, Réunion), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

European contact

European Commission
 Directorate-General XVI
 Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Interreg II

Aim

Interreg has three distinct strands: developing cross-border cooperation, completion of energy networks and transnational cooperation on spatial planning.

Eligible actions

A. Cross-border cooperation

As regards measures to promote cooperation between internal border areas of the Union, actions may be assisted, provided that a development impact can be foreseen on both sides of the border and that their planning and, where possible, implementation are undertaken on a cross-border basis.

B. Completion of energy networks

Completion of work on the introduction of natural gas into certain regions of Greece and Portugal, and the interconnections between national energy distributing systems in Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain.

C. Transnational cooperation on spatial planning

Includes three axes: spatial planning and transnational cooperation, mass migration and the fight against drought. Contribution to the development of transnational cooperation at European level for actions relevant for spatial planning.

Funding

- A. ECU 2 565 million.
- B. ECU 500 million.
- C. ECU 412.84 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

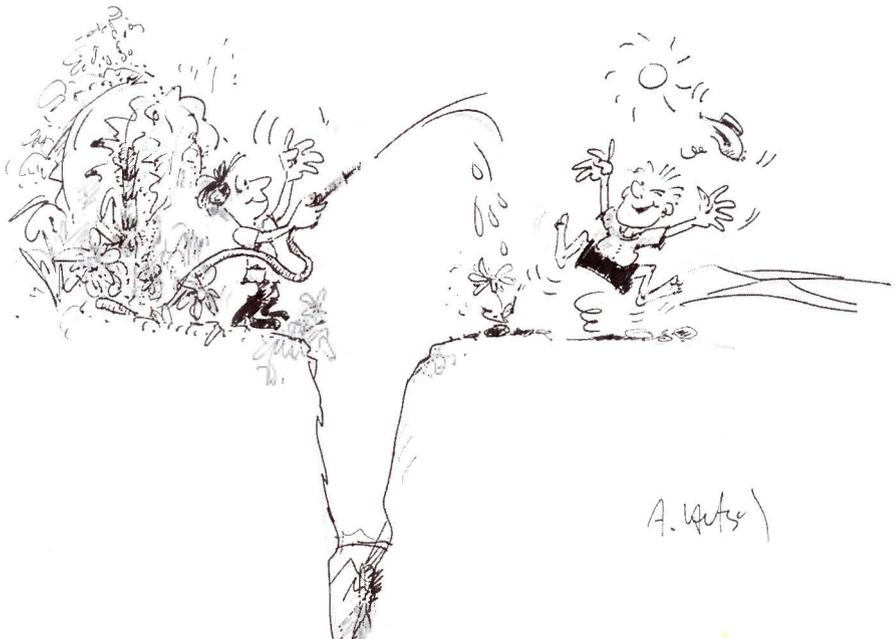
Areas eligible for Interreg II.A are:

- all areas delimited at administrative level NUTS 3 in the Union situated on internal and external land borders;
- certain NUTS 3 areas on sea borders.

For Interreg II.C, all eligible areas under the ERDF are eligible. Other areas can be considered eligible, but on a minor scale.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11





Rechar II

Aim

Rechar II, with Konver, Resider II and RETEX, is part of the four Community initiatives for industrial reconversion areas.

The aim is to support the conversion of the coalmining areas hit by the decline of their industry and employment by giving priority to the environment.

Eligible actions

- Environmental improvement and restoration to other commercial uses of old mining buildings.
- Promotion of new economic and tourist activities.
- Assistance for training and employment.
- Promotion of cross-border cooperation between coalmining areas.

Funding

ECU 460 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Areas already eligible under Rechar I.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Resider II

Aim

To support the economic and social conversion of the steel areas, by giving priority to the environment.

Eligible actions

- Environmental improvement and restoration to other commercial uses of old steel industrial buildings.
- Promotion of new economic and tourist activities.
- Assistance for training and employment.
- Assistance to bodies concerned with economic conversion and regional development.

Funding

ECU 575 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Small geographical units which face significant unemployment rates.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



RETEX

Aim

To assist areas highly dependent on the textiles and clothing industry.

Eligible actions

- Support for local groupings of businesses and for cooperation schemes.
- Business audits.
- Rehabilitation of industrial wasteland etc.

Funding

ECU 600 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Areas already eligible under RETEX in 1992.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

 **Konver****Aim**

To assist regions weakened by the decline of defence industries and installations.

Eligible actions

- Support for local associations of businesses and cooperation schemes, networking and market information systems.
- Business audits.
- Promotion of alternative activities, tourism, etc.

Funding

ECU 735 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Small geographical units with significant unemployment rates.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XVI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



PESCA

Aim

To assist the fishing industry and fishing dependent areas in coping and mastering the social and commercial consequences of the crisis.

Eligible actions

- Diversification of economic activities.
- Safeguarding and creating jobs.
- Concrete projects which are general or transnational in scope.

Funding

ECU 297 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Areas dependent on fisheries, mainly in regions eligible under Objective 1, 2 or 5b.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XIV
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Aim

To contribute to the development and implementation of Community environmental policy.

Eligible actions

- LIFE-Nature: to protect endangered species of fauna and flora and associated habitats.
- LIFE-Environment: to promote sustainable development in industrial activities and land-use development.
- LIFE-Third countries: to provide technical assistance to third countries and associated demonstration actions.

Funding

ECU 450 million.

Duration

1996-99

Beneficiaries

LIFE-Nature and LIFE-Environment are open to all natural and legal persons established in the European Union who wish to propose and implement projects within the territory of Member States.

LIFE-Third countries is addressed primarily at third country administrations. It is open, however, to all natural and legal persons, but proposals which do not emanate directly from the competent authorities of third countries must include a declaration of support from these authorities.

European contact

European Commission
 Directorate-General XI
 Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Environmental education

Aim

To help to develop education as a tool for achieving environmental objectives.

Eligible actions

Projects which achieve the sustainable integration of environmental education.

Funding

ECU 1 million.

Duration

One year, renewed on an annual basis.

Beneficiaries

National or regional government, NGOs, county councils, etc.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Environmental information

Aim

To identify the responsibilities and encourage the active participation of actors in tackling environmental problems.

Eligible actions

Actions that promote exchanges of information and experience, that generate a market multiplier effect on a European scale and that demonstrate an integrated approach to the environment in one or more of the following sectors: industry, energy, transport, agriculture and tourism.

Funding

ECU 5 million.

Duration

One year, renewed on an annual basis.

Beneficiaries

Regional and local authorities, trade unions, environmental-protection organizations, consumer groups.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

Education, employment, social affairs, culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Socrates

Youth for Europe III

Tempus

Horizon

NOW

Youthstart

Integra

ADAPT

Kaleidoscope

Raphael

MEDIA II

Ariane

Eurathlon



 **Leonardo da Vinci****Aim**

To promote new and innovative approaches to training.

Eligible actions

Leonardo da Vinci, which combines the former Comett, FORCE, PETRA, Eurotecnet and, in part, Lingua programmes, supports and supplements Member State initiatives in the field of vocational training, focusing on cooperation among the different types of initial, continuous and lifelong training.

Leonardo da Vinci supports three kinds of activities:

- transnational pilot projects;
- transnational placement and exchange programmes;
- transnational surveys and analyses.

Funding

ECU 620 million.

Duration

1995-99

Beneficiaries

Young apprentices and students, young workers, instructors, tutors or training coordinators, public authorities, employers' and employees' organizations.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XXII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11





Socrates

Aim

To encourage cooperation between Member States in the field of education.

Eligible actions

Part I: higher education (Erasmus).

Part II: pre-school, primary and secondary education (Comenius).

Part III: flexible measures applicable at all levels of education (Lingua, Eurydice and ARION);

distance education;

multimedia in education;

adult education.

Funding

ECU 850 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Students of all levels, teachers, schools and universities.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XXII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Youth for Europe III

Aim

Action programme to promote cooperation in the field of youth in order to contribute to the educational development of young people.

Eligible actions

- A. Intra-Community activities directly involving young people.
- B. Youth leaders.
- C. Cooperation between the institutions of Member States.
- D. Exchanges with third countries.
- E. Information aimed at young people and studies about youth.

Funding

ECU 126 million.

Duration

1995-99

Beneficiaries

Young people aged 15 to 25 resident in the 15 Member States of the European Union, or in Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XXII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Tempus

Aim

To promote the quality and support the development of the higher education system in the beneficiary countries of the PHARE and TACIS programmes by means of cooperation between universities and companies in these countries and in those of the European Union.

Eligible actions

Support to joint projects between universities and, if need be, companies.

Assistance, in the framework of joint projects:

- for the reorganization of the higher education system in sectors where a change is needed to adapt to the new economic context (e.g. curriculum development, reform of higher education structures and institutions and their management);
- to help develop skill-related training to address specific needs emerging from economic reform.

Duration

1994-98

Beneficiaries

Higher education institutions, university teachers.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XXII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

**Aim**

To facilitate access to employment for people with disabilities.

Eligible actions

Establishment of local development agencies and structures for the professional integration of people with disabilities, adaptation of the workplace, development of transport systems and local employment initiatives, improvement of systems of guidance, training, counselling and employment. Taking into account the needs of people with disabilities.

Funding

Horizon is a strand of the Employment initiative and has a budget of ECU 513 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

People with disabilities. Priority will be given to Objective 1 and other less-favoured areas.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General V
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



NOW

Aim

This initiative is intended to improve equal opportunities for women with regard to employment, training and access to high-tech and management jobs.

Eligible actions

Implementation of programmes of personalized and flexible training, and creation and development of self-employed activities among local employment initiatives for women.

Funding

NOW is a strand of the Employment initiative and has a budget of approximately ECU 496 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Unemployed women, women threatened by unemployment and women wishing to improve their situation in the labour market.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General V
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



**Aim**

Youthstart is designed to encourage the integration into the labour market of young people under the age of 20.

Eligible actions

Programmes for the training and placement of young people, assistance for job-creation, transnational exchanges, support for regional and local information services.

Funding

Youthstart is a strand of the Employment initiative and has a budget of approximately ECU 441 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

All young people under the age of 20, especially those leaving school with no diploma or basic qualification; more generally, key actors in the training and labour market integration of young people.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General V
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Integra

Aim

To favour the work integration of people in danger of exclusion and discrimination on the labour market. Integra is particularly concerned with the work integration of migrants, refugees and other such vulnerable groups.

Eligible actions

To improve the availability of high-quality public services; to promote local approaches concerning reintegration; to create jobs and provide aid for setting up enterprises. Each project is required to have at least one transnational partner. Strategies must involve widescale partnerships between communities.

Funding

Integra is part of the Employment initiative and has a budget of ECU 385 million.

Duration

1997-99

Beneficiaries

The economically and socially most vulnerable groups, especially those in urban communities.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General V
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

**Aim**

ADAPT is designed to help European employers and workers anticipate industrial changes and to find innovative solutions to deal with their effects.

Eligible actions

ADAPT finances measures for training, anticipation, promotion of networks and new employment possibilities, adaptation of structures and support systems.

Funding

ECU 560 million.

Duration

1994-99

Beneficiaries

Workers and enterprises. More generally, ADAPT provides support for the efforts of those who actually create aid and preserve jobs, employers, trade unions, local developers and trainers in the public and private sectors, in training organizations and universities.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General V
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11





Kaleidoscope

Aim

To promote knowledge about and the diffusion of the culture and history of the peoples of Europe; to favour access to and the participation in culture; to favour European cooperation in cultural matters; to encourage intercultural creation and dialogue.

Eligible actions

Cultural projects and events organized by cultural organizations from at least three Member States and including participants from at least three Member States. Priority is given to projects involving lasting cooperation which tend to encourage access to culture for young people from different social and regional backgrounds and which include improving measures.

Funding

ECU 26.5 million.

Duration

1996-98

Beneficiaries

Cultural organizations or cultural activities (legal status needed).

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Raphael

Aim

To promote and maintain heritage buildings and movable objects (e.g. museums, collections); to make European citizens aware of Europe's common cultural heritage.

Eligible actions

To promote and spread cultural heritage; to develop networks and partnerships; to enable access to heritage; to encourage innovation improvement and mobility for professionals; cooperation with third countries and international organizations.

Funding

ECU 67 million.

Duration

1996-2000

Beneficiaries

Professionals, organizations and networks (museums, collections, etc.) working in the heritage sector.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



MEDIA II

Aim

To create a favourable environment for the growth of companies in the European audiovisual programme industry.

Eligible actions

The training of European professionals; the development of production projects for the European and international markets; the transnational distribution of European films and audiovisual programmes.

Funding

ECU 310 million.

Duration

1996-2000

Beneficiaries

European companies and professionals of the audiovisual industry.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Ariane

Aim

To encourage, through translations, knowledge about and diffusion among European Union citizens of the literature and history of the peoples of Europe; to support cooperation between professionals in the field of books and literature, and favour perfection.

Eligible actions

Translation of contemporary literary works; translation of theatrical works; reference works and studies; projects to promote wider reading; perfection projects for professionals working in this field.

Funding

ECU 2.9 million.

Duration

1997

Beneficiaries

Networks, associations, foundations and professional organizations involving partners from at least four Member States (for projects in favour of books and reading); publishers (for translating projects).

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Eurathlon

Aim

The general aim of the Eurathlon programme in favour of sport is to contribute to a better understanding between European citizens and to promote the essential role of sport as a factor of social integration, health education and human solidarity.

Eurathlon seeks to promote every kind of sporting activity.

Eligible actions

Projects must have a European dimension which promotes as wide as possible a participation and involvement of citizens, athletes or sports officials from at least three Member States.

Funding

Year by year.

Duration

Year by year.

Beneficiaries

The programme is open to activities which involve partners — public authorities, sports federations, public or private organizers — in at least three Member States. The participation of partners from other European countries is allowed, particularly for those that have applied for membership, such as those of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Information

- Euro Info Centres
- European documentation centres
- Info-points Europe
- European depository libraries
- Rural information carrefours
- Urban Forum for sustainable development
- Eurojus
- Team Europe
- Access to European Commission documents
- Europa – The server of the European Union
- Visits to the European Commission in Brussels
- Commission patronage
- Administrative in-service training



Euro Info Centres

Aim

Euro Info Centres (EICs) inform companies, particularly SMEs and the craft industry, about Community activities that favour their integration and development in the European Union through a decentralized European network.

Type of action

- Assistance for SMEs in order to favour the internationalization of their participation in Community programmes.
- Establishment of partnerships among SMEs, especially through Interprise and Europartenariat.
- Information exchanges among EICs on issues related to the national legislation and commercial practices of the other Member States.

Coverage

Network composed of 230 EICs spread over 15 Member States, Norway and Iceland. The network also includes 19 correspondence centres (EICCs) opened in non-EU countries.

Beneficiaries

Companies, especially SMEs and the craft industry.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General XXIII
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

European documentation centres

Host structure

The European documentation centres (EDCs), set up in 1963, are assigned to universities to promote and consolidate studies and research in Community matters.

Target public

The university community (lecturers, students, researchers), and also the non-university public.

Coverage

There are 316 centres in the European Union and 140 centres in non-EU countries.

Objectives

- To help universities to consolidate teaching and research on European integration by providing them with the sources of information which they require.
- To contribute to making the policies of the Union known to all European citizens, and making the documents produced by the EU available.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Info-points Europe

Host structure

The Info-points Europe (IPEs) are set up within facilities which are visited frequently: national or local community facilities, public libraries.

Target public

The general public.

Coverage

There are 52 centres in operation and others are being opened in the countries of the Union.

Objectives

- To provide general information on the European Union and Community policies.
- To direct specific requests to the appropriate sources.

Actions

- Distribution of publications of general interest concerning all Community policies.
- Dealing with requests for general information.
- Making available for consultation various official publications.
- Presentation of videos on Community policies.
- In certain cases, a question and answer service is provided.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



European depository libraries

Host structure

Set up in 1963, the European depository libraries (DEPs) are situated in the large national libraries. In principle, there is only one DEP per country.

Target public

All citizens.

Coverage

There are 24 DEPs in Europe, and 75 in the rest of the world.

Objectives

To make available to the general public all the official publications of the Union institutions.

Information available at DEPs

The DEPs receive a copy of all the official publications of the European Union in one of the 11 languages; they do not automatically have free access to the Commission databases.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Rural information carrefours

Host structure

The rural information carrefours were created following the Commission communication, 'Future of the rural world', published in 1988. They were established within existing regional organizations, working in close harmony with all members of the rural society of the region (chambers of agriculture, rural foundations, community administrations, etc.).

Target public

All the actors of the rural world (development or professional organizations, local cooperatives, schools, citizens, associations, etc.).

Coverage

There are 86 carrefours spread over the whole of the Union's territory, but the network will eventually extend to all European regions.

Actions

The carrefours bring information on Union policies and measures of interest to the rural world to the heart of rural communities.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Urban FORUM for sustainable development

Host structure

Town halls, urban institutes, non-profit-making organizations.

Target public

Socioeconomic actors in cities and city dwellers.

Coverage

There are 20 centres already set up and others are projected. This is an experimental network.

Objectives

To inform and heighten the awareness of socioeconomic actors and city dwellers on the Community strategy of sustainable development in cities.

Urban Forum examines and experiments with new ways of informing the different sectors of the population on Community policies and initiatives, encourages and assists dialogue between the different categories of city dwellers, and facilitates information exchanges between cities on the problems which they face and on their experiences in finding solutions.

European contact

European Commission
Directorates-General X and XI
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



Eurojus

Host structure

Representative offices of the Commission in the Member States.

Field of activity

Practical information on Community legislation of particular interest to citizens' daily life (free circulation of property, people, services and capital; environment; consumers; right of residence; etc.).

Target public

All citizens.

Coverage

An expert lawyer in each Member State.

Actions

The expert lawyers answer questions which are put to them by telephone, in writing or in person.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11



 **Team Europe****Field of activity**

Information for the general public on all aspects of Community policy.

Target public

General public.

Coverage

- A coordination agency in Brussels.
- A coordinator in each office of the Commission in the Member States.
- A network of 740 speakers spread over 19 European countries.

Actions

More than 5 000 lectures are given annually by 740 speakers to an audience of around 125 000 people.

Network animation and method of communication

Dispatch of press releases, speeches and other documents to network members relating to all aspects of EU policy.

European contact

European Commission
Directorate-General X
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

 Access to European Commission documents

The publications of the institutions and other bodies of the European Union are listed in a catalogue, which is available from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2, rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg.

These include:

- the *Official Journal of the European Communities*, which is published every working day in 11 languages, and has three separate series. The L series contains all new European Union legislative acts. The C series contains information and notices from the EU institutions, such as preparatory legislation, reports of the progress of cases before the Court of Justice and questions from the Members of the European Parliament to the Commission and the Council. In the S series (Supplement to the Official Journal), several hundred tenders issued by public institutions are published every day;
- COM documents comprising proposals, Council regulations, recommendations, communications, reports, etc. They are available in all the official languages;
- Green Papers (documents presented for public discussion and debate);
- White Papers (documents presenting, for discussion and decision, detailed policies which have already been debated).

Many of these documents can also be obtained in electronic form. For details of databases, CD-ROMS and the document delivery service for documents (EUDOR), published in the Official Journal, contact the Office for Official Publications.

The Commission also produces many booklets and leaflets describing its objectives and policies which can be obtained free of charge from Commission offices in the Member States.

Access may also be obtained to unpublished or preparatory Commission documents.

Further information on this can be obtained from:

Commission offices in the Member States and external delegations in non-member countries;

or

information points and relays throughout the European Union (to obtain a list of these contact the European Commission, Directorate-General X, Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11;

or

European Commission
Secretariat-General
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11.



Europa – The server of the European Union

Since its launch in February 1995, Europa has provided a rapidly growing coverage of up-to-date information on all aspects of European integration.

Europa is accessible and user-friendly, providing an effective tool for increasing the openness of EU institutions.

News

Europa brings you the official press releases distributed by the European institutions as well as information on the main up-and-coming events. This allows you to follow news concerning the European Union every day.

ABC

Europa provides simple answers to key questions. What are the objectives of the Treaty on European Union? How can you receive concise and simple documentation on EU activities?

Policies

Europa offers you detailed or general answers, depending on your particular needs, on the many activities of the European Union in economic and social matters, in matters of security and foreign policy, and in matters of justice and home affairs.

Institutions

Europa presents the different institutions of the Union and explains their specific roles, as defined by the Treaty. Through this door, you can enter directly into the institution of your choice:

<http://europa.eu.int>

Visits to the European Commission in Brussels

The Visitors' Service of the European Commission organizes hundreds of visits each year for various groups. The various visitors' groups are considered as 'information relays' likely to spread the information received within their respective networks, thus giving it a wider dissemination. Depending on a group's composition and requirements, they are classed as:

High priority groups

These are recommended as such by the Commission's offices in the field. They are made up of 'opinion multipliers' who are likely to disseminate the information received within their social and professional circles (Members of Parliament and other elected representatives, journalists, business leaders, university, etc.). In order to address their precise areas of interest and provide the right level of response to their queries, a special programme of between one half-day and two full days is organized with the participation of relevant officials.

Priority groups

Also recommended by the Commission's offices, these groups consist of people such as university and postgraduate students and members of various associations. They are offered a programme of one half-day or one full day geared to their needs and involving appropriate Commission speakers.

General public groups

These are made up of students finishing secondary school, university students in their early years, junior and senior citizens and other identifiable groups who would like to obtain general information on the European Union. They are given a two-hour information session, involving audiovisual material and a general presentation by a Commission speaker followed by questions and answers. They also receive a general information pack.

Individual visits

These are not provided for by the Visitors' Service. However, the European Community visitors' programme (ECVP) provides the

framework and funds for two-week individual study programmes. They are available in non-European Union countries to some 150 visitors a year, selected on the basis of recommendations by Commission delegations in these countries. The costs of the visit are paid by the ECVP, which is an interinstitutional programme founded in 1974, involving both the Commission and the European Parliament.

Practical information

High priority groups and priority groups

If an information visit is deemed to be politically important, a group may be contacted by a local office in a Member State, which then makes a proposal concerning them to the Visitors' Service in Brussels. Groups in this category can also take the initiative themselves to request a visit to Brussels. In this case, they must start by writing to their local Commission office.

General public groups

These visits are normally arranged directly through the Visitors' Service in Brussels, with no need to contact the Commission office in a Member State.

Applications should be sent at least two months in advance to the following address:

The head of the Visitors' Service
European Commission
Rue de Trèves/Trierstraat 120 – 5/45
B-1049 Brussels

Important remarks

- Visits are free of charge.
- Visits from Belgium are handled only by the Commission's Press and Information Office in Belgium.
- Groups must be made up of a minimum of 15 people.
- All talks and briefings are carried out in a language understood by the visitors (only one language per group).

Commission patronage

Under certain circumstances, the Commission may grant patronage to a European event. This is a means of giving moral support and does not commit the Commission to giving financial assistance. Patronage is only given for one-off events and may not be given repeatedly, except in the case of very high-profile sporting and cultural events.

Patronage is not given for commercial purposes (trade fairs, exhibitions at which goods are also being sold, magazines, etc.). The activity in question must be an external activity (patronage cannot be awarded to events organized by the Commission).

Patronage must not offend the sensitivities of a Member State (e.g. commemoration of armed conflicts).

Patronage is granted by the President, the Vice-Presidents or the Members of the Commission, or through the offices in the Member States and not by individual Directorates-General or departments.

For further information on patronage contact:

European Commission
Secretariat-General
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

Administrative in-service training

Twice a year the Commission organizes in-service training lasting between three and five months for candidates from universities and from the public and private sectors. The training periods start on 1 March and 1 October each year.

The purpose of in-service training with the Commission is:

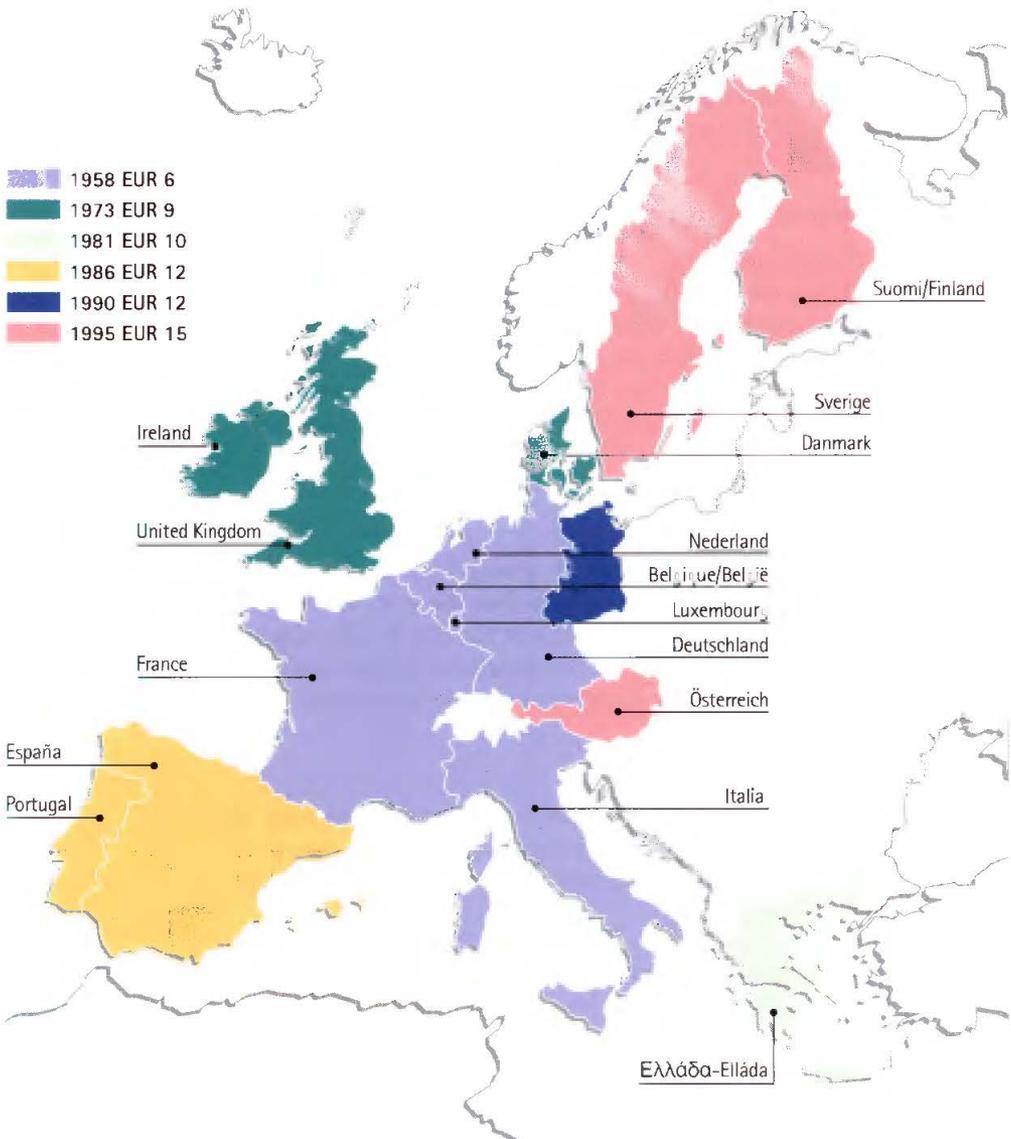
- to give trainees a general idea of the objectives and problems of European integration;
- to provide them with practical knowledge of the working of Commission departments;
- to enable them to acquire personal experience by means of the contacts made in the course of their everyday work;
- to enable them to further and put into practice the knowledge they have acquired during their studies or professional careers.

Trainees are, in principle, selected from among nationals of the Member States of the Union. However, a limited number of nationals of non-member countries may be accepted.

Applications must be received by 31 March (for the period beginning on 1 October) and by 30 September (for the period beginning on 1 March) and be addressed to:

European Commission
Secretariat-General
Training Office
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
B-1049 Brussels
Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

A look at the European Union



1. Milestones on the road to an integrated Europe

The origins: a desire for lasting peace

1945 *End of the Second World War*

1946 *Winston Churchill's speech* calling for the 'establishment of a United States of Europe'.

1948 *The setting-up of the OEEC*

The Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was set up to distribute American aid to the European countries under the Marshall Plan. This was the first European organization for cooperation and only the West European countries were members. It was renamed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1960.

1948 *The Hague Congress*

The European Movement, which sprang from the Resistance movements and ideas developed before the war, convened a meeting of the leading politicians of the day in The Hague. The need to unite the peoples and nations of Europe has been a popular theme in most European countries ever since.

1949 *Council of Europe, NATO*

The setting-up of the Council of Europe and the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. Western Europe followed up its policy of economic cooperation by developing cultural and military cooperation.

Europe was divided into two, as was Germany with the creation of two States.

1954 *EDC and WEU*

Failure of the European Defence Community initiative.

The setting-up of the Western European Union: an organization for the coordination of security and defence policy.

Establishing the European Communities

1950 *Schuman Declaration*

The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, submitted a plan developed by Planning Commissioner Jean Monnet. The scheme involved pooling French and German coal and steel production under the joint management of a European institution, the High Authority.

1951 *ECSC*

The Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was signed. Six countries were members of this first Community: the Federal Republic of Germany and France were joined by Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

1957 *EEC and Euratom*

The Treaties of Rome establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) and the European Economic Community (EEC) were signed.



The Common Market: from high hopes to crises

1967 *Merger Treaty*

The three Communities, ECSC, EEC and Euratom, were henceforth managed by joint institutions.

1968 *Customs union*

Customs barriers came down 18 months ahead of schedule. Goods were now able to move within the European Community free of quota restrictions and customs duties. The six Community Member States established a common customs tariff *vis-à-vis* non-member countries.

1969 *The Hague Summit*

The Heads of State or Government of the six European Community Member States pledged to move forward with new initiatives for the building of Europe. Progress had been hampered since 1965 by the desire of certain Member States, particularly France, to require all decisions on matters of substance to be taken by unanimous vote. The Summit agreed to:

- consolidate (create new policies);
- strengthen (establish definitive structures especially for the common agricultural policy CAP);
- enlarge the Community (admit new Member States).

1970 *End of the transition period*

The European Community Member States set up a new common trade policy.

The financing of the Community budget through contributions from the Member States was replaced by a system of own resources, ensuring greater freedom of action for the Community *vis-à-vis* the Member States.

1971 *The international monetary crisis*

1972 *Launch of the European currency 'snake'*

The Member States decided to limit the margins of fluctuation among European currencies and between them and the US dollar; they looked ahead to economic and monetary union by 1980 (plan put forward by the Werner Committee).

1973 *New members joined the Community: Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom**The first oil crisis***1974** *Establishment of the European Council*

Summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government.

1975 *Regional policy*

The setting-up of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

1979 *First election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage*

This was the first time such an assembly was directly elected by Community citizens.

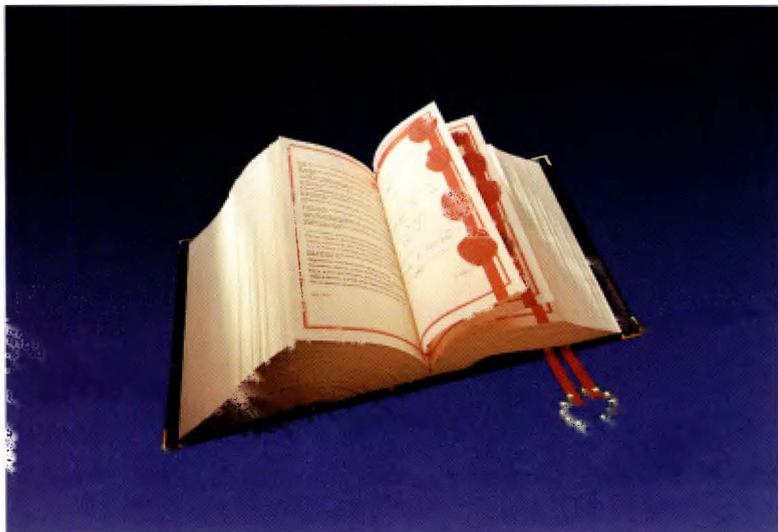
Launch of the European Monetary System (EMS)

The ecu (European currency unit), put together from a 'basket' of national currencies, became the European unit of account.

*The second oil crisis***1980** *World economy in recession*

Implementation of economic and monetary union was postponed.

1981 *Greece joined the Community***1983** *The common fisheries policy*



Renewed impetus: towards European Union

1984 European Union scheme

By a large majority, the European Parliament adopted a draft Treaty initiated by Altiero Spinelli and submitted it to the national parliaments for ratification.

The Fontainebleau Summit

The European Council found a solution to the budget crisis, particularly to the problem of the United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget.

1985 The White Paper on the internal market

The Delors Commission put before the European Council a programme of nearly 300 measures to be implemented between June 1985 and December 1992 in order to remove all frontier controls between member countries and to establish a genuine European single market.

1986 Spain and Portugal joined the Community

The Single European Act

Reform of the Treaties. The single market and the deadline for its completion (31 December 1992) were written into the Treaty of Rome. The European Parliament was given more powers.

1988 The Brussels European Council

The Delors Plan for making a success of the Single European Act is adopted.

1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall

Eastern Europe opened up to democracy.

1990 Free movement of capital

The Community enlarged to include the territory of the German Democratic Republic (German unification)

Trade and economic cooperation agreements concluded with several East European countries

Free movement of people

The Schengen Agreement on the elimination of border checks was signed.

*1991 The European Council met in Maastricht**1992 The Treaty on European Union signed in Maastricht*

The Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) signed in Oporto

1993 1 January: introduction of the single market

Free movement of goods, persons and capital, and freedom to provide services.

1 November: the Maastricht Treaty entered into force

1994 *The Treaty on the EEA entered into force* (with the exception of Switzerland, which rejected it in a referendum on 6 December 1992)

Norway, in a referendum, rejected joining the European Union

1995 *Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the Union*

The Schengen Agreement came into force between Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal

1996 *Opening of the Intergovernmental Conference on the future of the Union*

2. The institutions

The European Union has a number of institutions with which it carries out the tasks assigned to it by the Treaties. These institutions are not comparable to those of a Federal State or of a traditional international organization.

The institutions and other bodies of the Union are:

- the Parliament,
- the Council,
- the Commission,
- the Court of Justice,
- the Court of Auditors,
- the Economic and Social Committee,
- the Committee of the Regions,
- the European Investment Bank.



D	99
F	87
I	87
UK	87
E	64
NL	31
B	25
EL	25
P	25
S	22
A	21
DK	16
FIN	16
IRL	15
L	6

European Parliament

Place of work

- Strasbourg (plenary sessions)
- Luxembourg (secretariat)
- Brussels (meetings of the committees and additional sessions)

Membership

There are 626 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), representing the 370 million citizens of the Union, organized into multinational political groups and elected for a five-year term by direct universal suffrage under election systems which are, at the moment, governed by national provisions in each Member State.

The number of Members by State is the following: Germany 99; France, Italy and the United Kingdom 87 each; Spain 64; the

Netherlands 31; Belgium, Greece and Portugal 25 each; Sweden 22; Austria 21; Denmark and Finland 16 each; Ireland 15; Luxembourg 6.

Powers

- Legislative power
- Budgetary powers
- Supervision of the executive

Legislative power

Originally, the Treaty of Rome, 1957, gave the Parliament only a consultative role, allowing the Commission to propose and the Council of Ministers to decide legislation. Subsequent treaties, the Single Act 1987 and the Treaty on the European Union 1993, have extended Parliament's influence to amending and even adopting legislation so that Parliament and the Council now share the power of decision in a large number of areas.

The Parliament participates in the process of legislation by:

- the consultative procedure;
- the cooperation procedure;
- the co-decision procedure;
- the Parliament's assent.

Budgetary powers

The European Parliament approves the Union's budget each year. The budgetary procedure allows Parliament to propose modifications and amendments to the Commission's initial proposals and to the position taken by the Member States in the Council. On agricultural spending and costs arising from international agreements, the Council has the last word, but on other expenditure — for example, education, social programmes, regional funds, environmental and

cultural projects — Parliament decides in close cooperation with the Council.

Parliament, on the basis of the annual report of the Court of Auditors, makes an assessment of the Commission's management of the budget before approving the accounts and granting it a 'discharge'.

Supervision of the executive

The Parliament exercises overall political supervision of the way the Union's policies are conducted. Executive power in the Union is shared between the Commission and the Council of Ministers and their representatives appear regularly before Parliament.



Council of the European Union

Place of work

Brussels

Membership

Representatives of the governments of the 15 Member States. Whereas the Minister for Foreign Affairs is regarded as a country's main representative at the Council (at meetings on general affairs), established practice now is that other ministers attend in accordance with the subject of the meeting (special councils on agriculture, the environment, etc.).

Presidency

Held for a period of six months by each of the Member States in rotation in the following order: Spain, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Finland, Portugal, France, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Greece.

Voting

The Council of Ministers almost always takes its decisions on the basis of proposals submitted by the Commission. When adopting proposals, the Council takes either unanimous or majority decisions. In qualified majority decisions, the votes of Member States are weighted according to the size of their populations and relative economic importance within the European Union.

The Council is assisted by the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper), which comprises the Member States' representatives to the European Union and a secretariat which mainly serves the Council Presidency.

Function

As the legislative arm of the Union, the Council is vested with the power to enact legislation, primarily in the form of directives and regulations. In matters of external relations, the Council authorizes the opening of negotiations, gives the Commission its negotiating brief and concludes agreements.

European Council: A special case

Although not provided for in the original Treaties, the European Council was established by political initiative in 1974 and comprises the Heads of State or Government of the Member States. There is, therefore, no overlapping with the Council of Ministers. The Commission participates in European Council meetings, which are held at least twice a year.

The European Council intervenes by virtue of European political cooperation (EPC) and of Community policies. The role of the European Council in Community affairs is primarily to lay down guidelines and provide political impetus.

Do not confuse

the Council of Ministers, the European Council and the Council of Europe.

Council of Europe

Headquarters Strasbourg

Members Forty European countries

Activities Cultural relations
Human rights (European Commission and Court of Human Rights)

Regional and local authorities (Standing Conference of Regional and Local Authorities in Europe)



European Commission

Place of work

- Brussels
- Luxembourg

Membership

Twenty Commissioners appointed for five years by agreement among the governments of the Member States; the full Commission has to be approved by the European Parliament before its members can take office. The larger countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) have two representatives on the Commission; the others have one each. Members of the Commission act independently of Member State governments and act only in the interest of the European Union.

Function

Initiative

The Council cannot, as a rule, take any decision without a proposal from the Commission, which thus serves as the motive force of Community policy. In the decision-making process, the Commission has the right to withdraw or modify its proposals at any time. Furthermore, the Council may only depart from a Commission proposal by a unanimous vote.

Implementation

The Council has vested the Commission with powers to secure the implementation of Community acts. The Commission is assisted in this task by committees comprising representatives of the Member States.

The Commission also applies Treaty rules in specific cases, especially with regard to competition.

Lastly, it is responsible for administering the Community Funds (EAGGF, ESF, ERDF, EDF) and, more generally, for implementing the budget.

Supervision

The Commission is the guardian of the Treaties. It is the Commission's job to ensure that Union legislation is applied correctly by the Member States. In the event of infringements of Treaty provisions or secondary Community legislation by a State, another institution or an enterprise, the Commission can initiate proceedings that may culminate in the matter being referred to the Court of Justice.



Court of Justice

Place of work

Luxembourg

Membership

Fifteen Judges and nine Advocates-General appointed by agreement among the governments of the Member States for a renewable term of six years. Members of the Court are guaranteed independence from the Member States.

The Judges elect the President of the Court from among their number for a term of three years.

Function

The Court of Justice has broad jurisdiction enabling it to enforce the application of Community law and to deliver uniform interpretations (national courts may ask the Court for preliminary rulings).

In its rulings, the Court of Justice is helping to build up a consistent body of European case-law applicable to all Community institutions, Member States, national courts, and individuals.

The Court of Justice is assisted by the Court of First Instance made up of 15 Judges appointed by the Member States for the same renewable term of office. This Court has jurisdiction to deal with all actions brought by individuals and companies against decisions of the Community institutions and agencies.

Do not confuse

the Court of Justice of the European Communities with the European Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice.

European Court of Human Rights

Headquarters Strasbourg

Function Council of Europe body responsible for ruling on infringements of the European Convention on Human Rights

International Court of Justice

Headquarters The Hague

Function United Nations body responsible for the peaceful settlement of differences between member States of the United Nations



European Court of Auditors

Place of work

Luxembourg

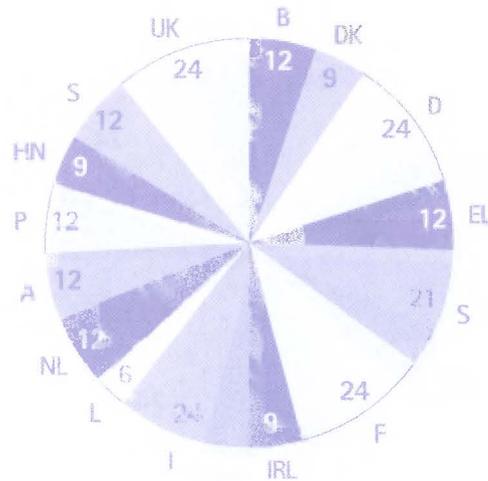
Membership

Fifteen members, one for each Member State, appointed for a six-year term after consulting the European Parliament.

Function

- To assist the budgetary authorities (especially the European Parliament)
- To carry out ongoing auditing of Community accounts and draw up an annual report. The Court audits the legality and regularity as well as the sound financial management of Community resources.





Economic and Social Committee

Place of work

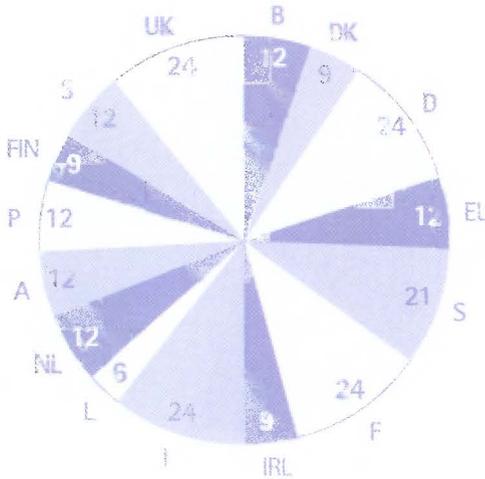
Brussels

Membership

Advisory and consultative body composed of 222 members appointed for a term of four years by unanimous decision of the Council. The number of members by State is the following: Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom 24 each; Spain 21; Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Austria 12 each; Denmark, Finland and Ireland 9 each; Luxembourg 6. The Economic and Social Committee represents employers, workers and various interest groups, such as farmers and consumers.

Function

The Commission and the Council consult the Economic and Social Committee on a number of economic and social proposals. Since 1974, it has been authorized to deliver opinions on its own initiative.



Committee of the Regions

Place of work

Brussels

Membership

There are 222 members comprising: Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom 24 each; Spain 21; Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Austria 12 each; Denmark, Finland and Ireland 9 each; Luxembourg 6.

As regional presidents, mayors or leaders of cities and county councils, the members are elected officials from the levels of government closest to the citizen; the term of office is four years.

Function

The Committee of the Regions plays an important consultative role in a variety of matters that concern local and regional authorities directly. The Treaty on European Union requires the Committee to be consulted on matters relating to trans-European networks, public health, education, youth, culture, and economic and social cohesion. It can also take the initiative and give its opinion on other policy matters that affect cities and regions directly. From its first session in March 1994, the Committee has emerged as the guardian of the principle of subsidiarity.



European Investment Bank

Place of work

Luxembourg

Membership

The 15 Member States.

Function

The EIB is the European Union's financing institution which promotes the balanced economic development and integration of the Community by granting loans and giving guarantees.

Do not confuse

the European Investment Bank with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

EBRD

Headquarters	London
Members	Forty-two countries and organizations, including the European Union and each of the Member States, which together hold 51% of the capital.
Function	To promote the economic recovery of Central and East European countries and their transition to a market economy.

3. The agencies

In 1994, the Council of the European Union set up the following autonomous agencies:

- European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (London);
- European Training Foundation (Turin);
- European Environment Agency (Copenhagen);
- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (Lisbon);
- Translation Centre for bodies of the Union (Luxembourg);
- European Agency for Health and Safety at Work (Bilbao);
- Community Plant Variety Office (Brussels);
- Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (trade marks, designs and models) (Alicante);
- Office for Veterinary and Plant-Health Inspection and Control (Ireland);
- European Energy Charter Secretariat.

Other agencies were incorporated into existing structures:

- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin);
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (Thessaloniki).

Data banks



The European Union is one of the world's largest data bank producers. With the aim of placing information within everyone's reach, it has developed more than 50 data banks accessible to the public.

These data banks cover practically all areas of Community action, ranging from agriculture to new technologies, from training to the environment.

Some of the EU electronic information products are free of charge and some must be paid for; this is due more to the different types of information accessible than to the different media.

- **For free-of-charge information, the access point will provide the conditions and the details as well as the different ways of accessing.**
- **For information which must be paid for, the data banks can be accessed in two main ways:**

1. ON-LINE

- Via the official gateway network.

National gateway agents provide access to a complete line of important EU on-line databases and offer their users related administrative and user-support services.

- Via licence-holders.

2. OFF-LINE

A distribution network is responsible for the commercialization of off-line products.

Alphabetical list of Community data banks

ABEL

Document delivery of Official Journal L and C series.
Access on-line, against payment.

AGREP

Permanent inventory of agricultural research projects in the European Union.
Access on-line, against payment.

APC

Commission preparatory acts. APC is a database which monitors Commission proposals and communications.
Access on-line, against payment.

BACH

Harmonized company accounts. BACH contains statistical data on aggregate company accounts.
Access off-line (diskette), against payment.

CCL-Train

Common command language training database.
Information source enabling users to become familiar with on-line bibliographic information, retrieval sciences and the common command language.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

CELEX

Communitatis Europaeae Lex.
The computerized interinstitutional documentation system for Community law.
Access on-line, against payment.

Comext

Intra and extra-European Union trade. This is the database for statistics on the European Union's external trade and trade between the Member States.
Access on-line/off-line, against payment.

Cordis

Community research and development information service. This provides information on all research and technological development activities of the European Union.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

ECDIN

Environmental chemicals data and information network.

Database containing factual information on chemical products that have an impact on the environment.

Access on-line and off-line, against payment.

ECHO News

ECHO facts for users' archive and I'M News archive.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

ECLAS

European Commission library automated system.

Databank of the central library of the Commission containing bibliographical references covering all aspects of European integration.

Access on-line, against payment.

ECU

Latest daily ecu rates in the main currencies as well as the rates of these currencies in ecus.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

EMIRE

The EMIRE database is the on-line version of the European employment and industrial relations glossaries.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

Epistel

European Parliament press information system. Epistel was designed to disseminate information on the Parliament's work.

Access on-line, against payment. Free of charge for accredited journalists.

Epoque

European Parliament on-line query system and documentary database.
Access on-line, free of charge, via the European Parliament.

Eurhistar

European historical archives.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

Euristote

Academic research on European integration. This data bank provides information on theses and studies, conducted since 1950, covering various aspects of European integration.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

Eurocron

General European Union statistics. It contains statistical data covering the main sectors of the economy in the Member States.
Access on-line, against payment.

Eurodicautom

Terminological database containing scientific and technical terms, and acronyms and abbreviations, with their meaning.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

Eurofarm CD-ROM

Statistics on the structure of agricultural holdings.
Access off-line on CD-ROM, against payment.

Eurolib-Per

Collective catalogue of periodicals.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

HTCOR-DB

High-temperature corrosion database.
Access off-line, against payment.

HTM-DB

High-temperature materials database.
Access off-line, against payment.

I&T Magazine

Industry, telecommunications and information market.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

I'M Guide

Information market guide which gives users free access on information on services offered within the European information services market.

Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

Info 92

European internal market and its social dimension. Info 92 is a system of information which follows up European Union legislation and its effects on everyday life.

Access on-line, against payment.

luclid

Classification and evaluation of existing substances.

Access: data on CD-ROM obtainable free of charge on request.

New Cronos

Macroeconomics statistical database.

Access on-line/off-line, against payment.

OIL

Weekly oil bulletin.

Access on-line, against payment.

OVIDE

Information and communication service for the priority use of Members, officials and agents of the European Parliament.

Access on-line, free of charge.

Panorama CD-ROM

Panorama of European Union industry.

Access off-line on CD-ROM, against payment.

RAPID

Up-to-date information on European Union activities. RAPID gives access to press releases and information from the Spokesman's Service of the European Commission and from other sources.
Access on-line, against payment.

REGIO

Eurostat's database for regional statistics, covering also the main aspects of economic and social life in the Community.
Access on-line, against payment.

REM

Radioactivity environmental monitoring.
Access on-line, free of charge, via the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Ispra.

SCAD

Community documentation access system.
Access on-line, against payment.

Sesame

Documentary database containing descriptions of research, development and technology projects in the energy sector.
Access on-line, against payment.

TED

Tenders electronic daily.
Public calls for tender from the European Union Member States, ACP countries, associated and non-associated countries, Japan and the United States.
Access on-line, against payment.

Thesauri

Analytical directory of structured vocabularies (thesauri) for information retrieval.
Access on-line, free of charge, via ECHO.

TIDE

The technology initiative for disabled and elderly people database contains professional contacts in the field of assistive technology. Access: distribution on floppy disk, through subscription scheme.

Information:

ECHO

European Commission host organization

Boîte postal 2373

L-1023 Luxembourg

Tel. (352) 40 11 62 200

Fax (352) 40 11 62 234

Eurobases (EUR-OP)

2, rue Mercier

L-2985 Luxembourg

Tel. (352) 29 29 42 053

Fax (352) 29 29 42 025

For the off-line products distribution network contact:

Office for Official Publications of the

European Communities (EUR-OP)

Tel. (352) 29 29 42 564/017

Fax (352) 29 29 42 027

The European Union on Internet

Europa, the main European Union server, offers general information on the Union's goals and policies.

<http://europa.eu.int>

Annex 1

The guiden stars of town-twinning

Prize of the European Commission

List of prize-winning towns, 1993–96

Aalborg (DK), 1995	Braunfels (D), 1996
Abrantes (P), 1994	Brignoles (F), 1995
Adamus (RO), 1995	Brunico (I), 1995
Albertslund (DK), 1996	Bucine (I), 1993
Aldeia Viçosa (P), 1994	Bundoran (IRL), 1993
Altea (E), 1993	Calcinaia (I), 1993
Ansião (P), 1994	Carcaixent (E), 1996
Arnedo (E), 1994	Cashel (IRL), 1993
Aue (D), 1995	Castillon-la-Bataille (F), 1994
Autun (F), 1995	Cattolica (I), 1995
Bacainti (RO), 1993	Chalon-sur-Saône (F), 1995
Bagnols-sur-Cèze (F), 1996	Cisse (F), 1993
Barcelos (P), 1994	Città della Pieve (I), 1995
Baunatal (D), 1994	Coventry (UK), 1993
Bellagio (I), 1993	Crucea (RO), 1994
Bertrange (L), 1996	Cumnock and Doon Valley (UK), 1993
Bièvre (B), 1993	Denzlingen (D), 1995
Bitterfeld (D), 1994	Desborough (UK), 1993
Blatná (CZ), 1996	Dunfermline (UK), 1993
Blyth Valley (UK), 1995	East Grinstead (UK), 1995
Boqueho (F), 1993	Eeklo (B), 1996
Borken (D), 1996	Episkopi (EL), 1994
Bourg-de-Péage (F), 1995	Erbach (D), 1994
Bovenden (D), 1995	

- Esch (NL), 1993
Eschborn (D), 1995
Eschweiler (D), 1996
Faches Thumesnil (F), 1995
Feltre (I), 1996
Ferrara (I), 1993
Gap (F), 1993
Gdynia (PL), 1995
Gourin (F), 1993
Granville (F), 1993
Groß Gerau (D), 1995
Guarda (P), 1996
Gubbio (I), 1994
Guichen (F), 1995
Halluin (F), 1994
Hechingen (D), 1993
Hepstedt (D), 1993
Hereford (UK), 1994
Hodonin (CZ), 1995
Holmegård (DK), 1993
Holstebro (DK), 1993
Houffalize (B), 1993
Huescar (E), 1994
Huntingdon (UK), 1994
Ingelheim am Rhein (D), 1995
Joué les Tours (F), 1993
Kelkheim (D), 1996
Kiel (D), 1995
Kiskunfélegyháza (HU), 1996
Klagenfurt (A), 1996
Kočevje (SI), 1994
Kolding (DK), 1994
Kolindros (EL), 1993
Köthen (D), 1996
Kötzing (D), 1993
Lahti (FIN), 1996
Lastra a Signa (I), 1996
Logrono (E), 1993
Lora del Río (E), 1994
Lorca (E), 1996
Lübbenau (D), 1994
Meerssen (NL), 1993
Milevsko (CZ), 1995
Mindelheim (D), 1995
Miranda de Ebro (E), 1994
Mohács (HU), 1996
Möln dal (S), 1996
Montabaur (D), 1995
Montgeron (F), 1995
Naoussa (EL), 1995
Nenagh (IRL), 1995
Newbury (UK), 1996
Niederanven (L), 1993
North Hykeham (UK), 1995
North Tyneside (UK), 1994
Ocaña (E), 1993
Oer Erkenschwick (D), 1994
Olsztyn (PL), 1996
Parthenay (F), 1994
Patras (EL), 1993
Pinerolo (I), 1993
Plymouth (UK), 1995
Póvoa de Varzim (P), 1995
Preveza (EL), 1993
Randers (DK), 1996
Rendsburg (D), 1994
Ricany (CZ), 1996
Rovaniemi (FIN), 1996

- Rush (IRL), 1993
 Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer (F), 1995
 Saint-Étienne (F), 1993
 Saint-Fons (F), 1996
 Saint Mars d'Egrenne (F), 1994
 Salon-de-Provence (F), 1994
 Salvaterra de Magos (P), 1996
 Samuel (P), 1993
 San Polo d'Enza (I), 1993
 Santa Fe (E), 1994
 Santa Maria da Feira (P), 1993
 Santa Maria Nuova (I), 1996
 Sant Feliu de Guixols (E), 1995
 Sargé-lès-le Mans (F), 1996
 Schwaz (A), 1995
 Sesimbra (P), 1993
 Sherborne (UK), 1993
 Siemianowice Slaskie (PL), 1996
 Skerries (IRL), 1995
 Solingen (D), 1995
 St Neots (UK), 1995
 Stevenage (UK), 1995
 Stolberg (D — Rheinland), 1995
 Stolberg (D — Harz), 1995
 Szamotuly (PL), 1995
 Szentendre (HU), 1994
 Tielt (B), 1995
 Tipperary (IRL), 1994
 Tonnerre (F), 1995
 Totnes (UK), 1994
 Traunstein (D), 1993
 Troisvierges (L), 1993
 Vacha (D), 1996
 Valkenswaard (NL), 1996
 Västerås (S), 1996
 Verbania (I), 1995
 Vichy (F), 1993
 Viernau (D), 1995
 Vierzon (F), 1994
 Vilanova del Camí (E), 1993
 Villafranca de los Barros (E), 1995
 Vire (F), 1994
 Watrelos (F), 1996
 Weinstadt (D), 1994
 Wertheim (D), 1994
 Wilhelmshaven (D), 1993
 Wuppertal (D), 1993
 Zoersel (B), 1994

Annex 2

The form of words for the oath which the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) suggests that its members use in their twinning ceremonies is set out below. Whatever version is eventually used must make clear that European unification is the primary aim of, and reason for, the twinning.

The twinning oath

We, the mayors of...,

freely elected by vote of our fellow citizens,

confident that we are responding to the deeply felt aspirations and real needs of our townspeople,

aware that our age-old urban communities were the cradle of Western civilization and that the spirit of freedom first took root in the freedoms they contrived to win,

believing that the work of history must be carried forward in a larger world, but that this world can only be on a truly human scale if its people live their lives freely in free towns and cities,

on this day, give
a solemn pledge

to maintain permanent ties between the town councils of our two communities, to foster exchanges between their inhabitants in every area of life so as to develop a living sense of European kinship through better mutual understanding,

and to join forces to help secure, to the utmost of our abilities, a successful outcome to this vital venture of peace and prosperity: European Union.

Annex 3

Organization structure of the European Commission

Each Community institution has its own particular role to play and its own structure. Because it has been given the widest responsibilities, the Commission is by far the largest of the Community's institutions.

At the political level, there are 20 Commissioners who form the College of the Commission which takes its decisions collectively. The College is headed by a President, and at present there are two Vice-Presidents. Like a national minister, each Commissioner has special responsibility for some part of the institution's work, and for the services dealing with these areas of responsibility.

The administrative structure of the Commission reflects this division of responsibilities. The Directorates-General are each specialized in a certain area and are organized along similar lines to national government departments.

The Commission's organizational chart is as follows:

Secretariat-General of the Commission

Forward Studies Unit

Inspectorate-General

Legal Service

Spokesman's Service

Joint Interpreting and Conference Service

Statistical Office

Translation Service

Informatics Directorate

Security Office

Directorates-General

- DG I External Relations: Commercial policy and relations with North America, the Far East, Australia and New Zealand
- DG IA External Relations: Europe and the newly independent States, common foreign and security policy and external missions
- DG IB External Relations: Southern Mediterranean, Middle East, Latin America, South and South-East Asia and North-South Cooperation
- DG II Economic and Financial Affairs
- DG III Industry
- DG IV Competition
- DG V Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs
- DG VI Agriculture
- DG VII Transport
- DG VIII Development (external relations and development cooperation with the ACP countries; Lomé Convention)
- DG IX Personnel and Administration
- DG X Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media
- DG XI Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection
- DG XII Science, Research and Development
Joint Research Centre
- DG XIII Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research
- DG XIV Fisheries
- DG XV Internal Market and Financial Services

DG XVI Regional Policy and Cohesion

DG XVII Energy

DG XIX Budgets

DG XX Financial Control

DG XXI Customs and Indirect Taxation

DG XXII Education, Training and Youth

DG XXIII Enterprise Policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Cooperatives

DG XXIV Consumer Policy Service

European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)

Euratom Supply Agency

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

The Commission's address is:

in Belgium:

Rue de la Loi /Wetstraat 200

B-1049 Brussels

Tel. (32-2) 299 11 11

in Luxembourg:

Bâtiment Jean Monnet

Rue Alcide De Gasperi

L-2920 Luxembourg

Tel. (352) 4301 1

Annex 4

Useful addresses

Offices of the European Commission in the Member States

Belgique/België

Rue Archimède/
Archimedesstraat 73
B-1040 Brussels
Tel. (32-2) 295 38 44
Fax (32-2) 295 01 66

München

Erhardtstraße 27
D-80331 München
Tel. (49-89) 202 10 11
Fax (49-89) 202 10 15

Danmark

Højbrohus, Østergade 61
Postbox 144
DK-1004 København K
Tel. (45-33) 14 41 40
Fax (45-33) 11 12 03

Ελλάδα/Ellada

2, Vassilissis Sofias
PO Box 11002
GR-10674 Athina
Tel. (30-1) 725 10 00
Fax (30-1) 724 46 20

Deutschland

Bonn
Zitelmannstraße 22
D-53113 Bonn
Tel. (49-228) 530 090
Fax (49-228) 530 09 50/530 09 12

España

Madrid
Paseo de la Castellana, 46
E-28046 Madrid
Tel. (34-1) 431 57 11
Fax (34-1) 576 03 87

Berlin

Kurfürstendamm 102
D-10711 Berlin
Tel. (49-30) 896 09 30
Fax (49-30) 892 20 59

Barcelona

Avenida Diagonal 407bis, Planta 18
E-08008 Barcelona
Tel. (34-3) 415 81 77
Fax (34-3) 415 63 11

France

Paris

288, boulevard Saint-Germain
 F-75007 Paris
 Tel. (33) 140 63 38 00
 Fax (33) 145 56 94 17/18/19

Marseille

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