FINAL REPORT ON UPDATING THE REGIONAL AUTHORITY INDEX (RAI) FOR FORTY-FIVE COUNTRIES (2010-2016)
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
Directorate B - Policy
Unit B1 - Policy Development and Economic Analysis

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FINAL REPORT ON UPDATING THE REGIONAL AUTHORITY INDEX (RAI) FOR FORTY-FIVE COUNTRIES (2010-2016)
Abstract

This is the final report of the project entitled “Updating, improving and expanding the Regional Authority Index for 43 democracies 1950-2016.” The project was funded by the European Commission (tender: 2016.CE.16.BAT.079). This report discusses the main results of the project and presents country profiles updates for forty-five countries. These profiles discuss reforms since 2010 that have affected regions and regional tiers. Two datasets (excel files) accompany this final report: one with scores at the country level, and one with scores at the regional level.

Résumé


Zusammenfassung


Disclaimer

The information and views set out in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission’s behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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Executive Summary

This is the final report of the project entitled “Updating, improving and expanding the Regional Authority Index for 43 democracies 1950-2016.” The project was funded by the European Commission (tender: 2016.CE.16.BAT.079). This report discusses the results of the project and presents country profiles updates for forty-five countries. Each update country profile update lists the primary and secondary sources which have been consulted to evaluate the recent reforms.

Two datasets (excel files) accompany this interim report: one with scores at the country level, and one with scores at the regional level. The datasets provide a breakdown of the scoring 1) for each of the ten dimensions, and 2) by tier or region (when regions have a special statute or where there is institutional asymmetry). The scores run from 1950 (or when a region or regional tier was established) until and including 2016.

If you use the 1950-2010 data, please cite the following source:


The results of the project are discussed according to the three objectives of the project. First, we conducted an update of the coding of regional authority in forty-five OECD and European countries from 2010 up to and including 2016. There were no reforms affecting regional authority index scores in seventeen countries and although many reforms have taken place in these countries, they do not affect their coding. We count a total of thirty-four reforms in twenty-eight countries. Regional tiers were abolished in seven countries whereas nine countries introduced ten new regional tiers. Nine out of these ten newly introduced regional tiers concern economic development regions. Seven reforms decreased (or centralised) autonomy, and ten reforms increased (or decentralised) autonomy.

The second objective of this project was to put the scores for 1950-2010 to close scrutiny when assessing new sources. Previously published scores are only revised when there is a clear coding error. We have found four coding errors which we were able to identify because we have access to new primary and secondary sources.

The third objective was to explore an expansion of the measurement. We now also include metropolitan and urban governance which combines competences across several local and upper-local units for urbanized areas. We code nineteen metropolitan and urban governance government tiers in fourteen countries which fulfill the criteria for regional government.
Résumé Exécutif


Deux ensembles de données (fichiers Excel) accompagnent ce rapport intermédiaire: l'un avec des résultats au niveau national, et l'autre avec des résultats au niveau régional. Les ensembles de données fournissent une ventilation de la notation 1) pour chacune des dix dimensions, et 2) par niveau ou région (lorsque les régions ont une loi spéciale ou lorsqu'il existe une asymétrie institutionnelle). Les résultats vont de 1950 (ou quand un niveau régional ou régional a été établi) jusqu'en 2016 inclus.

Si vous utilisez les données 1950-2010, veuillez citer la source suivante:


Le deuxième objectif de ce projet était de soumettre les scores de 1950-2010 à un examen minutieux lors de l'évaluation de nouvelles sources. Les scores publiés antérieurement ne sont révisés que lorsqu'il y a une erreur de codage claire. Nous avons trouvé quatre erreurs de codage que nous avons pu identifier, grâce à notre accès à de nouvelles sources primaires et secondaires.

Le troisième objectif était d'explorer une expansion de la mesure. Nous incluons également la gouvernance métropolitaine et urbaine qui combine les compétences de plusieurs unités locales et locales pour les zones urbanisées. Nous avons codés dix-neuf niveaux de gouvernement de gouvernance métropolitaine et urbaine dans quatorze pays qui répondent aux critères du gouvernement régional.
Kurzfassung


Wenn Sie die Daten für 1950-2010 verwenden, geben Sie bitte die folgende Quelle an:


Das zweite Ziel dieses Projekts bestand darin, bei der Bewertung neuer Quellen die Ergebnisse für 1950-2010 genau zu prüfen. Zuvor veröffentlichte Punkten werden nur dann überarbeitet, wenn ein eindeutiger Kodierungsfehler vorliegt. Wir haben vier Kodierungsfehler gefunden, die wir identifizieren konnten, weil wir Zugang zu neuen primären und sekundären Quellen haben.

Das dritte Ziel war es, eine Erweiterung der Messung zu untersuchen. Wir inkludieren jetzt auch ‘metropolitan and urban governance’, die Kompetenzen für Gemeinde und Regionen kombinieren. Wir kodieren neunzehn ‘metropolitan and urban governments’ in vierzehn Ländern, die die Kriterien für die regionale Regierung erfüllen.
Introduction

This is the final report of the project entitled “Updating, improving and expanding the Regional Authority Index for 43 democracies 1950-2016.” The project was funded by the European Commission (tender: 2016.CE.16.BAT.079). This report discusses the results of the project and presents country profiles updates for forty-five countries. These profiles discuss reforms since 2010 that have affected regions and regional tiers. The reader is advised to consult the original country profiles available in Hooghe et al. (2016) for a comprehensive coding. The update profiles should be read alongside the original country profiles while the scores for regions and regional tiers which are not affected by recent reforms are extended to 2016. Each update country profile update lists the primary and secondary sources which have been consulted to evaluate the recent reforms.

Two datasets (excel files) accompany this interim report: one with scores at the country level, and one with scores at the regional level. The datasets provide a breakdown of the scoring 1) for each of the ten dimensions, and 2) by tier or region (when regions have a special statute or where there is institutional asymmetry). The scores run from 1950 (or when a region or regional tier was established) until and including 2016.

If you use the 1950-2010 data, please cite the following source:


Results

The results of the project will be discussed along the three objectives of the project. First, an update of the coding of regional authority in forty-five OECD and European countries from 2010 up to and including 2016. A second objective was to detect and correct errors in Regional Authority Index scores for 1950 until 2010. The third objective was to explore an expansion of the measurement. We now also include metropolitan and urban governance.

1. Update for 2010-2016

Detail on the reforms are presented in the country update files presented below. There were no reforms affecting regional authority index scores in seventeen countries: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Many reforms have taken place in these countries but these do not affect their coding. For example, between 2010 and 2017, län in Sweden assumed competences in economic development (including EU Structural Funds), regional transport, and cultural institutions, which were previously the responsibility of länsstyrelser. This reform does not affect the score on policy scope which remains 2. In the country update files, we also discuss reforms which do not have an impact on the coding.
We count a total of thirty-four reforms. Regional tiers were abolished in seven countries whereas nine countries introduced ten new regional tiers. Tables 1 and 2 provide a snapshot overview of the disestablished and introduced regional tiers. Table 3 summarizes the thirteen reforms affecting existing regional tiers or regions. For the newly established regional tiers we also looked at the time period 2006-2010. These regional tiers were recently established and not many primary and secondary sources were available when we wrote the previous update (Hooghe et al. 2016). Therefore, for this update, we have put the scores of these recent regional tiers to close scrutiny against new primary and secondary sources.

Five out of seven countries replaced one regional tier for another regional tier. Table 2 lists these new regional tiers for Greece and Ireland. Table 4 on metropolitan and urban governance provides further detail for Canada, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The abolished regional tiers were not powerful. The maximum RAI-score was below 5 except for Greek nomoi which RAI-score was 9 in 2010.

Table 1. Abolished regional tiers of government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Conferences regionals des élus</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Regierungsbezirke in Saxony</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Nomoi</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Tervezéi-statisztikai régiók</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Regional authorities</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Distritos</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Regions in England</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nine out of ten newly introduced regional tiers concern economic development regions (Table 2). It is safe to assume that these regional tiers are the result of EU structural policy which requires (candidate) member states to have regions that are capable to absorb and spend EU-subsidies. It is therefore not surprising that these new regional tiers can mainly be found in Central and Eastern European countries. The counties in Ireland are an exception. Ireland merged some counties and introduced a two-tier sub-national government structure which includes counties at the upper local level and municipal districts at the lower local level. As a result, Irish counties meet the criteria for regional government as of 2014.

Table 2. Newly introduced regional tiers of government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Oblasti</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Regiony soudržnosti</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Apokentroménes dioikiseis</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Regional assemblies</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Counties</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Plānošanas regioni</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Regiono plėtros tarybos</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Planski ryegioni</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Regionalni razvojni saveti</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Kalkunna ajanslari</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seven reforms decreased (or centralised) autonomy, and ten reforms increased (or decentralised) autonomy. A break down by dimension is given below. Sixteen reforms affected self-rule and only one reform concerned shared rule. Given the global fiscal crisis of 2008, it is not surprising that all seven reforms that decreased autonomy concern finances (fiscal and borrowing autonomy), expenditures (policy scope), or representation (abolishment of direct elections).

Table 3. Number of reforms per dimension of regional authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Self-rule</th>
<th>Shared rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional depth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy scope</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal autonomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing autonomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the table does not include four self-government agreements concluded with native people in Canada.

2. Revision of the scores 1950-2010

The second objective of this project was to put the scores for 1950-2010 to close scrutiny when assessing new sources. Previously published scores are only revised when there is a clear coding error. The Regional Authority Index team identifies three common sources of ‘gray cases’, that is cases whereby coding is not immediately obvious (Hooghe et al. 2016: 33). First, there may be insufficient or ambiguous information because of a lack of sources. Second, observations may fall in-between coding categories even when there is abundant information. Third, there may be disagreement among sources, coders, and experts. Applying a concept is an inferential process that is subject to error and hence to disagreement. We have found four coding errors which we were able to identify because we have access to new primary and secondary sources.

- **Belgium**: Brussels Gewest/Région bruxelloise (Brussels) can set the rate of an income tax since 1992 instead of 1995 and Brussels scores 3 on fiscal autonomy as of 1992;
- **Norway**: fylker (counties) can borrow without prior approval from the central government since 2001 instead of 1993 and they score 2 on borrowing autonomy as of 2001;
- **Romania**: the first direct elections for the judete (county) councils were held in 1996 and they score 2 on assembly from 1996 onwards. In 1992, the judete councils were elected by the municipal councils within the judete;
- **Slovakia**: samosprávne kraje (regions) do not need to seek prior approval of central government for taking up debt and they score 2 on borrowing autonomy as of 2002.

More detail on these revisions is provided in the country update profiles at the end of this final report.
3. Expansion: metropolitan and urban government

Metropolitan and urban government combines competences across several local and upper-local units for an urbanized area. Thereby, these government ‘straddle’ in between local and regional government. The RAI-team decided during a workshop held on 17-18 November 2017 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA to include metropolitan and urban government. The team members observed that recent reforms in, for example Italy and Turkey, replaced provincial government by metropolitan cities. Table 4 provides an overview of identified metropolitan and urban government which were not (yet) included in previous versions of the RAI. The nineteen regional tiers and regions listed in Table 4 comply to the criteria for regional government and they have the following in common:

- It is government that is intermediate between the national and the local. This means that there should be a tier of government below the metropolitan or urban tier. This sub-metropolitan or sub-urban tier can consist of councils or assemblies established in city districts or they can be independent municipalities;
- It is multi-purpose and not single- or specific-purpose government. Metropolitan and urban government deliver various types of policies and there is an assembly and executive at the metropolitan or urban city level which decide and implement policy;
- It legally exercises competences and does not solely perform tasks or collaborate on a voluntarily basis. This entails that the competences of metropolitan and urban government are laid down in legislation, either in a specific law or a chapter in a local government law. Often certain areas are obliged to establish a metropolitan or urban governance structure. In addition, the often law specifies that once constituent municipalities decide to establish metropolitan or urban government they must also introduce specific institutions, or they have to exercise particular competences;
- The average of population size across units is 150,000 people or more. For regional government we make an exception for non-standard and differentiated regions. In case of metropolitan and urban government the population size is often far above 150,000 inhabitants;
- When a metropolitan or urban governance arrangement is laid down in national legislation it is in principle applicable to the whole statewide territory but in practice often applied in part of the country.

The previous versions of the Regional Authority Index did not exclude metropolitan and urban government. The measurement explicitly encompasses “metropolitan regions where these perform regional government tasks in urban areas.” (Hooghe et al. 2016: 60). For example, Paris was included in previous versions of the RAI in its capacity as département. It is now listed in Table 4 because Paris exercises additional competences in its capacity as a municipality and Paris scores 2 on policy scope whereas départements score 1 on policy scope. In addition, specific legislation applies only to Paris. All forty-five countries included in this update have been subject to close scrutiny to find out whether metropolitan and urban government can be detected for 1950-2016. The result in table 4 shows that metropolitan and urban government is a recent phenomenon, that is many have been introduced in the 2000s. In addition, those metropolitan and urban governments that were established before the 2000s often were ‘pilots’ in specific areas of a country which did not last longer than twenty to thirty years.
Table 4. Metropolitan and urban government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of regional tier or region</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>FA</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>EX</th>
<th>RAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Brusselse agglomeratie</td>
<td>Brussels conurbation</td>
<td>1971-1989</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Communauté urbaines</td>
<td>Urban communities</td>
<td>1970-2002</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communauté métropolitaine</td>
<td>Metropolitan communities</td>
<td>2006-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Magistrát hlavního města Prahy</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>1993-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Hovedstadsrådet</td>
<td>Metropolitan council</td>
<td>1974-1989</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Pääkaupunkiseudun yhteistyövaltuuskunta</td>
<td>Helsinki Metropolitan Area</td>
<td>1974-2010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>1968-2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communauté urbaines</td>
<td>Urban communities</td>
<td>1967-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Métropoles</td>
<td>Metropolis</td>
<td>2012-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Regionalverband Ruhr</td>
<td>Regional association Ruhr</td>
<td>2004-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Città metropolitana</td>
<td>Metropolitan cities</td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond</td>
<td>Public Authority Rijnmond</td>
<td>1965-1985</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Área Metropolitana Lisboa/Porto</td>
<td>Metropolitan areas of Lisbon/Porto</td>
<td>1991-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comunidades urbanas</td>
<td>Urban communities</td>
<td>2004-2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comunidades intermunicipales</td>
<td>Inter-municipal communities</td>
<td>2009-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>București</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>1991-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Área Metropolitana de Barcelona</td>
<td>Metropolitan area of Barcelona</td>
<td>2010-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Büyükşehir belediyeleri</td>
<td>Metropolitan municipalities</td>
<td>2005-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Combined authorities</td>
<td>Combined authorities</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: ID = institutional depth; PS = policy scope; FA = fiscal autonomy; BA = borrowing autonomy; AS = assembly; EX = executive; RAI = Regional Authority Index. See Table 5 for an explanation of the indicators.
Methodology

The Regional Authority Index (RAI) evaluates individual levels of government (or individual regions in asymmetric arrangements) on an annual basis across ten dimensions of regional authority. A mix of primary sources (constitutions, legislation, statutes), secondary literature, and consultation of country experts are employed to achieve reliable and valid estimates. The coding scheme and the method have proven successful — and withstood the test of academic scrutiny — for estimates of regional authority in 81 democracies for 1950-2010 (Hooghe, Marks and Schakel 2008, 2010; Hooghe et al. 2016). The same methodology is applied to the update from 2010 to 2016.

The Regional Authority Index is grounded in a well-established set of concepts. Authority is defined as legitimate power, that is, power recognized as binding because it is derived from accepted principles of governance (Dahl 1968). Formal authority is defined as authority exercised in relation to explicit rules, usually written in constitutions, legislation, treaties or statutes. A regional government has some degree of authority, with respect to some territorial jurisdiction, over certain actions. The proposed instrument therefore specifies: (A) the territory over which a government exercises authority; (B) the depth of that authority; and (C) the spheres of action over which it exercises authority.

- With respect to territorial scope of authority (A), a government may exercise authority in its own jurisdiction or co-exercise authority over a larger jurisdiction in which it is part. This is the distinction between self-rule and shared rule (Elazar 1987). The expression of authority in self-rule, that is rule over those within the regional territory, is fundamentally different from that in shared rule, that is rule in the country as a whole.

- With respect to depth of authority (B), one needs to estimate the degree to which a government has an independent legislative, fiscal, executive organization, the conditions under which it can act unilaterally, and its capacity to rule when opposed by the national government.

- With respect to spheres of action (C), a regional or international government can have authority over a smaller or broader range of policies. Authority over taxation and borrowing, and over constitutional reform are especially important.

The coding scheme presented in the table below sets out the ten dimensions that constitute the latent variable of regional government. Readers interested in the measurement theory, cross-validation, and decisions on operationalization are referred to chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Hooghe et al. (2016). These chapters also engage the following questions: a) What is authority and how might it be disaggregated into discrete dimensions? b) How can these dimensions be operationalized unambiguously? c) What rules can be specified to code governments on these dimensions? d) What ambiguities arise and how might one sensitively adjudicate them? e) How robust are the resulting estimates to the assumptions that generate them? f) How might one evaluate systematic and random error in the estimates?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Ten dimensions of authority for regional government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF RULE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority exercised by a regional government over those living in its territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional depth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which a regional government is autonomous rather than deconcentrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy scope</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The range of policies for which a regional government is responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal autonomy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which a regional government can independently tax its population</td>
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Albania

A territorial and administrative reform implemented in July 2014 decreased the number of local government units from 373 to 61 (Law No. 115/2014; Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe 2017: 40-50). The reform did not affect Albania’s regional tier of governance which consists of twelve qarku (regions) (Sherifi 2016; Xhafa and Yzeiri 2015). Qarks’ main tasks are the development and implementation of regional policy and they can implement competences delegated to them by municipalities and communes (Law No. 8652/2000, Art. 13; Totoni and Frasheri 2016). Qarku are almost entirely dependent on intergovernmental grants from local and central government and they are not allowed to borrow (Council of Europe 2006, 2013; Law No. 8652/2000, Art. 18; Totoni and Frasheri 2016). The regional council consists of delegates from the communes and municipalities and mayors and chairmen of communal councils who are ex officio members (Law No. 8652/2000, Arts. 6 and 49). The head and the board of the regional council are elected from among regional councilors and they are responsible for executing the council decisions (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 8652/2000, Arts. 58-60). Alongside the regions there are twelve districts which coordinate the activities of central government agencies which are headed by a centrally appointed prefect (Law No. 8927/2002). Officially, there is no connection between the regions and the districts but, in practice, prefects appear to exercise unlimited power and frequently interfere in the affairs of regional councils (Council of Europe 2006, 2013; Totoni and Frasheri 2016).

Qarku scores remain 1 on institutional depth and 1 on assembly as of 2000.

Co-existing alongside the qarku are council of territorial regulations (Law No. 10119/2009) which are involved in spatial development on the territory of regions but they do so under strict supervision of the National Territorial Planning Council led by the Prime Minister and composed of central government officials (Council of Europe 2013).

Until 2015, the local government tier consisted of 65 urban municipalities (bashkia), 308 communes (komuna), and Tirana, the capital of Albania, which has about 550,000 inhabitants (19.6 per cent of the total population). Tirana has its own law and is the only urban municipality which is further sub-divided into eleven municipal units, each having its own council and head of council (Law No. 8654/2000, Art. 3). Tirana has no special authority compared to other municipalities and communes and its status is similar to the status of an ordinary municipality. A reform implemented after the local council elections of June 2015 merged 308 communes and 65 municipalities into 61 municipalities but the special law for Tirana has been kept (Law No. 115/2014; Totoni and Frasheri 2016).

Tirana does not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references


Australia

In December 2013, the council of Australian governments (COAG) – which includes the prime minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers, and the president of the Australian local government association (ALGA) – agreed to re-organize more than forty Commonwealth-state ministerial councils and forums into eight ministerial councils.1 The COAG also introduced a framework for these intergovernmental meetings (Australian Government 2016; Phillimore and Harwood 2015). The ministerial eight councils make decisions on the basis of consensus and in absence of a consensus the council will make decisions on the basis of a majority of members. In that case, states forming the minority are not bound to implement the decisions that have been made. Councils should meet up twice a year. Since 2006, the premiers and chief ministers of the states and territories often meet in advance to COAG meetings in the Council for the Australian Federation (CAF) (Phillimore and Harwood 2015).

The score on executive control remains 1 for both states and territories.

1 The eight COAG councils are the Council on Federal Financial Relations; Disability Reform Council; Education Council; Energy Council; Health Council; Industry and Skills Council; Law, Crime and Community Safety Council; and the Transport and Infrastructure Council.
Intergovernmental transfers between the Commonwealth and the states and territories were significantly reformed in 2008, which led to the adoption of the Federal Financial Relations Act (Broschek 2014; Fenna and Hollander 2013; Law No. 11/2009). This act regulates intergovernmental transfers and performance indicators through national agreements and specific purpose payments in health care, education, skills and workforce development, disability services, affordable housing, and indigenous reform (Blöchliger and Vammalle 2012: 27-37; Koutsogeorgopoulou and Tuske 2015). As a result, some competences within health and education have been shifted between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to reduce overlap and duplication of services (Davis and Silver 2015). However, not all of the envisaged changes were implemented (Koutsogeorgopoulou and Tuske 2015) and those that did materialize add little to the policy scope for states and territories. In addition, in 2007 the COAG established the COAG Reform Council (CRC) which was tasked with making independent assessments to determine how the Commonwealth, states and territories were progressing against the agreed performance benchmarks. The CRC was abolished in May 2014 (Phillimore and Harwood 2015).

The score on fiscal control remains 2 for both states and territories.

The city of Canberra is the capital of Australia and the city is governed by its own act. The original country profile provides further detail. Until 2011, the powers of a territory were not constitutionally guaranteed and the governor-general could withhold assent or recommend amendments to its proposed laws. A law adopted in October 2011 abolished these powers for the governor-general for both the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (Law No. 166/2011).

The Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory score 3 on institutional depth from 2012 onwards.

The city of Brisbane is the only state capital with its own law. In addition, the city of Brisbane is also the only local authority that has more than one million inhabitants. Almost all other local authorities do not have more than 150,000 inhabitants, including local government authorities in the other state capitals (Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide), which are generally responsible only for the central business districts and inner neighborhoods of those cities. Apart from some additional competences in relation to specific tasks, the city of Brisbane does not enjoy much more autonomy than enjoyed by other local authorities in Queensland (Law Nos. 32/1924, 17/2009 and 23/2010).

Regional reform remains heavily debated, most importantly, future statehood for the Northern Territory and a tax reform which enables states to levy income tax in addition to the payroll tax (Council of Australian Governments 2016).

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2 The National Health Reform Agreement of 2011 (Law No. 9/2011) assigns full funding responsibility for primary health and aged care and public hospital to the Commonwealth whereas the delivery of these services is devolved to local hospital networks established by the states. The National Education Reform Agreement (Council of Australian Governments 2013) made the Commonwealth the main funder for private schools and a supplementary funder for government schools whereas the states are the main funder of government school and provide supplementary funding to non-government schools. States are also responsible for regulation of non-government and government schools but the Commonwealth regulates higher (tertiary) education.
Primary references


Secondary references


Austria

Reforms have been discussed during several rounds since the 1990s but these discussions have not resulted in constitutional amendments or changes in federal laws with constitutional status such as the Finanz-Verfassungsgesetz (Benz 2013; Bußjäger 2014; Council of Europe 2011; Karlhofer and Pallaver 2013). There have been reforms affecting fiscal control and borrowing control for the Länder.
The Finanzausgleichgesetz –which regulates the details of Finanz-Verfassungsgesetz– is negotiated by the finance minister, the nine Land finance ministers, and the representatives of the municipalities before being presented to the Nationalrat (the lower chamber) every four to six years. Subnational governments must be consulted, but have no veto power. The fiscal arrangement of 2008 (Law No. 103/2007) was extended in 2012 and 2015 (Council of Europe 2011; Law Nos. 4/2012 and 17/2015) while reforms were under discussion. The Finanzausgleichgesetz 2017 (Law No. 116/2016) transfers housing subsidies to the Länder and provides special grants to the Länder and municipalities for immigration and structural policy.

The score for Länder on fiscal control remains 1.

A government debt committee (Staatsschuldenausschuss) was set up in 1970 and was transformed into a fiscal advisory council (Fiskalrat) in 2013. The fiscal advisory council makes recommendations on public debt and mainly consists of academic experts. The conference of governors (Landeshauptleutekonferenz) elects one member (out of fifteen), who has no voting rights (Law No. 742/1996, Art. 4.1, and 149/2013, Art. 7).

In order to meet the Maastricht stability criteria for membership in the EMU, all levels of government agreed on a Domestic Stability Pact in 1999 (Law No. 35/2009). The pact stipulated that Länder as a group have to achieve an annual budgetary surplus of 0.75 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) over the period 2001-04, while municipalities as a group must have a balanced budget (Balassone, Franco, and Zotteri 2003; Joumard and Kongsrud 2003). The pact was extended in 2002, 2008 and 2013 (Law Nos. 39/2002, 81/2008, and 30/2013) and the last version stipulates that total debt may not exceed 0.45 percent of GDP at the federal level and the combined debt of the Länder and municipalities may not exceed 0.1 percent of GDP (Law No. 30/2013, Arts. 4 and 6).

The Domestic Stability Pact establishes a consultation mechanism (Konsultationsmechanismus) which obliges the Bund, Länder and municipalities to submit draft laws and regulations and legislative proposals to each other in order to facilitate financial compensation in case a law enacted by one government imposes costs for another government (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 35/1999). The Bund, a Land, and the two organizations representing cities and municipalities (Österreichischen Gemeindebund and the Österreichischen Städtebund) can bring cases before a consultation board (Konsultationsgremium) which can request that the government which enacts legislation that poses costs on another government to financially compensates those costs. The consultation board consists of three members from the federal government, three members from the Länder, and two members who are appointed by the organizations representing cities and municipalities.³ Decisions on cost-sharing are taken by unanimity.

Since 2002, the Domestic Stability Pact contains a sanction mechanism (Sanktionsmechanismus) which stipulates that a conciliation board (Schlichtungsgremium) must be established in case the federal court of auditors (Bundesrechnungshof) notifies a breach of the agreements (Law Nos. 39/2002, Art. 11 and 30/2013, Art. 19). The conciliation

³ The members of the federal government are the Chancellor, the vice-Chancellor, and the Minister of Finance, the members representing the Länder are appointed by the Länder under unanimity but when the concerned legislative proposal is from a Land then the respective Land may appoint three representatives.
board consist of a total of six representatives: two nominated by the federal Ministry of Finance, two nominated by the current and following chair of the Landeshaupleutekonferenz (conference of Land governors), and two nominated by the associations representing municipalities and cities who do not have a vote. The conciliation committee invites the affected Bund or Land to take measures to achieve a balanced budget and in case the Land or Bund does not submit a plan or when the conciliation committee deems the plan not sufficient it can impose a fiscal sanction.

There are no changes in the scores on borrowing control for Länder for 2010-2016. The information above provides some additional detail to the original country profile.

The Constitution grants cities, at its own request, to have their own statute (Stadtverfassung) when they have at least 20,000 inhabitants (Law No. 1/1930, Art. 116). There no differences in legal status between municipalities and ‘statutory cities’ (Statutarstädte) except that cities with their own statute also hold the functions of districts (Bezirke) which are deconcentrated state and Land administration (Council of Europe 2000, 2011). There fifteen Statutarstädte and their average population size is less than 80,000 when Vienna is excluded.

Statutarstädte do not meet with the criteria for regional government.

The capital city of Vienna (Wien) is a combined Land, statutory city, and municipality (Council of Europe 2000, 2011; Law No. 28/1968, Art. 1). The municipal council acts as the Land parliament, the city councilors act as the Land deputies, and the mayor acts as the Landeshauptman. Vienna is subdivided into 23 municipal districts (Gemeindebezirke) which have their own district parliaments (Bezirksvertrtretung) and district chairpersons (Bezirksvorsteher) (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 28/1968, Art. 3).

Vienna (Wien) is coded similarly as a Land.

Primary references


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Secondary references


Council of Europe (2011) Local and regional democracy in Austria. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.


Belgium

A sixth state reform called ‘Vlinderakkoord’ was concluded in 2011 and implemented through legislation in 2012 and 2014. The sixth state reform decentralized competences to the communities and regions, increased fiscal autonomy of the communities and regions, and transformed the Senate of national parliament into an upper chamber which represents communal and regional governments. These reforms affect institutional depth, policy scope and fiscal autonomy on the self-rule dimension and law making on the shared rule dimension.

The sixth state reform significantly deepened the autonomy of both the communities and regions. Brussels and the German community received constitutive autonomy which put them on par with the Flemish and Francophone communities and regions. At same time, constitutive autonomy was extended and communities and regions can legislate, with a two-thirds majority—in Brussels also a majority in both language groups—on matters such as electoral districts, the number of parliamentarians and ministers, the right of parliamentary inquiry, and parliamentary-executive relations (Law No. 204228/2012).

The score for communities and regions on institutional depth remains 3 except for Brussels which scores remains 2 (see details in the full country profile).

The communities received further competences in hospitals, mental care, and justice and they gained full control over child allowances and child care (Law No. 200341/2014; Popelier and Cantillon 2013). In Brussels, these powers have been devolved to the Common Community Commission (Gemeenschappelijke Gemeenschapscommissie; Commission communautaire commune de Bruxelles-Capitale) which is composed of members of the Brussels parliament (Goosens and Cannoot 2015; Law No. 200341/2014, Art. 44). Regions obtained additional competences regarding the labor market, traffic rules and traffic safety and they gained the autonomy to decide on a law on renting and leasing of houses (Law No. 200341/2014).

Immigration and citizenship remains a federal competence hence the score on policy scope for the communities and regions remains a 3.

The broadening of competences of the communities and regions induced a revision in 2014 of the special law on the financing of communities and regions of 1989 (Law No. 203016/2014). Communities receive higher shares from the federal personal income and value-added taxes but they cannot set the base or rate for these taxes. The fiscal reform of 2014 also increased funding for Brussels which is earmarked for additional burdens that Brussels bears in comparison to the other regions with regard to bilingualism, mobility, training, and safety (Goosens and Cannoot 2015; Law No. 203016/2014, Arts 64-66). Since 1995, regions have been able to levy additional taxes or rebates on personal income tax within federally set limits and with the 2014 reform regions gained the power to impose an unlimited surcharge on the personal income tax with the only restriction that the tax must remain progressive (Gérard 2014; Law No. 003016/2014).

The score on fiscal autonomy remains 0 for communities and remains 3 for regions.
The sixth state reform reduced the total number of senators from 71 to 60 and transformed the Senate into a fully territorial chamber whereby 50 seats are allocated to senators who are appointed by and from the parliaments of the communities and regions. The Flemish language group elects 29 senators, the Francophone language group elects 20 senators, and the German language group elects 1 senator. For each of the language groups, the constitution requires a specific number of senators to be elected from the Brussels parliament. The remaining ten senators are co-opted and elected by the Flemish (6 senators) and Francophone (four senators) language groups (Law No. 200153/2014).

At the same time, the reform abolished the requirement of Senate approval for laws on the organization of courts and the adoption of international agreements. However, the Senate remains a strong upper chamber regarding the vertical state structure because of its involvement in the revision of the constitution, the adoption of acts which require a special majority, matters that according to the constitution have to be decided by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the laws regarding the German community (Law No. 200234/2014).

The sixth state reform made communities the unit of representation (L1), whereby the communal governments designate the representatives (L2), who collectively constitute a majority in the Senate (L3) which can considered to have extensive legislative authority (L4). The score on law making remains 2 for communities and 0 for regions

A Brussels Conurbation (Brusselse Agglomeratie) based on 19 municipalities established in 1971 had responsibilities in foremost economic policy: urban development, transport, airports, fire fighters, public health, street cleaning, and refuse collection (Council of Europe 1996, 2014; Law No. 072603/1971, Art. 4). The law foresaw regular direct elections for the council every five years but elections were only held once on 21 November 1971 (Council of Europe 1996). The council became indirectly elected afterwards and the council elected the chair and at least three board members from among its members (Law No. 072603/1971, Arts. 36). The Brussels Conurbation could with prior approval from the federal government set a surtax on provincial taxes and on the property tax and it could borrow with prior approval from the federal government (Council of Europe 1996; Law No. 072603/1971, Arts. 48 and 50). The competences of the Brussels Conurbation were gradually taken over by the Bruxelles-Région-Capitale/Brussel Hoofdstedelijk Gewest when the latter was established in

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5 Special majority acts regulate the borders of the communities, the provinces, the competences of regional bodies, the composition functioning of the Flemish and French parliaments, elections to the communities’ parliaments, the composition and functioning of the Flemish and French Governments, the competences of the communities, provisions concerning Brussels, the constitutional court and conflicts of interests and competences, matters regarding the exercise of competences by the communities in Brussels, the change of national borders, compliance with international or supranational obligations, certain tax regulations, the financing of the Flemish and French communities and regions (C-1831, Arts. 4-5, 39, 115, 117-118, 121, 123, 127-129, 135-137, 141-143, 163, 166, 167, 169, 170, 175, and 177).
6 These matters concern the King (C-1831, Arts. 85, 87, 92, 195, and I).
7 The law also foresaw the establishment of four other metropolitan areas in Antwerp, Charleroi, Gent, and Liége (Law No. 072603/1971, Art. 1) but only the Brussels Conurbation was created and given its own legal personality (Council of Europe 1996, 2006). The five federations of outlying municipalities of the Brussels conurbation (Asse, Halle-Vilvoorde, Rhode-Saint-Genèse, Tervuren, and Zaventem) were abolished from January 1, 1977 (Council of Europe 1996, 2006; Law No. 123003/1975).

Brussels scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive from 1971 until 1988. Brussels scores 3 on fiscal autonomy from 1992-2016.

Since 1989, Brussels is considered to be one of three regions although it has different competences when compared to Flemish and Walloon regions. Further detail on the competences is provided in the original country profile. Brussels houses the parliaments of the federal government, the Francophone (now renamed the Brussels-Wallonie Federation) and Flemish communities and is thereby a triple capital. Even though Brussels is the capital of the Flanders region, Flemish regional laws are not applicable on the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region (Council of Europe 2014). Brussels comprises 19 municipalities, each with their own assembly and mayor (Council of Europe 2002; Law No. 062452/1988).

With the sixth state reform, Brussels has been subject to reforms other than those mentioned above which, however, do not affect its regional authority (Philipps 2015). With the elections of 2014, the electoral district of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde was split into two: Flemish-Brabant (Halle-Vilvoorde and Leuven) and Brussels-Capital (Council of Europe 2014; Law No. 204277/2012). Similarly, the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde judicial district was split into a prosecutor’s office of Brussels and a prosecutor’s office of Halle-Vilvoorde (Council of Europe 2014; Law No. 009297/2012).

Primary references


Secondary references


Bosnia and Herzegovina

The confederation of Bosnia-Herzegovina contains two upper level units or ‘entities’, the Republika Srpska and the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine. There are also cantons (Bosniak kantoni, Croatian županije) in the Federacija whereas Republika Srpska has no intermediate tier (C 1992; C 1994). The confederation was the product of the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 gave Bosnia and Herzegovina its constitution. The autonomy of all regional tiers within the confederation is limited by the international community, which has intervened regularly –through a UN-appointed official– in the internal affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite international pressure for constitutional and regional reform, a lack of compromise and
tensions between the representatives of the three ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) prevents further decentralization reform (Council of Europe 2012, 2016).  

The parliament in the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine established a fiscal coordination body in 2014 which is responsible for proposing fiscal objectives and borrowing ceilings for the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine, the cantons and municipalities (Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe 2017: 54-65). This body includes the entity minister of finance, all cantonal ministers of finance, and a representative of the association of municipalities and cities of the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine who meet twice a year (Law No. 102/2013, Art. 41; International Monetary Fund 2016: 53).

There are no chances in the scores for the entities (Republika Srpska and the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine). The cantons within the Federacija score 1 on borrowing control within the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine from 2014 onwards. The scores for shared rule exercised by the cantons within the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine are not used in calculating the country score for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sarajevo is the capital of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine and Republika Srpska. The constitution of the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine declares the City of Sarajevo to be the capital and grants the city self-government but does not attribute any specific competences to Sarajevo (C 1994, Art. VI.B.1). In practice, Sarajevo Canton exercises all the powers of the City of Sarajevo apart from urban planning (Council of Europe 2012). Mostar, and as of 2014, Bihać, Široki Brijeg, Tuzla, and Zenica also have city status but they do not have specific competences (Law Nos. 49/2006 and 51/2009, Art. 3; Mujakić 2016) and, except for Sarajevo, none of the cities have more than 150,000 inhabitants.

Since 1995, the Republika Srpska has two cities specified by special laws: East Sarajevo (the city of Sarajevo was split during the war) which is de jure the capital of the Republika Srpska and Banja Luka which operates as the de facto capital (Council of Europe 2001, 2012; Law No. 11/1994). Cities exercise the same competences as municipalities but the law establishing the city may divide the competences between the city level institutions and the composite municipalities (Bašić and Bašić 2015; Law No. 101/2004). For example, East Sarajevo exercises competences in transport, tourism, fire-fighting, inspection, and intermunicipal cooperation on behalf of its six constituting municipalities (Council of Europe 2006, 2012). Since 2012, Bijeljina, Doboj, Prijedor, and Trebinje have city status in addition to Banja Luka and East Sarajevo (Mujakić 2016) but none of the cities surpass the population threshold of 150,000 inhabitants.

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9 For example, “on 19 April 2011 some 500 Croats from all levels of the Bosnia and Herzegovina met in Mostar to set up the Croatian National Assembly, which adopted a resolution calling for recognition of equal status for the Croatian people with the other two constituent peoples and reiterating its calls for the creation of a third Entity, while also advocating thorough constitutional reform, also covering the territorial and administrative organisation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Council of Europe 2012: 5). Another example, "Long-standing tensions between Republika Srpska and the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been particularly stimulated in the last years and continuing statements by officials of Republika Srpska calling for secession had been recorded. These statements included considerations over a referendum on the entity's status in 2018” (Council of Europe 2016).
Cities (or municipalities with city status) in the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine and Republika Srpska do not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary sources


Secondary sources

Bulgaria

Most decentralization reforms implemented since the early 2000s have affected the intergovernmental finance system for municipalities (obshтини). Most importantly, municipalities were heavily dependent on a share of the personal income tax but this system was replaced in 2003 by block and conditional grants based on expenditure needs and the total size of these grants have been gradually increasing (Nenkova 2014; Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe 2017: 65-73).

The latest regional reform concerns a new Regional Development Act promulgated in 2008 and last amended in 2009 (Law No. 93/2009). The law reduced the number of NUTS 2 regions from nine to six and introduced regional development councils (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 18) which coordinate and oversee the implementation of regional development plans but their secretariats are staffed by the central government, i.e. the six departments of the General Directorate ‘Strategic Planning of Regional Development and Administrative and Territorial Structure’ (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 93/2009, Art. 20; Troeva 2016). The regional development councils comprise representatives from eight central state ministries, the district governors from the of the districts comprised within the region, representatives from municipalities comprised within the region, and one representative from each of the national employers’ and employees’ organizations (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 18). The regional representatives do not constitute a majority, and there is also no corresponding administration. The regional development councils fall short of being counted as a regional government.

The Regional Development Act (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 22) also establishes development councils at the district (област) level. District development councils can discuss and adopt the district regional and spatial development schemes and they coordinate initiatives of municipalities (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 22.4). The centrally appointed district governors prepare and implement the regional development plans (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 93/2009, Art. 21; Troeva 2016). The financial sources for district development councils are intergovernmental transfers from the European Union, the central state and municipalities (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 26). Since 2009, oblast development councils are comprised of the mayors of all obshтини within the respective oblast, one representative of the municipal council of each obshtina, and a delegated representative of the national organizations of employers and of employees. The councils are chaired by the governor. District development councils are chaired by the centrally appointed district governor (Law No. 93/2009, Art. 22.2).

Oblasti score 1 for institutional depth, 0 for policy scope, 0 for fiscal autonomy, 0 for borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 0 on executive for 2009-2016.

The city of Sofia is the formal capital of Bulgaria and it is one of the 28 областi. The specific legal status of Sofia only concerns the internal territorial division of the municipality of Sofia. The law on the administrative territorial structure determines that Sofia and cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants (i.e. Plovdiv and Varna) shall have wards (Law No. 63/1995, Art. 10). Sofia consists of 24 districts (района) but has similar authority as other municipalities (Council of Europe 1997; Law No. 77/1991, Art. 8).
The cities Plovdiv, Sofia, and Varna do not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references


Canada

Canada has ten provinces and three autonomous territories: the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. Aboriginal peoples (which includes Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples) can conclude self-government agreements with provincial, territorial, and federal governments and these are coded as autonomous regions. Ontario and Quebec have intermediate governance within their jurisdictions whereas the other provinces and territories have local government only. Almost all regional governments have been affected by reform.

The appointment process of the members of the upper house we reformed in 2016. The upper house is a federal rather than provincial product. Quebec and Ontario have 24 twenty-four senators each, the Maritime Provinces and Prince Edward Island have twenty-four senators, the Western Provinces have twenty-four senators, whereas Newfoundland has six senators and Yukon Territory, the Northwest territories, and Nunavut have one senator each. Senators must be resident of the relevant province/territory but they are appointed by the federal government. Before 2016, senators were appointed by the governor-general upon the recommendation of the prime minister without prior provincial consultation. Since 2016, there is an advisory board consisting of five members –three appointed by the federal government and two appointed by the provinces. The advisory board drafts a list of
candidates and the Prime Minister makes the final decision as to which senator is appointed (Brown 2016).

The score for provinces on law making is unaffected by the senate reform.

The Northwest Territories Devolution Act (Law No. 15/2014) increased the autonomy for the Northwest Territories as of 2014. The Northwest Territories obtained tax authority over non-renewable resources (Law No. 15/2014, Arts. 19(3)) and gained some control over the management of public lands and waters (Canada 2013).\textsuperscript{10} Negotiations on devolution for Nunavut began in October 2014 and are still ongoing. In August 2012, amendments were made to resource revenue sharing arrangements between Yukon and the federal government which ensure a greater portion of the revenues generated from the mining and resource economy in Yukon will be available for use in the territory.\textsuperscript{11}

The scores of the Northwest Territories on policy scope and tax autonomy do not change.

Aboriginal peoples with self-government agreements were not part of intergovernmental meetings between federal and provincial government until recently. National Canadian Aboriginal organizations attended as observers during four First Minister Conferences devoted to Aboriginal issues held during the 1980s (Alcantara 2013). Since then, Aboriginal organizations have not been invited to intergovernmental meetings until the late 2000s when three developments started (Dubois and Saunders 2013). First, in 2008, the Métis National Council and the Government of Canada signed the Métis Nation Protocol which commits the central government to enter into multilateral discussions with provinces and the Métis on rights related to land and harvesting, economic development, health, justice and Métis governance and institutions. Second, in 2009, an Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, consisting of Aboriginal leaders in Canada and national, provincial and territorial ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, began meeting annually. Third, since 2010, meetings between the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of Aboriginal peoples (such as the President of the Métis National Council, the National Chief of Aboriginal Peoples, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and the President of the National Representative Organization for Inuit) have become annual affairs (Dubois and Saunders 2013). Meetings between Aboriginal group representatives, territories, provinces and the central government are held regularly but they are informal, lack legal status, and decisions are non-binding.

The score for Aboriginal groups with a self-government (or land-claim) agreement score 0 on multilateral executive control because national representational organizations rather than self-government executives participate in the intergovernmental meetings.


The four self-government agreements are taken into account in the region and country scores according to their population weight and from the year the self-government agreement was concluded.

Quebec has three types of intermediate governance within its jurisdiction (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2016). The 86 regional county municipalities do not meet the population threshold for regional government. The cities of Montreal and Quebec and their surrounding municipalities have been subject to special legislation since 1970. Since 2006 there are also eleven urban agglomerations and 21 conférences régionales des élus.

Between 1970 and 2002, the Montreal urban community (communauté urbaine de Montréal) was a regional government that governed all 27 municipalities located on the island of Montreal and the islands of Ile Dorval and Ile Bizard. During the same time period, the area surrounding Quebec City on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River was governed by the Quebec urban community (communauté urbaine de Québec). Together the two urban communities governed over around 2.5 million inhabitants which was about 7.5 per cent of the total Canadian population. Although the two urban communities were governed by two separate laws, they had similar authority.

Urban communities were chiefly responsible for preparing development plans, industrial promotion, tourist promotion, traffic regulation, and preparing minimum standards for construction. The constituent municipalities could also hand over tasks in garbage disposal, recreation, regional parks, public health, inter-municipal libraries, and water works. The central government could also delegate tasks to the urban communities (Law No. 83/1969, Arts. 105-108 and 84/1969, Arts. 121-123). Urban communities could set the rate of a tax on property and they were allowed to borrow but only for capital expenditures and they had to seek prior approval of the Minister (Law Nos. 83/1969, Arts. 188 and 201 and 84/1969, Arts. 221 and 224). The council of the urban community (conseil de la communauté) consisted of the mayors of the constituent municipalities who were ex officio members plus additional members from the councils of the cities of Montreal and Quebec (Law No. 83/1969, Art. 39 and 84/1969, Art. 42). The executive committee (comité exécutif) of the Quebec urban community consisted of a chairman plus six members. Three members were appointed by the council of the City of Québec whereas three other members were elected by the councils of the other constituent municipalities. In the Montreal urban community, the executive committee consisted of thirteen members, one member elected from among the representatives of the Ville de Montréal and the other members from among the representatives of the other municipalities (Law No. 83/1969, Art. 7 and 84/1969, Art. 11). The chair (président) was elected by and from the members of the urban community council (Law No. 83/1969, Art. 19 and 84/1969, Art. 8).

Urban communities \((\text{communauté urbaines})\) score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly and 2 on executive for 1970-2002. We weigh the scores for the urban communities by their population size when we derive country scores.

A major municipal reform in 2002 enlarged the territories of the cities of Montreal and Quebec and replaced the urban communities by two metropolitan communities \((\text{communauté métropolitaine})\) which govern, respectively, the city of Montreal and 60 surrounding municipalities, and the city of Quebec and 26 surrounding municipalities. Together they govern over around 4.8 million inhabitants which is about 14.5 per cent of the total Canadian population.

The metropolitan communities have primarily responsibility for economic policy encompassing economic development, land use planning, public transport, social housing, tourism, waste disposal, and sewage management (Law Nos. 34/2000, Art. 119 and 56/2000, Art. 112). Metropolitan communities are financed through a working fund which is financed by the participating municipalities which can levy a surcharge on the property tax to finance their contributions (Law Nos. 34/2000, Arts. 180 and 183, and 56/2000, Arts. 170 and 173). They can borrow up to a limit of twenty percent of the appropriations provided for in their budgets and subject to prior approval of provincial government (Law Nos. 34/2000, Art. 189 and 56/2000, Art. 179). The councils of metropolitan communities consist of the mayors and council members of the municipalities within their jurisdiction. The mayor of the city of Montreal and of the city of Quebec are the chair \((\text{président})\) of their metropolitan community (Law Nos. 34/2000, Arts. 4 and 14, and 56/2000, Arts. 4-5).

Metropolitan communities \((\text{communauté métropolitaine})\) score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive for 2006-2016. We weigh the scores for the metropolitan communities by their population size when we derive country scores.

The 2002 municipal reform affected all municipalities in Quebec and after a number of municipal demerger referenda held in 2004, 41 former independent municipalities split-off. fifteen municipalities separated from the city of Montreal and two municipalities split off from the city of Quebec. In response to the demergers, the Quebec government introduced a law effective on January 1, 2006 which mandated the re-instated independent municipalities and their ‘mother-municipality’ to collaborate through eleven urban agglomerations \((\text{agglomérations urbaines})\) (Law No. 29/2004). The average population size of urban agglomerations is about 273,000 inhabitants but the average drops to 104,000 when the Montreal urban agglomeration is excluded. In addition, seven urban agglomerations have only two member municipalities, two have three members, and one has five members whereas the Montreal urban agglomeration has sixteen constituent members. We do not include urban agglomerations in the regional authority index. The Montreal urban agglomeration is a member of the Montreal metropolitan community (Law No. 56/2000, Art. 4). Although legally speaking they are two different inter-municipal bodies we will treat the Montreal urban agglomeration and the Montreal metropolitan community as one ‘unitary authority’.
The intermediate tier of governance in Quebec consisting of 21 conférences régionales des élus, established in 2006, has been abolished as of March 31, 2016 (Law No. 28/2015, Arts. 235-264). Further detail on the conférences régionales des élus is provided in the original country profile.

The scores for conférences régionales des élus will be phased out as from 2016.

The city of Ottawa which is the capital of Canada, is a single-tier municipality in the province of Ontario. The city is subject to a federal law which establishes a National Capital Commission which main responsibility is to coordinate the development of public lands and buildings in the National Capital Region (Law No. 4/1985, Art. 11). The members of this commission are appointed by the federal government whereby three members should be resident in local municipalities in Ontario, two members should be residents in local municipalities in Quebec, and eight members should come from the rest of Canada (Law No. 4/1985, Art. 4). The executive committee of the National Capital Commission is also appointed by the federal government and at least one member should be a resident from Quebec (Law No. 4/1985, Art. 9).

The city of Ottawa does not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references

Croatia

Croatia’s 21 counties (županije) constitute the regional tier of government since 1993. Two decentralization reforms have been implemented in the early 2000s and despite a lot of discussion there has been no regional reform except for the transfer of issuing location and building permits and road maintenance in 2008 (Maleković, Puljiz, and Bartlett 2011). The counties are perceived to be too small, economically not viable, and not having sufficient financial resources to provide the assigned public functions for their citizens (Alibegović and Slijepčević 2012; Alibegović, Slijepčević, and Kordej-De Villa 2013). Therefore, many proposals suggest reducing the number of counties from twenty-one down to four or twelve.

When Croatia negotiated membership with the European Union it established three NUTS2 regions (since 2012 two) which function mainly as statistical units. There are regional development councils (vijeće za regionalni razvoj) which are chaired by a county governor of one of the counties included in the respective region but a majority of the council members are central government representatives. In addition, regional development councils have no budget and executive powers lie with the central government (Law No. 147/2014, Arts. 18-20; Magaš 2016).

The local level consists of 428 municipalities and 128 towns. The capitals of the counties and cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants obtain the legal status of a town (Law No. 90/1992. Art. 3). Towns have the same competencies as municipalities but seventeen ‘large towns’ (i.e. cities with more than 30,000 inhabitants) also take up additional tasks concerning their ‘economic, cultural and social development’ (Council of Europe 2007; Law No. 90/1992. Art. 14). Since 2005, ‘large towns’ are responsible for the maintenance of public roads and they issue permits in relation to spatial planning (Council of Europe 2016). Counties may devolve their competences to towns where the county has its seats as well as to ‘large towns’ (Law No. 90/1992, Art. 14). None of the cities surpass the population threshold of 150,000 inhabitants except for Split and Zagreb.

The city of Zagreb is the capital of Croatia that has its own law which declares it to be a town and a county (Law No. 62/2001, Art. 2). The city of Zagreb is subdivided into seventeen urban quarters with their own councils and mayors (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 62/2001, Art. 17). Zagreb does not exercise additional competences compared to other municipalities, towns, and counties (Law Nos. 90/1992, Art. 2 and 62/2001) but it does receive additional grants from the central state and the city can set the surtax on personal income to a maximum of eighteen per cent whereas the maximum is ten per cent for ‘large towns’ (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 90/1993, Art. 30a).

‘Large cities’ and the City of Zagreb do not meet the criteria for regional government.
Primary references


Secondary references


Cyprus

Greek and Cypriot leaders have been negotiating to create a ‘bi-communal’ federation over the past four decades but despite international support, no agreement has yet been reached (Bahcheli and Noel 2013). Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts whereby the district of Keryneia and parts of the districts of Nicosia and Ammochostos are occupied by Turkish troops since 1974. The districts function as deconcentrated central state government and are headed by a centrally appointed district officer (Kombos 2015). As of 2016, the 19 members of the board of each district council will be directly elected (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2016). The administrative districts do not reach the population threshold for regional government.

Two forms of local authorities exist in Cyprus: municipalities and communities (Council of Europe 2016). The cities and large towns do not have special administrative status but Nicosia, the capital city, and Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos, which are regional centers, have some additional planning functions delegated by the central government (Council of Europe 2016).
In 1999, the community boards were introduced to replace the improvement boards, the village authorities, the health committees and the water committees. The establishment of provincial councils for regional planning and development is foreseen in a proposed local government reform which resulted from a memorandum of understanding regarding the economic adjustment program signed in 2013 by the Republic of Cyprus on the one hand and the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund on the other hand (National School of Government International 2014). The draft law was submitted to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus in September 2016 (Kombos 2015).

Secondary


**Czech Republic**

After an initial phase starting in 2000 decentralization was halted. Between 2000, when the first elections were held, until 2003, the 14 *kraje* had competences in economic policy which comprises development, transport, and tourism (Law No. 129/2000, Art. 35). Special laws gave *kraje* also some delegated powers in secondary education, health, and environmental protection (Council of Europe 2004, 2010). The central government districts (*okresy*) were abolished in January 2003 and their policy competences were transferred to the *kraje* (Baun and Marek 2006: 413). However, the central government has resisted further decentralization and did not transform the delegated state administrative functions into independent functions (Brusis 2014: 310; Illner, 2011: 523).

*Kraje’s* score on policy scope remains 2 for 2003-2016.

The focus of subsequent governments has been on public administration reform which mainly implied additional measures to overcome the fragmentation of municipalities and improve the efficiency of territorial administration, but no decentralization (Ministerstvo vnitra, 2012). One notable exception is the involvement of *kraje* councils as managing authorities for the preparation and implementation of regional operational programmes (Brusis 2014: 312).
Since 2000 there are eight NUTS2 regiony soudržnosti (cohesion regions) which coordinate and implement regional development policy (Law No. 248/2000). The regiony soudržnosti cluster the 14 kraje except for three (Praha, Středočeský kraj, and Moravskoslezský kraj) which are NUTS3 and NUTS2 regions at the same time (Law No. 248/2000, Art. 15). The regiony soudržnosti already had a committee but these comprised members from kraje and municipal councils as well as non-elected members from trade unions and non-profit, non-governmental organizations. In 2006, the law on regional development was amended and the committees became fully elected by the members of the kraje councils, and regiony soudržnosti obtained their own budgets and executive offices (Law No. 138/2006, Arts. 16a-c, and 17). Regiony soudržnosti are fully dependent on intergovernmental transfers from the European Union, the central state, and kraje (Law No. 138/2006, Art. 16b). Regiony soudržnosti are governed by committees (vybor) which, until 2006, comprised of elected members by kraje and municipalities and non-elected members from trade unions, and non-governmental, non-profit organizations and other partners (Law No. 248/2000, Art. 17). Since 2006, the members of the committees are elected by and among the members of the kraje councils, 15 members in case the regiony soudržnosti is constituted by one kraj, and by eight members when the regiony soudržnosti is constituted by more than kraje (Law Nos. 129/2000, Art. 35g, 138/2006, Art. 16d). The committee elects the chairman (predseda) who convenes and chairs the sessions of the committee and the office (úrad) is the executive body on behalf of the regiony soudržnosti (Law No. 138/2006, Arts. 16f and 17).

Regiony soudržnosti (cohesion regions) score 1 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy and 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly and 2 on executive for 2006-2016. When calculate country scores we do not include Praha, Středočeský kraj, and Moravskoslezský kraj which are both a kraje and a cohesion region.

Until 2001, there were fourteen statutory cities which could be divided into urban districts but which otherwise did not have additional competences compared to other municipalities (Law No. 367/1990, Art. 3). The capital city of Prague (Magistrát hlavního města Prahy) is a municipality and, since 2000, a kraje (Council of Europe 2012; Law No. 131/2000, Art. 1). Prague has about 1.3 million inhabitants (almost 10 per cent of the total population) and is divided into 57 metropolitan districts (městské části) each with their own directly elected district assembly and a district mayor elected by the district assembly (Law No. 131/2000, Arts. 3-4 and 89). In its capacity as a municipality, Prague has competences in social work, water supply, public order, and local public services (Council of Europe 2000; Law Nos. 367/1990, Art. 14, 418/1990, and 128/2000, Art. 35). Prague also assumed exclusive regional competences in transport, tourism, economic policy and delegated powers in secondary education, health, and environmental protection with the establishment of kraje in 2000 (Law Nos. 129/2000, Arts 29 and 35 and 131/2000, Art. 1). In contrast to other kraje, which are completely reliant on intergovernmental grants, Prague can set the rate of a property tax (Council of Europe 2000, 2012). Since independence of the Czech Republic in 1993, Prague can borrow with ex ante supervision by the central government (Council of Europe 2000; Law No. 190/2004, Art. 27). The Prague Assembly is directly elected and the assembly elects the mayor and eleven members who together form the Prague Council (Law Nos. 367/1990, Art. 27, 418/1990, Art. 24, and 131/2000, Arts. 48 and 59).
Prague (Magistrát hlavního města Prahy) scores 2 on institutional depth, 2 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 2 on executive as of 2000. We code Prague as an asymmetric kraj and the scores for Prague are weighted by its population size when we calculate country scores.

Primary


Secondary

Denmark

The reform of 2007 (Bundgaard and Vrangbæk 2007; Korgh 2011; Law No. 537/2005; Torfing, Lidström and Røiseland 2015) which replaced fifteen amstkommuner by five regioner was evaluated in 2013 which lead to minor adjustments to the distribution of tasks between regions and municipalities (Council of Europe 2013). Regions are mainly responsible for health care and have limited additional responsibilities in regional development and educational and social institutions (Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet 2006; Klatt 2014). Regions gained the competence to approve landfills (Law No. 380/2014) and regional councils gained the right to establish standing committees (Law No. 1471/2013). These reforms do not affect the scores for policy scope or representation.

On April 1, 1974, a Metropolitan Council (Hovedstadsrådet) was established with thirty-seven members indirectly elected among the members of the municipal councils of Copenhagen and Frederiksberg and the county councils of Copenhagen, Frederiksborg and Roskilde amstkommuner (Law No. 315/1984, Art. 2). It was a second tier of sub-national government and its main responsibilities concerned economic policy: environmental planning, hospital planning, public transport, regional planning, and water supply (Council of Europe 1996; Law No. 315/1984, Art. 14). The Metropolitan Council was financially fully dependent on contributions from the participating municipalities and counties (Council of Europe 1996; Law No. 315/1984, Art. 16). The Metropolitan Council was abolished in 1990 and its competences were transferred back to the municipalities and counties (Law No. 191/1989).

The Metropolitan Council (Hovedstadsrådet) scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive from 1974-1989. The scores are weighted by the population size of the Metropolitan Council when we calculate country scores.

Prior to the 2007 reform, the Municipality of Copenhagen, Frederiksberg, and Bornholm (since 2003), were at the same time a municipality and an amstkommuner (Council of Europe 1996, 2005, 2013). As of 2007, the Municipality of Copenhagen became one of the 29 municipalities in the Hovedstaden region and the city had to transfer some of its competences to the new region (Council of Europe 2013). Copenhagen and Frederiksberg still have additional competences in hospitals, primary education, secondary schools, social welfare, and elderly care when compared to other municipalities (Council of Europe 2013).

Denmark has also two special autonomous regions, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. After the implementation of two constitutional agreements in 2005 which transferred additional authority to the Faroe Islands there have been no further reforms. A new Greenland self-government act was passed in 2009 and since then there have been no further reforms except that in December 2009, Greenland reduced the number of its municipalities from 18 to 4 (Council of Europe 2013).

Primary references


Secondary references


Estonia

Since 1990 Estonia has deconcentrated intermediate governance consisting of fifteen maakonnad (counties) which do not reach the threshold for regional government. Maakonnad are responsible for economic, environmental and spatial development, emergency situations and monitoring the legality of municipal acts, and they are headed by a governor who is appointed by the central government (Committee of the Regions 2012; Council of Europe 2010; Law No. 356/1995). The counties will be abolished as from 1 January 2018 and their competences will be transferred to local government and state agencies (Council of Europe 2017).

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In each of the fifteen counties, there is a regional association uniting all or most of the local authorities. They exercise joint activities in various areas such as waste management, education, transport or social care. Membership in these associations is voluntary and the member municipalities finance the joint activities themselves (Jansoo 2016).

At the local level, there are cities and rural municipalities but there are no differences in competences between cities and municipalities, also not for the capital city of Tallinn (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 558/1993). An administrative reform act obliged local authorities to decide upon voluntary mergers by the end of 2016 (Law No. 788/2016) and 183 out of 213 cities and municipalities are engaged in reform process negotiations. When negotiations fail there will be a mandatory merger phase directed by national government (Council of Europe 2017).

Primary references


Secondary references

Committee of the Regions (2012) Division of powers between the European Union, the member states and regional and local authorities. Brussels: European Union.

Finland

On 1 January 2010, the regional state administration was reformed and the six läänit (provinces) were replaced by six aluehallintovirastot (regional state administrative agencies) and fifteen ELY-keskukset (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment). The aluehallintovirastot represent deconcentrated outposts of state ministries and execute and oversee central legislation in their respective territory. The ELY-keskukset execute some tasks in the areas of business, labor force, transport, infrastructure and the environment (Council of Europe 2011; Hörnström 2015).
Läänit are phased out from 2010 onwards and aluehallintovirastot score 1 on institutional depth and 0 on all other dimensions from 2010 onwards. ELY-keskukset are conceived as task-specific.

The new local government law of 2015 (Law No. 410/2015) does not significantly alter the authority for the eighteen maakuntien. Maakuntien constitute joint municipal authorities which are obliged by national law to administer economic development and regional land use planning (Kettunen 2014; Law Nos. 132/1999, Art. 25 and 7/2014, Arts. 5 and 17) and they also have voluntary tasks which they fulfill on behalf of their member municipalities (Law No. 410/2015, Art. 8). Between 2005 and 2012 Kainuu, one of the maakuntien, exercised additional competences in health care, social services, and secondary and vocational education and the Kainuu council was directly elected (Council of Europe 2011; Haveri, Airaksinen and Jänti, 2015; Law No. 343/2003). The participating municipalities decided to terminate the experiment in 2012 (Kettunen 2014; OECD 2014: 105).

Kainuu’s autonomy arrangement leads to a score of 2 on assembly for 2005-2012 but scores similar as for the other maakuntien on the other dimensions, including policy scope, for the period before 2005 and after 2012.

Between 1974 and 2010, there was a Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (Pääkaupunkiseudun yhteistyövaltuuskunta) consisting of the municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, and Kauniainen. These four municipalities established the Helsinki Metropolitan Commission on the basis of an agreement in 1970 but a law adopted in 1974 established a council with members appointed by the constituent municipal councils and with a chair elected annually by the council (Council of Europe 1996; HSY 2010; Law Nos. 978/1973 and 1269/1996, Art. 5). The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council’s main responsibility concerned economic policy: public transport, regional planning, air pollution, and refuse collection and disposal (Council of Europe 1996; HSY 2010; Law No. 1269/1996, Art. 2). The only two sources of income were user fees and municipal contributions (Law No. 1269/1996, Arts. 7-9). In 2010, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council was abolished and its tasks were taken over by the Helsinki Regional Transport Authority (Helsingin seudun liikenne) and the Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (Helsingin seudun ympäristöpalvelut) which are single-purpose public authorities established and governed by the participating municipalities (Council of Europe 2017).14

The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (Pääkaupunkiseudun yhteistyövaltuuskunta) scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing, 1 on assembly and 2 on executive for 1974-2010. We weigh the scores by the population size of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council when we calculate country scores.

A significant regional reform is under its way (Council of Europe 2017). The current 18 maakuntien will be transformed from joint municipal authorities into county government (maakunta) with directly elected councils. The regional reform will abolish the six aluehallintovirastot and fifteen ELY-keskukset Maakunta and their competences will be

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transferred to the new *makuunta*. Social and health services, which currently are the responsibility of municipalities, will be transferred to the counties. The first elections will be held in October 2018 and, as of January 1, 2020, the *maakunta* will be responsible for providing health and social services, rescue services, promotion of regional culture and identity, and environmental healthcare in addition to their current tasks in regional and economic development. *Maakunta* will not have right to levy taxes and will be financially dependent on central government transfers and client and user fees\(^{15}\).

Autonomy for Åland has been slightly adjusted in 2011. In case of shared powers between Åland and Finland, the Finnish Parliament may draft a reasoned opinion on whether a draft legislative act by the European Union is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity but the position of the Åland Parliament must be submitted to the European Union institutions (Law No. 1115/2011). This amendment does not affect Åland’s score of 4 on policy scope.

A parliamentary committee headed by the Finnish President is tasked to draw up a proposal for the reform of the system of self-government in Åland. In an interim report the committee advised to extend Åland’s tax autonomy and Åland’s right to participate in negotiations on international treaties in matters that are subject to the competence of Åland (Finland 2015). The final report by the committee is expected in 2017 and is likely be followed by legislative proposals to amend the autonomy statute of Åland in 2021 (Council of Europe 2017).

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France

Several reforms have affected the territorial boundaries and competences of the départements and régions. A reform effective since 1 January 2016 reduced the number of régions from 22 to 13 (Law No. 29/2015). Seven regions combine two or three predecessor regions whereas the territorial boundaries of Bretagne, Centre, Ile-de-France, Pays de la Loire, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, and Corse remain unaltered. The régions have authority over education (excluding tertiary education), career training, planning and economic development, urban planning, the environment, and transport. In 2015, they gained authority in regional development plans (including applying for EU funding), regional waste plans, and vocational training (Law No. 991/2015). Some competences shifted from the départements to the régions: harbours in 2016 and non-urban transport, school transport, departmental roads and public colleges in 2017 (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 991/2015).

Since 2016, départements lost competences to the régions as well as to the newly established, métropoles (see below). Départements score on policy scope goes down from 2 to 1 as from 2016.

In the near future, the départements may be abolished. A government reform to be implemented by January 2020 foresees three future scenarios for the départements: (1) they can be merged with a métropole, (2) they can be replaced by inter-municipal cooperation bodies, and (3) in rural areas the département may remain to enable inter-municipal cooperation (Council of Europe 2016).

France has a wide variety of different forms of inter-municipal collaboration. In 2011, there were 2,599 inter-municipal communities involving 35,041 municipalities (Council of Europe 2016). Inter-municipal cooperation is organized into categories across the state-wide territory since the adoption of the so-called Chevènement law (Council of Europe 2000; Law No. 586/1999). This law identifies three forms of inter-municipal cooperation which differ with regard to population size and the competences they exercise: communauté de communes (community of communes) meant for rural municipalities and small cities, communautés d’agglomération (agglomeration communities) which should include more than 50,000 inhabitants and a city of at least 15,000 inhabitants, and communautés urbaine (urban
communities) with over 500,000 inhabitants. The population threshold was set down to 250,000 inhabitants in 2011 (Law Nos. 1563/2010 and 58/2014).\footnote{Collectivites-locales-gouv.fr Le portail de l’Etat au services des collectivités. ‘Les différents groupements intercommunaux’ https://www.collectivites-locales.gouv.fr/differents-groupements-intercommunaux and ‘La définition du niveau d’intégration communautaire’ https://www.collectivites-locales.gouv.fr/definition-niveau-dintegration-communautaire-0 (Consulted January 27, 2018).}

In 2014, a fourth form of inter-municipal cooperation was introduced, the métropole (metropolis). Any territory which involves more than 400,000 inhabitants located in an urban area with more than 650,000 inhabitants must be transformed into a métropole. In addition, other territories with more than 400,000 inhabitants in which a regional capital is present or which are at the center of an ‘employment zone’ (zone d’emploi) with more than 400,000 people may request to become a métropole (Law No. 58/2014, Art. 5217-1).\footnote{A request requires the approval of two-third of the municipal councils of the municipalities concerned representing more than half of the total population or at least half of the municipal councils of the municipalities representing two-thirds of the population.}

The average population size of communauté de communes (community of communites) and communautés d’agglomération (agglomeration community) is below 150,000 inhabitants and are thereby not included in the regional authority index. The communautés urbaines (urban communities) and métropoles (metropolises) involve 1,485 municipalities and about 21.5 million inhabitants (about one-third of the total population). Combined they have an average population of around 450,000 inhabitants (not including the 7.1 million inhabitants of the Grand Paris métropole). They meet the population threshold and we code both. The first urban communities of Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, and Strasbourg were established by a law adopted in December 1966 (communauté urbaine) (Law No. 1069/1966) and this number has gradually been expanded to eleven in 2018. In between 1967 and 2017, an additional thirteen communautés urbaines have existed before they were turned into a métropole (see below).\footnote{The following eleven communauté urbaines (urban communities) are existent in 2018: Alençon (since 1997), Angers Loire (since 2016), Arras (since 1998), Caen la Mer (since 2017), Creusot Montceau (since 1970), Dunkerque Grand Littoral (since 1969), Grand Paris Seine et Oise (since 2016), Grand Potiers (since 2017), Grand Reims (since 2017), Le Mans (since 1972), Perpignan Méditerranée (since 2016).}

By law, municipal competences are obligatory shifted upwards to the communauté urbaine (Law No. 586/1999). These competences mainly concern economic policy and includes tourism, spatial planning, slaughterhouses, public buildings, crematoria and cemeteries, housing, roads, parks, transport, sanitation and water, environmental protection, and waste disposal. In addition, communauté urbaines can receive any other competence with the approval of the participating municipalities and social assistance can be shifted to the urban community in agreement with the département (Law No. 586/1999). Communautés urbaines budget autonomy is largely the same as for municipalities (Council of Europe 2000). Urban communities can set the rate for self-employment tax, property tax, and waste disposal tax (Territoires Conseils, Caisse des dépôts et consignations, 2017). They can borrow but only to finance long term capital investment and they are required to balance their budgets. Before
1982, borrowing required prior approval of a centrally appointed préfet at the département level. Following a reform in 1982, the préfet reviews the legality of the borrowing plans and may request an audit from the Chambres Régionales des Comptes which can propose appropriate fiscal measures when the audit reveals a current account deficit (Law No. 213/1982, Art. 9). This procedure amounts to post hoc control. The council of the communauté urbaine was indirectly elected by the municipal councils of the member municipalities until a reform effective in 2014 established direct elections except for the representatives of communes with less than 1,000 inhabitants for which the mayor and/or the deputy mayor are ex officio members (Law No. 1563/2010, Art. 9). The council of the communauté urbaine elects its own chair. A centrally appointed préfect reviews the legality of the decisions made by the communauté urbaine and this we code as dual executive government.

Communauté urbaines (urban communities) score 2 on institutional depth for 1967-2016, 1 on policy scope for 1967-2016, 1 on fiscal autonomy for 1967-2016, 1 on borrowing autonomy for 1967-1981 and 2 for 1982-2016, 1 on assembly for 1967-2013 and 2 on assembly for 2014-2016, and 1 on executive for 1967-2016. The scores are weighted by population size and only the years of existence as a communauté urbaine are taken into account when deriving country scores.

A law adopted in 2014 enabled communauté d’agglomération and communauté urbaines which collectively have more than 400,000 inhabitants to transform themselves into a métropole. The first métropole was established in 2012 (métropole Nice Côte d’Azur; Law No. 1563/2010), followed by eleven in 2015, three in 2016, three in 2017, and four in 2018. Out of the total of twenty-two métropoles, thirteen were former communauté urbaines and eight were ‘upgraded’ from communauté d’agglomération to metropolitan status.

A métropole has to take over competences from the participating municipalities in social policy, economic planning and development, environment, energy, water, housing, cultural and sports institutions, tourism, urban transport, and waste disposal. By agreement with the département, the métropolis can also assume competences in youth and elderly, roads, economic development, tourism, and sports facilities (Protière, 2012; Law No. 58/2014). Furthermore, régions can transfer their competences in high school buildings and regional economic development to the métropole and the central state can delegate competences in social housing to the métropole (Law No. 58/2014). Budget autonomy for métropoles is largely the same as communauté urbaines (Protière, 2012). The métropole can set the rate of property tax in addition to or in replacement of the rate applied by the participating municipalities (Law No. 58/2014). Metropolises can borrow but only to finance long term capital investment and they are required to balance their budgets. The préfet reviews the legality of the borrowing plans and may request an audit from the Chambres Régionales des Comptes which can propose appropriate fiscal measures when the audit reveals a current account deficit (Law No. 213/1982, Art. 9). Once established, there is a transition period during which métropoles have an indirectly elected assembly consisting of delegated representatives from the municipalities residing within the métropole. The métropole council

will be directly elected from the 2020 municipal election onwards.\textsuperscript{20} The councils elect their own president (président) who heads the executive office (Law No. 403/2013). A centrally appointed préfect reviews the legality of the decisions made by the métropole and this we code as dual executive government.

Métropoles (metropolis) score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 2 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly (2 on assembly as of 2020), and 1 on executive. We start scoring from the year of establishment (i.e. starting in 2012) and the scores are weighted by the métropole population size when we calculate country scores.

Three metropolises have a special statute: Métrople d’Aix-Marseille-Provence, the Métrople de Lyon, and the Métrople du Grand Paris (Law Nos. 58/2014 and 1212/2015).\textsuperscript{21} A unique element in the governance structure of these metropolises is that there are two advisory councils: a metropolitan conference of mayors (conférence de la métropolitaine des maires) and a development council (conseil de développement) with representatives from economic, social and cultural associations. In addition, the cities of Paris, Lyon, and Marseille are subdivided into respectively twenty, eight, and nine districts each with their own mayor and, since 1982, directly elected councils (conseil d’arrondissement). Two thirds of the councilors in the arrondissement council are elected inside the arrondissement; the remaining one third is made up of members of the municipal council elected at the city level above the arrondissements (Law No. 1169/1982).

Métrople d’Aix-Marseille-Provence was established on January 1, 2016 by merging five communauté d’agglomération and one communauté urbaine. Its competences will be gradually extended, the inter-communal competences as of 2016, transferred competences from the département in 2017, and the obligatory métropole competences in 2018. Métrople d’Aix-Marseille-Provence is subdivided into six territories (territoires). The territorial boundaries correspond to the boundaries of the six constituting inter-municipal collaborations. The territorial council consists of delegates from the municipal councils from within the territory and each territorial council elects a président and one or more vice-présidents. Territoires exercise competences delegated by the metropolitan council which can be revoked or assigned by a simple majority in the metropolitan council from the 2020 municipal elections onwards.

Métrople de Lyon was established in 2015 and has a special status because the métropolis assumed the competences of the département Rhône for disabled people, families, territorial development, and mobility. In addition, tasks in managing cultural facilities, heating distribution, concessions for gas and electricity, flood prevention, and housing are assigned by national law. Lyon can also impose the same taxes as départements in addition to métropole taxes.

\textsuperscript{20} When a participating municipality has less than 1,000 inhabitants, the municipal council appoints its members to the council of the métropole. The mayor and deputy mayors of these small municipalities are ex officio members of the council of the métropole (Law No. 403/2013).

The Metropole de Lyon has the same scores as other métropoles. When we calculate country scores we do not include the self-rule exercised by this métropole in the scores of the départements. [Métropole d'Aix-Marseille-Provence will be similarly coded as of 2017 when the competences from the département have been transferred.]

Paris has not been part of any inter-municipal collaboration in the form of a communauté d’agglomération or communauté urbaine but always had its own law. The special status for the capital Paris goes back to 1968 when a law declared Paris to constitute both a municipality and a département and which established twenty municipal districts (arrondissements) within Paris (Law No. 707/1964, Art. 2; implemented in 1968). Instead of a mayor, Paris was ruled by a centrally appointed prefect (préfet). This changed in 1977, when Jacques Chirac was elected by universal suffrage as the first mayor after nearly 183 years. However, a centrally appointed préfet de police remains responsible for the local police (Council of Europe 2000, 2016). In 2016, Paris became a métropole with a special statute (Law No. 1212/2015). The Métrople du Grand Paris is subdivided into twelve territories with the city of Paris being one territory.


Primary references


Secondary references


Germany

Although constitutional reform has been discussed during the past decade it has resulted in limited constitutional or institutional change except for the replacement of the financial planning council (Finanzplanungsrat) by the stability council (Stabilitätsrat) in 2010 (Benz 2016; Broschek 2014; Dose and Reus 2016; Grasnick 2014; Korioth 2016; Law No. 48/2009; Stecker 2016).

The members of the stability council are the federal ministers of finance and economy and technology, and all Länder ministers of finance. The chair is shared between the federal finance minister and the chair of the Finanzministerkonferenz (a Land-Land institution) and the federal government and two-thirds of the Länder governments have veto power. A Land government is not allowed to vote when a decision concerns the Land itself and the federal government loses its right to vote when a decision concerns the federal government and decision are then adopted by two-thirds of the Länder governments (Korioth 2016; Law No. 2702/2009, Art. 1). The stability council oversees budgets, including borrowing, of the federal government, Länder governments, Kreise, and Gemeinden. It negotiates and implements austerity plans and can place governments under supervision (Korioth 2016; Law No. 2702/2009, Arts. 2-5). In 2011, the stability council negotiated austerity plans with Berlin, Bremen, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein which ran until 2016 and which were prolonged for Bremen and Saarland (Stabilitätsrat 2011a-d, 2016a-b).

Länder score 2 on borrowing control for 2010 onwards.


We adjust the country score with the phasing out of Regierungsbezirke.

A höherer Kommunalverband is an inter-district collaboration of two or more Kreise (district) or kreisfreier Städte (district-free city). In 2018, there are eleven höherer Kommunalverbände but six of them can be considered to be single-purpose government (they provide social assistance or they promote regional culture) and four out of six include in the membership all Kreise and kreisfreier Städte within the Land (Council of Europe 1996, 1999). Bezirke in Bayern, Landschaftsverbände Rheinland and Landschaftsverbände Westfalen-Lippe in Nordrhein-Westfalen, and Bezirksverband Pfalz in Rheinland-Pfalz are already included in the regional authority index and further detail can be found in the original country profile. Regionalverband Ruhr is added to the measurement.

Regionalverband Ruhr provides for an institutional framework for Kreise to collaborate and thereby constitutes another tier of government (Law No. 96/2004, Art. 2). Its tasks are restricted to economic policy: traffic planning, regional economic development, regional spatial planning and cultural, sport and recreational facilities (Law Nos. 96/2004, Art. 4). The Regionalverband Ruhr is fiscally fully dependent on intergovernmental transfers from the participating Kreise and, in case of indebtedness, the Regionalverband Ruhr can impose a special levy on its members (Law No. 96/2004, Arts. 19 and 20b). The assembly of the Regionalverband Ruhr is directly elected and the executive is appointed by the assembly (Law No. 96/2004, Art. 10 and 14).

Regionalverband Ruhr scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 2 on executive as from 2004.

Städtregion Aachen, Region Hannover, and Regionalverband Saarbrücken are so-called Kommunalverbänder besonderer Art which means that they combine or integrate multiple Kreise (districts) and Kreisfreie Städte (district-free cities) (Council of Europe 2012). Although they have their own specific law, their competences are very similar to Kreise and Kreisfreie Städte. They have their own competences and they implement federal and Land policies including museums, hospitals, school buildings, social assistance for youth, families and elderly, public transport, regional development, and regional spatial planning (Law Nos. 682/1997, Art. 211a, 348/2001, Arts. 8-10, and 162/2008, Art. 3). They can determine the rates of local business and property taxes. They also receive intergovernmental transfers from the participating municipalities and from the Land and Bund. Another important source of

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24 We do not code the processor Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet which existed in between 1994 and 2003 because its competences were limited to protecting open waters and forests, public relations, facilitating public leisure facilities and, optionally, waste disposal (Law No. 270/1994 Art. 4). In 2004, a law replaced the Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet with the Regionalverband Ruhr and significantly extended its competences (Law No. 96/2004).
income are user fees (Law Nos. 682/1997, Art. 216, 348/2001, Art. 14, and 162/2008, Art. 3). Similar to Kreise, they can borrow but only to fund investment and when other sources of revenue (taxes and fees) have been exhausted. The budget must be submitted to the federal ministry of finance or its counterpart at the Land level. The total amount of the loan and assumption of securities and guarantees are subject to prior approval (Law Nos. 682/1997, Art. 217, 348/2001, Art. 78, and 162/2008, Art. 3). Their assemblies are directly elected and their executives are elected by the assemblies or directly elected (Law Nos. 682/1997, Art. 210 and 212, 348/2001, Arts. 36 and 68, 162/2008, Art. 3).

Städtregion Aachen, Region Hannover, and Regionalverband Saarbrücken have similar scores as Kreise and kreisfreie Städte and we start scoring from the year they were established: Städtregion Aachen in 2009, Region Hannover in 2001 and Regionalverband Saarbrücken in 1974. When we calculate the country score for Landkreise and Kreisfreie Städte, we include the self-rule exercised by these three Kommunalverbänder besonderer Art.

Primary references


Secondary references


Greece

Greece underwent significant regional reform labelled the 2010 Kallikratis plan which came into effect on January 1, 2011. The reform abolished the nomoi and introduced seven newly created apokentroménes dioikíseis (deconcentrated state administrations) which serve as regional subdivisions of the central government with heads appointed by the central government (Council of Europe 2013, 2015; Hlepas and Getimis 2011).

Nomoi are phased out as of 2011 onwards and apokentroménes dioikíseis score 1 on institutional depth and 0 on all other dimensions from 2011 onwards.
Some of the authority of the abolished nomoi was transferred to the peripheryes which exercise competences in agriculture, culture, vocational education, environment, health permits and control, provincial roads, regional and economic development, transport, and waste management (Akrivopoulou, Dimitropoulos, and Koutnatzis 2012; Council of Europe 2998, 2015; Hlepas, 2015; Law No. 3852/2010). The metropolitan peripheryes of Attica and Thessaloniki have some broader competences in environment, urban and spatial planning and transport and three insular peripheryes have some additional responsibilities in transport (Hlepas 2015). Peripheryes do not have taxing powers and are dependent on transfers from the central state (95 per cent of total revenue) and the EU and although they can borrow they do not take up loans (Council of Europe 2015). The Kallikratis reforms foresee the decentralization of some fiscal resources but these have not yet been implemented (Council of Europe 2015; Hlepas 2015). The council of the peripheryes (perifereiakó symvoulio) is elected for five-year terms concurrently with European elections and the head of the wining list assumes the role of the regional governor (perifereiárchis) (Skrinis 2013).

Peripheryes score 2 on institutional depth, 2 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 2 on executive as of 2011.

The Kallikratis plan endows the regions of Attiki and Kentriki Makedonia with additional metropolitan tasks in environment, spatial planning, transport and waste disposal but these provisions have not been implemented through the necessary ministerial decisions and presidential decrees (Council of Europe 2015; Law No. 3852/2010, Arts. 210-2013).

Primary references


Secondary references


Hungary’s regional tier of government consists of nineteen megyék (counties) and twenty-two megyei jogú városok (cities with county rights). Budapest, the capital city, has a special status which relates to its two levels of administration: a city level and twenty-three districts which each have a mayor and a council (C 1990, Art. 41). The competences of the city level are similar to a city with county rights and the district powers are comparable to those of municipalities (Council of Europe 2004; Law No. 65/1990, Art. 65A).

A constitutional reform in 2011 (C 2011) removed the requirement that a law on local government required a supermajority in the Hungarian parliament (C 1949, Art. 44C). This opened up the way to significantly reform regional government. In December 2011, the parliament adopted a new local self-government law assigning primary school education, outpatient and stationary health care functions from subnational government to state administration (Law No. 189/2011). The state administration also took over the public service institutions, assets, and debts of megye governments, limiting their functions to spatial and rural development, spatial planning and coordination (Brusis 2014; Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 189/2011, Art. 27; Pálné Kovács 2015). Local government borrowing, including loans by megyei jogú városok, became subject to prior state authorization (C 2011, Art. 34.5; Council of Europe 2013). Reforms also significantly decreased central grants and subnational government’s share in central taxes (Council of Europe 2013).

Megyék score 1 on policy scope from 2012 onwards. Megyei jogú városok score 1 on borrowing autonomy from 2012 onwards.

In 2013, the regional development councils (tervezési-statisztikai régiók) were replaced with regional development consultation forums, and their administrations were transferred to the ministry for national development and megye took over the responsibilities for managing European funding (Brusis 2014; Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 216/2013).

Tervezési-statisztikai régiók are phased out from 2013 onwards.

In June 2012, the parliament re-established districts (járások) of state administration below the megye level. The 175 járás offices took over most functions of state administration previously performed by municipal governments, and municipal employees and assets used to perform these tasks were assigned to the járások (Brusis 2014; Pálné Kovács 2015).

Primary references

Secondary references


Iceland

Iceland has one local tier of governance and the capital city Reykjavik does not have a special status (Council of Europe 2010, 2017). Municipalities (*sveitarfélag*) cooperate within 23 *sýslur* (counties) but these do not meet the population criteria for regional government. Eight regions (*landshlutasamtök*) are created for statistical purposes. The number of municipalities has been reduced in two waves from 196 in 1993 to 105 in 2002 and to 74 in 2013. A new local government law (Law No. 138/2011) which entered into force on January 1, 2012 increased policy scope for municipalities by making them responsible for services for disabled people.

In response to the global fiscal crisis, which had a strong impact in Iceland, the new local government law introduced two fiscal rules (Council of Europe 2017; Law No. 138/2011, chapters VII and VIII). First, municipalities are required to balance their budgets over every three-year period. Second, the municipal debt ratio may not exceed 150 per cent of annual revenues. In addition, the local government law introduces a municipal finances monitoring committee which consists of three members appointed by central government and which monitors the budgets of municipalities. Furthermore, the central government may, under particular conditions, deprive the municipal council of their financial control and appoint a financial management board for the municipality.

A new law on public finance (Law No. 123/2015, Art. 11) involves the association of local authorities in the formulation of a national fiscal strategy plan which forms the basis for national and local government budgets. Both the municipalities and national government have a duty to provide full and clear information on their fiscal performance, liabilities, long-term obligations, and assets for the immediately preceding two years and on the projected development of these over the next five years (Council of Europe 2017).

Iceland scores remain zero on all dimensions.
Iceland

A local government reform in 2014 abolished town councils, merged some counties and cities, and established municipal districts as the first tier of governance (Adshead and Finn 2014; Ireland 2012; Law No. 1/2014). Ireland’s 26 counties and five cities which exercise county competences surpass the population threshold for regional government of at least an average of 150,000 inhabitants. Each county and city is subdivided into municipal districts which makes the counties and cities an intermediate tier of government (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 573/2014, Art. 22A). The local government reform also replaced eight regional authorities and two regional assemblies by three new regional assemblies in 2015 (Adshead and Finn 2014; Ireland 2012; Law No. 573/2014).

Counties exercise (secondary) competences in culture, education, harbors, health, libraries, local roads, public housing, transport, and waste collection (Adshead and Finn 2014; Council of Europe 2001, 2013; Law No. 1/2014, Schedule 3, Part 3) and they can set the rate of the property tax (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 52/2012, Art. 20). Counties can borrow but only ‘with the sanction of the appropriate Minister’ (Law No. 31/2001, Art. 106). County councils are directly elected every five years and the county councils appoint a chair (Cathaoirleach) and the chief executive (Law No. 1/2014, Schedule 3, Part 3).

County councils score 2 on institutional depth, 2 on policy scope, 1 on tax autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 2 on executive as of 2014.

Regional assemblies are responsible for regional development and European cohesion policy and they may exercise functions on behalf of the participating local authorities (Law No. 573/2014, Art. 20). The member local authorities appoint representatives for the regional assemblies and the regional assembly appoints a chair who, however, has no specific policy implementation power (Adshead and Finn 2014; Law No. 573/2014, Arts. 5 and 16). Executive power is held by a director appointed by central government (Law No. 573/2014, Art. 51). Regional assemblies are reliant on intergovernmental transfers and European funding and they can borrow but only with the consent of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public


Ireland

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Expenditure and Reform, and the Minister of Finance (Law No. 573/2014, Art. 40). We interpret this to mean that borrowing autonomy remains primarily vested in the minister.

Regional authorities are phased out as of 2015. Regional assemblies score 1 on institutional depth, 0 on policy scope, 0 on tax autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly and 0 on executive from 2015 onwards.

The capital city of Dublin is a county and is divided into nine local electoral areas which serve as electoral constituencies. A law establishes three county councils in the Greater Dublin Area: Dun Loaghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, and South Dublin (Law No. /1993, Art. 9). The three counties and the city of Dublin cooperate and coordinate on transport matters through the Dublin Transport Authority (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 15/2008).

Primary references


Secondary references

Israel

The intermediate tier of deconcentrated national government consists of six mehozot (districts) which are sub-divided into 12 nafot (sub-districts) (Law No. 286/1957). Local governance consists of municipal councils (for cities), local councils (for municipalities not large enough to constitute a city), and regional councils (that combine small rural settlements) which are regulated by the Municipal Corporations Ordinance (Law No. 5724/1964). There have not been any recent reforms affecting the score for subnational government in Israel.

One of the basic laws of Israel declares Jerusalem to be the capital. The Jerusalem Law was condemned by the international community because they did not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The basic law is very short with only seven articles. The basic law states that the government shall allocate special funds for the development and prosperity of Jerusalem including an annual special capital city grant (Law No. 5740/1980, Art. 4).

Primary references


Italy

Several reforms implemented after the constitutional reform of 2001 have affected the autonomy of regions, provinces and metropolitan cities (C 1947, Art. 114; Law No. 3/2001).

The fiscal competences introduced by the 2001 Constitution (C 2001, Art. 119) were operationalized by a law introduced in 2009 (Frosini 2010; Law No. 42/2009; Palermo and Wilson 2013). The reform increased the share of ordinary regions of the revenues of VAT and personal and corporate income tax and introduced a regional tax on economic activities and employment. However, this part of the law has not yet been implemented (Frosini 2010; Martial 2015; Palermo and Wilson 2013). The 2009 law also introduces a new horizontal fiscal equalization system but this has not been implemented yet either (Frosini 2010; Lecours and Arban 2015; Martial 2015). The 2009 law did lead to revised bilateral agreements between the central government and the five special regions and two autonomous provinces which raised their share of revenue from certain taxes levied in the territories (Martial 2015; Palermo and Wilson 2013). Control over regional budgets has increased since 2012 by

27 Friuli-Venezia Giulia receives 60% of personal income tax, 45% of corporate income tax, 90% of VAT, and about 30% of petrol and diesel tax; Sardinia receives 70% of personal and corporate income tax and 90% of VAT; Sicilia receives 100% of taxes on excise, tobacco and the lottery; Trentino-Alto Adige receives 20% of VAT, 100% of mortgage tax, 90% of inheritance and gift tax and the tax on lotteries; the autonomous provinces of Bolzano and Trento receive 9/10 of the tax revenue allocated to Trentino-Alto Adige; Valle d’Aosta receives 100% of VAT, 100% of taxes on petrol, tobacco, electricity and 90% of a tax on business transactions and the tax on lotteries.
extending the control of the Court of Auditors (Corte dei Conti) to include draft regional budgets but the Court of Auditors cannot impose sanctions (Council of Europe 2017).

A constitutional bill which would increase the region’s legislative powers and which would reform the Senate into a territorial chamber with 95 members elected by and from the regional councils was voted down by 59 percent of the voters in a referendum held on 4 December 2016 (Martial 2015, update in 2016).

Provinces in Italy have not been abolished despite several proposals and attempts but recent reforms have reduced their competences. A reform introduced in 2011 (effective as of January 1, 2013) transferred the main competences from provinces (province) to municipalities (municipio) and made provinces responsible for coordination of policies on behalf of municipalities residing within the provincial territory (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 201/2011, Art. 23). The ‘Delrio Law’ in 2014 (effective as of January 1, 2015) reduced the competences for provinces to planning and coordination of environment, provincial roads, school buildings, territorial planning, and transport services with (Council of Europe 2013, 2017; Law No. 56/2014, Art. 85). The presidents of provinces (presidente della provincia) and the provincial assemblies (consigli provinciali) are now elected by the mayors and councilors of the municipalities within the province and only mayors are eligible to become the president of the province (Council of Europe 2017; Law No. 56/2014, Art. 1.58). The assembly of mayors (assemblea dei sindaci), a novelty introduced in 2015, advises the provincial assembly (Council of Europe 2017).

Province’s score on policy scope goes down from 2 to 1 as of 2013 and the score on assembly goes down from 2 to 1 as of 2014.

Metropolitan cities (città metropolitana) were foreseen in 1990 (Council of Europe 1996; Law No. 142/1990, Art. 17) but these provisions have not been implemented despite a constitutional reform in 2001 which provided metropolitan cities constitutional status (Council of Europe 2013, 2017; Law No. 3/2001). Metropolitan cities were finally introduced when the ‘Delrio Law’ replaced ten provinces by ten metropolitan cities in the ordinary regions in 2015 (Law No. 56/2014, Arts. 144-145). Special statute regions and the autonomous provinces were required to adapt their legislation accordingly and an additional three metropolitan cities were established in Sicilia plus one in Sardegna in 2016 (Law Nos. 4/2015, Art. 3, and 2/2016, Art. 17). The average population size is about 1.6 million inhabitants and they all are further subdivided into municipalities (comuni).

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28 The overall abolishment of provinces requires a constitutional revision and after the rejection of the constitutional reform in the December 2016 referendum the fate of provinces remains uncertain (Council of Europe 2017). In May 2012, a referendum abolished the eight provinces of Sardinia which was to take effect on 1 March 2013. However, in January 2014, the Sardinian Regional Administrative Court declared the abolition of the Sardinian province in 2013 as “unconstitutional”. Friuli-Venezia Giulia has abolished its four provinces effective as of January 1, 2017 (Law No. 164/2016).

29 The first indirect elections were held in 65 provinces in 2014 and the remaining 42 provinces followed in November 2015 and September 2016. All provinces receive a score of 1 on assembly from 2014 onwards.
Metropolitan cities take over the competences of provinces they superseded and are given additional responsibilities for local police services, roads, transport, and spatial and urban planning (Boggero 2016; Law No. 56/2014, Art. 1.44). Metropolitan cities have similar taxing powers as provinces and they can adjust the rate on a car registration and car accident tax and an environmental tax. Similarly, their borrowing powers are the same as for provinces and metropolitan cities can borrow but they must submit their budgets to the respective regional board of auditors. If the regional board of auditors does not overrule the metropolitan city budget within 30 days, it becomes final (Boggero 2016; Council of Europe 2017; Frosini 2010; Law No. 56/2014, Art. 1.97). The metropolitan city budget is adopted when at least one third of the municipalities in the metropolitan city representing a majority of the overall resident population approves it (Law No. 56/2014, Art. 1.8). Metropolitan city councils (consiglio metropolitano) are elected every five years by city councilors of the municipalities within the metropolitan city, and the metropolitan city mayor (sindaco metropolitano) is the mayor of the provincial capital (capoluogo) but a metropolitan city can decide to introduce direct elections for the metropolitan city mayor (Boggero 2016; Council of Europe 2017; Law No. 56/2014, Arts. 20-22). A metropolitan conference (conferenza metropolitana) co-exists alongside the metropolitan city council and it advises the metropolitan city council (Council of Europe 2017). This council consists of the mayors of the municipalities from within the territory of the metropolitan city and is headed by the metropolitan city mayor (Law No. 56/2015, Art. 1).

Città metropolitana (metropolitan cities) score 2 on institutional depth, 2 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive. The country score for Italy weights the total score of metropolitan cities by the share of total population that falls under the jurisdiction of metropolitan cities and the country score includes the phasing in of metropolitan cities in 2015 and in 2016.30

The Italian constitution states that a law shall regulate the status of the capital city of Rome (C 1947, Art. 114). Until recently, the city of Rome did not have its own law nor did it enjoy much more autonomy compared to other municipalities but specific legislation could mention rules pertaining only to the Comune di Roma (Council of Europe 2013, 2017). In 2009, Rome was given additional competences in economic and social development, urban and territorial planning, and public transport (Law No. 42/2009, Art. 24). Rome became a metropolitan city in 2015. The statute of Roma Capitale of 2013 divides the city into fifteen municipalities (municipi were introduced in 1972) each with directly elected councils and mayors (Law No. 75/2013, Arts. 26-29).

The capital city of Rome does not meet the criteria for regional government until 2015. From 2015 onwards the capital city of Rome is included in the scores for metropolitan cities (città metropolitana).
Primary references


Secondary references

Council of Europe (2013) Local and regional democracy in Italy. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
Council of Europe (2017) Local and regional democracy in Italy. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
Japan

After the implementation of the omnibus decentralization act (Law No. 87/1999) during the 2000s, the autonomy for Japan’s forty-seven to做什么ken (prefectures) has not significantly altered despite proposals from the central government (Tadashi 2012; United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2012). At the local level, there has been a major reform. The Heisei municipal merger program diminished the number of local authorities from 3,229 to 1,719 over the period 1999 to 2012 (Dollery and Yamazaki 2017; Koike 2013; Okamoto 2012). The central government used incentives and penalties to promote municipal mergers. For example, in 2003 the Ministry of Finance announced a twelve percent reduction in the allocation of local allocation tax revenue-sharing for local government forcing many small councils to merge to avoid bankruptcy (Dollery and Yamazaki 2017).

Cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants can be declared by the central government to be a ‘specified city’. These cities may exercise competences which normally are the responsibility of to做什么ken in relation to children’s welfare, social workers, physically handicapped, poverty, mentally handicapped, welfare of widows and aged people, food sanitation, cemeteries, city planning, and land re-zoning (Law No. 67/1947, Art. 252-19). Each specified city also must establish wards within their jurisdiction (Law No. 67/1947, Art. 252-20). There are twenty specified cities. Apart from these additional tasks, there are no essential differences between ‘specified cities’, cities, towns, and villages in their authority.

Specified cities do not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references

Kosovo

Kosovo proclaimed its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. There is one subnational tier with self-government consisting of thirty-eight municipalities (Law No. 40/2008) which hold direct elections for assemblies and mayors (Law No. 72/2008; Ministry of Local Government Association 2012, 2013). The constitution stipulates that capital city of Pristina shall be regulated by a separate law (C 2008, Art. 13). In January 2018, Kosovo has not yet adopted such a law which means that the law on local self-government applies to Pristina (Law No. 72/2008, Art. 2.2).\(^\text{31}\)

The constitution contains provisions for minority communities, which guarantee representation in a national consultative council, in public employment, and in local government (C 2008, Arts. 60-62). The law on local self-government gives municipalities in which the Serb community is in the majority extended powers in cultural and religious affairs, in the selection of local police commanders, and grants for some of these municipalities also enhanced competences in the provision of university education and secondary health care (Law No. 40/2008, Arts. 20-23; Ministry of Local Government Association 2013). The Brussels agreement (Kosovo 2013) signed by the governments of Kosovo and Serbia foresees the establishment an association/community of Serb majority municipalities (zajednica srpskih opština) which would collectively exercise these powers.\(^\text{32}\) The association would also provide services in economic development, education, health, urban and rural planning but implementation of the Brussels agreement is postponed because of disagreements about the extent of powers for the association (Agimi 2014; Shala 2015).

Primary references

Kosovo (2013) “First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations. (Brussels Agreement).” April 19, 2013.

Secondary references


\(^{32}\) Ten municipalities are foreseen to participate in the association of Serb majority municipalities: North Kosovska Mitrovica, Zubin Potok, Leposavić, Žvečan, Štrpce, Klokot-Vrbovac, Gračanica, Novo Brdo, Ranilug, and Parteš.
Latvia

In 2009 Latvia changed its two-level to a one-level municipality structure. The upper tier of districts *(rajons)* were liquidated, and the first tier consisting of towns *(pilsētas)*, towns’ countryside territories *(pilsētu lauku teritorijas)*, and parishes *(pagasti)* were merged into 110 municipalities *(novadi)*. In addition, there are nine republican cities *(republikas pilsētas)* including the capital city of Riga.33 Before 2009, republican cities exercised the competences of both districts and local authorities (Council of Europe 2006; Law Nos. 61/1993, Art. 15). Since 2009, republican cities have similar competences as other municipalities and their average population size is about 118,000 which is below the population threshold for regional government (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 202/2008). Riga does not have a special status despite the fact that about a third of the total population (about 660,000) lives in the capital city.

*Republikas pilsētas* do not meet the criteria for regional government.

Following legislation on regional development introduced in 2002 (Law No. 53/2002) and through several intermediate amendments of the law in 2006 and in 2007, five planning regions *(plānošanas regioni)* were created in 2009 (Reg. No. 391/2009). The planning regions did not have legal personality (but they did have councils made up of local authority representatives) until the reform of 2009 when the districts were abolished. Planning regions now have a development council *(plānošanas reģiona attīstības padome)* made up of mayors from the municipalities within the territory, an executive *(plānošanas reģiona sadarbības komisija)* with representatives from the development council as well as central government appointees, and they are tasked with public transport, regional spatial planning and development, and implementation of European funding (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 53/2002, Arts. 16-18; Pūķis 2015). Since 2014, the central government took over most competences in public transport but planning regions gained a role in implementing a national programme of culture activities (Law No. 181/2008; Pūķis 2015). Planning regions can also take up joint activities for the member local authorities. Planning regions have no tax autonomy and they are not allowed to borrow (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 53/2002, Art. 17.1; Pūķis 2015).

*Plānošanas regioni* score 1 on institutional depth, 0 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 1 on executive from 2009 onwards.

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33 Daugavpils, Jēkabpils (since 2009), Jelgava, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Rīga, Valmiera (since 2009), and Ventspils.
Primary references


Secondary references


Lithuania

Since 1995, Lithuania has a municipal and a regional tier of government. The local level consists of sixty districts, cities, and towns which do not differ in status or in competences (Council of Europe 2006; Law No. 533/1994). The legal status of the capital city of Vilnius is also similar to a municipality (Council of Europe 2001, 2012).

In 2010, the ten counties (apskritys) were abolished (Law No. 248/2010) and their tasks were taken over by ministries and agencies operating at the regional level. Regional development councils (regiono plėtros tarybos) at the apskritys level, which were created in 2000 (Law No. 1889/2000), continue to exist (Burbulyte-Tsiskarishvili, Kutkaitis, and Normante 2013). The regional development council is composed of representatives elected by and from municipal councils and mayors within the region and one central government appointee. The regional development council elects its own chair but executive power is exercised by deconcentrated central government offices (Astrauskas, Kankunaite, and Valickas 2016; Council of Europe 2012; Law Nos. 735/2010, Arts. 13.1-2, 14 and 1094/2014, Arts. 15.1-2, 17). The main task of regional development councils is to consider and implement regional development plans (Law Nos. 735/2010, Art. 13.6 and 1094/2014, Art. 15.7) and they are fiscally reliant on central government transfers and EU funding (Astrauskas, Kankunaite, and Valickas 2016; Law Nos. 735/2010 and 1094/2014).

Regiono plėtros tarybos score 1 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 0 on executive from 2010 onwards.
Two NUTS II regions were created in 2016 but these are statistical regions (Law No. 1069/2016).

Primary references


Secondary references


Luxembourg

There is no regional government in Luxembourg. An intermediate tier of three deconcentrated government districts (Luxembourg, Diekirch, and Grevenmacher) were abolished on October 3, 2015 (Council of Europe 2015; Law No. 174/2015). The only level of self-government consists of 105 communes (Law No. 64/1988) and this number is likely to decrease as the government is set to induce more mergers (Council of Europe 2015). The capital city of Luxembourg has no special status and has the same competences as a commune (Council of Europe 1997, 2005, 2007; Law No. 64/1988, Art. 1).
Macedonia (Republic of)

Macedonia, officially the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, has two levels of subnational governance, planski ryegioni (planning regions) and, at the local level, opštini (municipalities). The capital City of Skopje—which has more than 500,000 inhabitants, i.e. about twenty-five per cent of the total population—has a separate legal status laid down in its own law (C 1991, Arts. 6 and 117; Law Nos. 49/1996 and 55/2004). This law basically contains the same substance as the law on local self-government (Council of Europe 1999, 2012; Law No. 5/2002) except for the establishment of ten municipalities within Skopje and rules and procedures on the coordination between the City of Skopje and the ten municipalities (Council of Europe 2007, 2012; Law No. 55/2004).

The City of Skopje does not meet the criteria for regional government.

A reform in 2007, implemented as a result of EU negotiations, replaced eight statistical regions by eight councils of the planski ryegioni (Atanasova and Bache 2010). The main task for planski ryegioni is to implement regional development programs previously approved by the national council for regional development. The councils of the planski ryegioni consist of the mayors of the opštini within the regions (Council of Europe 2012). Planski ryegioni are fully reliant on local and central government for their finances and administrative support, and policies are implemented by centers for development established by opštini within the regions (Law No. 63/2007, Arts. 19, 23, 24 and 27). Despite the adoption of the Law on Local Self-Government in 2002 (Kreci and Ymeri 2010; Law No. 5/2002) and the establishment of planski ryegioni, Macedonia remains a highly centralized state (European Commission 2016; Lyon 2013; Mojosvkska 2011).

The scores for planski ryegioni remain 1 on institutional depth, 0 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 0 on executive as from 2007.
Primary references


Secondary references

Council of Europe (2012) Local democracy in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Malta

The only level of self-government constitutes of sixt-eight local councils which were established in 1994 (Council of Europe 2002; Law No. 15/1993; Ragonesi and Mifsud 2015). The local councils act paved the way for the establishment of a second tier of governance above the local councils (Law No. 15/1993, Art. 73.4) and in 2009 five regional committees (*kumitat regjonalji*) were established (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 16/2009). However, the central government has not yet decentralized responsibilities to them (Law No. 12/2010, Art. 5; Ragonesi and Mifsud 2015).
Montenegro

In May 2006, following a referendum, Montenegro became an independent state. There is no regional governance and at the local level there are twenty-three opština (municipalities) (C 2007, Art. 22; Council of Europe 2010; Law No. 42/2003). The Constitution defines the city of Podgorica as the capital and the city of Cetinje as the ‘Old Royal Capital’ (C 1992, Art. 6 and C 2007, Art. 5). Both cities have their own law but their legal powers are the same as for other municipalities (Council of Europe 2010; Law No. 42/2003, Art. 18). Podgorica can establish urban municipalities (gradske opštine) and there are two: Golubovci and Tuzi (Law No. 42/2003, Art. 2; Council of Europe 2015). A law adopted in 2011 established three regional planning regions at the NUTS-III level for statistical purposes (Law No. 54/2011).

Primary references


Secondary references

The Netherlands

A welfare policy reform has affected the policy competences for the 12 provinces (provincies). Provinces used to be implement youth care but this task was decentralized to the municipalities (gemeenten) in 2015 (Council of Europe 2014; Groenendijk 2015; Law No. 34925/2014). Other reforms also increased the competences for municipalities which, since 2014, have responsibility for long-term care of disabled persons and social day care as well as increasing labour participation of disabled and long-term unemployed people (Law Nos. 18450/2005 and 35362/2014; Vermeulen 2015). Provinces still have competences in economic policy, transport, infrastructure, investment policy, regional planning, social policy, culture, environmental planning, and urban development although many of these competences are shared with local authorities who are the senior partner in the relationship (Council of Europe 2014; Groenendijk 2015).

The score of provincies on policy scope remains 2.

Regional reform is regularly discussed since the 1970s but has not resulted in major changes in provincial autonomy (Council 1999). In 2012, a government plan to merge three provinces (Noord-Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland) triggered the criticism of provincial leaders who mobilized the support in the Senate –which is elected by the provincial assemblies– and in 2014, the government decided to abandon the idea to merge provinces (Council of Europe 2014; Groenendijk 2015).

The capital city of Amsterdam has no special status and is governed by the same regulations of the municipal act as other municipalities in the Netherlands (Council of Europe 2014). Every municipality in the Netherlands can establish sub-municipalities but only the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam are divided in respectively seven and fourteen districts (Law No. 5645/1992, Art. .87). Each district had their own council with independent competences, their own budget and civil servants. After the March 2014 municipal elections, the sub-municipalities were abolished and replaced with non-elected ‘administrative committees’ with less powers and tasks (Council of Europe 2014; Law No. 1992, Art. 83).

There various ways in which municipalities collaborate but all these forms of inter-municipal cooperation can be considered task-specific (Council of Europe 2008; Law No. 16538/1984) except for the short-lived Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond (‘public authority Rijnmond’). The Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond was established in 1965 and covered the city of Rotterdam and 24 surrounding municipalities with about 1.2 million inhabitants (Law No. 13229/1964). The province decentralized tasks in spatial planning and environment (since 1970) to the public

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34 Between January 2006 and January 2015, the law on cooperation introduced the so-called ‘plusregio’ which joined municipalities to collaborate. Non-willing municipalities could be forced to join a plusregio (Council of Europe 20008; Law No. 16538/1984, Arts. 104-123). The plusregio had mandatory tasks which mainly included spatial planning and spatial planning in relation to the economy (business and industrial areas). The council of the plusregio was indirectly elected by the assemblies of the participating municipalities and the plusregio was completely fiscally dependent on intergovernmental transfers from the central government. Ten plusregios were established which collectively had about seven million inhabitants. After their abolishment, the competences were transferred back to the municipalities and provinces. The plusregio falls short of being coded as regional government.
authority Rijnmond and recreation was shifted upwards from the municipalities. The Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond was largely fiscally dependent on intergovernmental transfers from the participating municipalities and the central government. It was not allowed to borrow but it could set a surcharge on the property tax rate (one guilder per inhabitant). It had a directly elected council of eighty-one members who elected a board consisting of six members. The Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond could not develop into a ‘city-province’ because it competed with the province of South-Holland and the city of Rotterdam (Council of Europe 1996, 1999). In February 1986, the Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond was abolished (Law No. 3919/1986). On 7 June 1995, a referendum was held was held in the municipality of Rotterdam on the establishment of a metropolitan province but it was voted down with 86.4 per cent against the plans (Council of Europe 1996).

Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 2 on executive for 1965-1985.

Primary references


Secondary references


New Zealand

New Zealand has an intermediate tier consisting of 11 regional councils and five unitary authorities\(^{36}\) which combine local and regional competences. At the local level, there are 67 territorial authorities, 13 city councils and 54 district councils. In November 2010, a new model of regional government was introduced with the creation of the Auckland Council which merged the Auckland Regional Council, one city council and six district councils (Law Nos. 13/2009, 32/2009, and 37/2010). The Auckland Council contains 21 local boards and council-controlled organizations which have responsibilities in service delivery.

Regional councils are primarily responsible for public transport, civil defense and environmental policy, including air, land, and marine pollution, river and coastal management, and harbor navigation (Law No. 69/1991). Wellington has also responsibility for bulk water supply and both Auckland and Wellington are also responsible for regional parks (Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2016). Five unitary authorities—Auckland City Region, Gisborne Region, Tasman Region, Nelson City Region, and Marlborough Region—are, in addition to regional competences, also responsible for the delivery of services in water, sewerage, libraries, parks, recreation, culture, and town planning (Law No. 84/2002).

The capital city of Wellington has no special status and its autonomy is the same as other local authorities. Local property tax rates do not apply for land on which governor-general residences or the Parliament is situated (Law No. 84/2002). The city of Wellington receives contributions from the central government to compensate for the loss in revenue.\(^{37}\)

Primary references


Secondary references


\(^{36}\) We do not include the Chatham Islands, an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, which has 600 inhabitants.

Norway

A redistribution of tasks and competences between central government, fylker (counties), and (municipalities) is constantly under discussion since the 1990s (Council of Europe 1998, 2003; Higdem and Hagen 2015). In 2002, the ownership and operation of hospitals was returned to the central government which removed almost two-thirds of the county councils fiscal activities (Council of Europe 2003, 2015). A large-scale local and regional government reform was initiated in 2014 and full implementation is foreseen for 2020 (Council of Europe 2015; Higdem and Hagen 2015). This regional reform foresees a reduction in the number of municipalities from 428 to 354 and the number of fylker is expected to be reduced from the present 19 to 11 in 2020. By 2020, fylker may have received additional competences in culture, regional roads, and regional development which are currently the responsibility of central state agencies (Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet 2016; Torging, Lidström, and Røiseland 2015).


Fylker score 1 on borrowing autonomy until 2000 and score 2 as of 2001.

The capital city of Oslo is both a county (fylke) and a municipality (kommune) and has one assembly and executive (Council of Europe 1998, 2003; Law No. 107/1992, Art. 3). Oslo has no additional competences beyond those for counties and municipalities and is subject to the same legislation as other counties and municipalities (Council of Europe 2015; Law No. 107/1992). The city is divided into fifteen boroughs (bydeler) with directly elected councils since 2007 which enjoy a large measure of autonomy over social services, basic health care and kindergartens (Council of Europe 2015).

The scores for Oslo are included in the scores for fylker.

Primary references


Secondary references


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38 Rogaland, Møre og Romsdal, Nordland, and Oslo will continue exist and seven mergers are foreseen: Vest-Agder and Aust-Agder; Akershus, Buskerud, and Østfold; Vestfold and Telemark; Hordaland and Sogn og Fjordane; Hedmark and Oppland; Finnmark and Troms; Nord-Trøndelag and Sør-Trøndelag.


**Poland**

The system of subnational governance established in 1999 is still in place in 2016 and consists of three tiers: a local tier of municipalities (*gminas*), a second local tier (*powiats*), and a regional tier (*województwa*) (Law No. 91.577/1998). In 2009, a law reduced the role of the centrally appointed *vovoid* to supervising *powiat* and municipal governments, auditing, managing emergency situations, and ensuring public order and collective security (Brusis 2014; Council of Europe 2015; Dąbrowski 2013; Law No. 31.206/2009). The law also transferred agricultural consulting, landscape protection areas, and voluntary labour corps fighting youth unemployment to the *województwa*, and some delegated functions were transformed into independent functions (Brusis 2014; Law No. 31.206/2009). Apart from the 2009 law there have been no further reforms although regional reform has been constantly discussed (Kaczmarek 2015).

*Województwa* score on executive remains 1.

Between 1994 and 2002, the Capital City of Warsaw was a communal association which, in addition to the tasks of municipal government, also had some competences related to providing custody for embassies and international organizations and preserving monuments (Council of Europe 2002; Law No. 48/195/1994, Arts. 1-3). The Capital City of Warsaw Act of 2002 declares Warsaw as a city with county rights (*Miasto na prawach powiatu*) and abolished the Warsaw *powiat* (Law No. 41.361/2002, Art. 1). This Act also allows the city to take up tasks regarding accepting foreign diplomatic representations and international organization (Law No. 41.361/2002, Art. 3). A major difference which came along with the 2002 reform is the establishment of eighteen boroughs (*dzielnica*), each with a directly elected council which nominates its own executive board (Law No. 41.361/2002, Arts. 8-10). Warsaw has no additional competences in other domains such as taxation, borrowing, and control and oversight from the central state as compared to other cities (Council of Europe 2015). Warsaw collaborates with neighboring municipalities on issues of spatial planning and public transportation through the Warsaw Metropolitan Area (*Aglomeracja warszawska*) but this is not a local authority in its own right (Council of Europe 2015).
The Capital City of Warsaw does not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references


Portugal

Portugal has four levels of governance: freguesias (parishes), municípios (municipalities), deconcentrated distritos (districts) and deconcentrated comissões de cooperação e desenvolvimento regional (commissions for cooperation and regional planning). In addition, there are also two special autonomous regions, the regiões autónomas of Açores (Azores) and Madeira. The fiscal crisis of 2008 has induced the government to reform all levels of subnational governance in the context of the economic adjustment program (2011-2014). The number of parishes was reduced from 4,260 to 3,092 in 2013 (Silva 2015), the municipalities faced a reduction in state grants and municipality staff, and the debt limit for all tiers of governance was set from 125 to 62.5 percent (Council of Europe 2012).

Borrowing autonomy for Azores and Madeira has been affected by stricter central government control on their budgets. A state budget law adopted in September 2015 stipulates that the central government can set limits on the annual indebtedness of the autonomous regions (Law No. 151/2015, Art. 29). In addition, autonomous regions are required to provide the central government with information on their annual budgets and accounts, quarterly accounts, information on the debt they have contracted and those of
their assets that take the form of public debt securities. They also must provide each month information on budget execution, namely commitments made, amounts processed and amounts paid, together with an updated forecast of the budgetary execution for the whole year and balance sheets setting out the treasury and supplier/client accounts (Law No. 151/2015, Art. 74). We interpret this as a priori control on borrowing.

The score for Azores and Madeira on borrowing autonomy decreases from 2 to 1 as of 2016.

The law on the finances of the autonomous regions (Law No. 1/2007) was changed as a result of the reduction in the total debt limit for local government. The law now stipulates that total debt may not exceed 1.5 times the average net current revenues collected in the previous three years (Law No. 2/2013, Art. 40; Paixão and Baleiras 2013). In addition, an amendment to the law on the finances of the autonomous regions reduced the options in tax deductions for corporate and personal income tax (Law No. 2/2013, Arts. 25-26; Paixão and Baleiras 2013).

The scores for Azores and Madeira on fiscal autonomy remains a 3.

The distritos are abolished as of October 2011 (Law No. 13/2011) and this reform has been effectuated de facto but not (yet) de jure because that requires a constitutional amendment. The competences, assets and staff of the distritos have been transferred to central government organizations such as the public security police, the national republican guard, and the national civil protection authority (Law No. 114/2011).

Distritos are phased out as of 2012.

A law effective in 2004 distinguishes two types of inter-municipal collaboration: grand metropolitan areas (área metropolitana) and urban communities (comunidades urbanas). A metropolitan area consists of at least nine municipalities (concelhos) and has at least 350,000 inhabitants and an urban community consists of at least three municipalities (concelhos) and has at least 150,000 inhabitants (Law No. 10/2003, Art. 3; Oliveira 2009). Collectively, the seventeen grand metropolitan areas and urban communities had about 8.8 million inhabitants and included 203 municipalities. The metropolitan areas and urban communities established in 2004 were transformed into inter-municipal communities (comunidade intermunicipal) in 2009 except for Lisbon and Porto (Law No. 45/2008). The 2013 local government reform introduced twenty-one inter-municipal communities with an average population size of about 260,000 inhabitants and involving a total of 243 municipalities (Law No. 75/2013).

The autonomy exercised by metropolitan areas (área metropolitana) and urban communities (comunidades urbanas) are largely the same and they may exercise tasks in education, environment, health, recreation, sanitation, sport, tourism, transportation, and youth and they are responsible for economic and social planning (Law No. 10/2003, Arts. 6 and 19; Oliveira 2009). These tasks are delegated by the member municipalities and central state administration (Council of Europe 2012; Law No. 10/2003, Art. 6). Apart from different establishment criteria, there are some minor differences. For example, a metropolitan area may appoint three executive directors whereas urban communities can appoint only one (Law
No. 10/2003, Art. 21). Metropolitan areas and urban communities are fiscally fully dependent on intergovernmental transfers from the member municipalities, central government, and the European Union and user fees (Law No. 10/2003, Art. 7). Borrowing autonomy for metropolitan areas and urban communities are similar as to those for municipalities and they can borrow for capital investments with prior approval from the Ministry of Finance (Council of Europe 1998, 2006; Law No. 10/2003, Art. 8). The assemblies (assembleia metropolitana/assembleia da comunidade urbana) are indirectly elected by the councils of the member municipalities and the chairs of the member municipal councils elect a president and two vice-presidents (junta metropolitana/junta da comunidade urbana) (Law No. 10/2003, Arts. 13 and 19). There is also a council (conselho metropolitano/conselho da comunidade urbana) which advises the metropolitan assembly (Law No. 10/2003, Art. 24). The council consists of assembly members and the president of the regional development region (comissão de coordenação e desenvolvimento regional) as well as organizations of public interest from within the area (Law No. 10/2003, Art. 23).

Metropolitan areas (área metropolitana) and urban communities (comunidades urbanas) score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive for 2004-2008. The scores for metropolitan areas (área metropolitana) and urban communities (comunidades urbanas) are weighted by their population sizes when we derive country scores.

The 2008 reform (effective from January 1, 2009) transformed the urban communities (comunidades urbanas) and the metropolitan areas (área metropolitana) into inter-municipal communities (comunidades intermunicipais) except for Lisbon and Porto which are discussed below (Law No. 45/2008, Art. 2). The autonomy exercised by inter-municipal communities (comunidades intermunicipais) is similar to those exercised by their predecessor metropolitan areas and urban communities (Council of Europe 2012; Law No. 45/2008, Arts. 5, 7, 11, 15-16 and 26-27; Oliveira 2009). The 2013 reform also did not significantly alter the autonomy exercised by inter-municipal communities (Law No. 75/2013, Arts. 81, 83, 88, and 90). The main change over time is that the number of municipalities and the total number of inhabitants involved in inter-municipal communities is larger than for the abolished metropolitan areas and urban communities: about 4.8 million inhabitants and 176 municipalities for metropolitan areas and urban communities versus around 5.5 million inhabitants and 243 municipalities for inter-municipal communities. In addition, there have been changes in the names for the assembly (assembleia intermunicipal), executive (conselho executivo until 2013 and conselho intermunicipal after 2013), and the advisory council (no name until 2013 and conselho estratégico para o desenvolvimento intermunicipal since 2013) (Law Nos. 45/2008, Art. 7 and 75/2013, Art. 82).

Inter-municipal communities (comunidades intermunicipais) score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive for 2009-2016. The scores for inter-municipal communities (comunidades intermunicipais) are weighted by their population sizes when we derive country scores.

Lisbon (Área Metropolitana de Lisboa) and Porto (Área Metropolitana do Porto) have been metropolitan cities from 1991 onwards (Law Nos. 44/1991 and 75/2013; Oliveira 2009). Despite numerous reforms, the autonomy of Lisbon and Porto has not significantly changed
between 1991 and 2016 (Law Nos. 44/1991, 10/2003, 46/2008, and 75/2013) except for borrowing autonomy. Until 2004, Lisbon and Porto were not allowed to borrow (Law No. 44/1991, Art. 5). Between 2004 and 2008, the 1991 arrangement for Lisbon and Porto was extended to five other metropolitan areas (Law No. 10/2003, Arts. 39-40) and metropolitan areas obtained similar borrowing autonomy as municipalities (Council of Europe 1998, 2006; Law No. 10/2003, Art. 8). Between 2009 and 2013 Lisbon and Porto had their own law again (Law No. 46/2008) until a reform in 2013 brought them back into a general local government law (Law No. 75/2013, Art. 66). At the time of writing (January 2018), Lisbon and Porto are the sole two metropolitan areas.


Primary references

Portugal (2013) “Law No. 75/2013. Lei n.° 75/2013 de 12 de setembro Estabelece o regime jurídico das autarquias locais, aprova o estatuto das entidades intermunicipais, estabelece o regime jurídico da transferência de competências do Estado para as autarquias locais e para as entidades intermunicipais e aprova o regime jurídico do associativismo autárquico.” September 12, 2013.
Secondary references


Romania

Regional reform is regularly debated in Romania but very few reforms have been implemented after 2010 (Council of Europe 2011, 2014). In 2013, a decentralization law was introduced which transferred responsibilities in public health, agriculture, culture, environment, youth and sport, undergraduate education and transport to the judeţe (county) and local councils. However, in 2014 this law was struck down by the constitutional court because it violated local autonomy (Mihailescu 2015). Presidents (preşedinte) of the judeţe councils were directly elected in the 2008 and 2012 elections but in 2015 the parliament decided to re-introduce the epresident elected by the members of the county council (Law No. 115/2015, Art. 1; Dragoman 2016).

The original country profile contains an error: the first direct elections for the judeţe (county) councils were held in 1996. Between 1991 and 1995, the judeţe councils were indirectly elected by the municipal councils from within the judeţe (Council of Europe 2002: 7; Dragoman and Gheorghiţă 2017).


The capital Bucharest (*Bucureşti*) is a municipality which has county (*judeţe*) rights (Council of Europe 1995, 2011). The city does not have its own law but a chapter in the law on local public administration is devoted to Bucharest (Law No. 215/2001, Chapter V). The chapter states that Bucharest shall be organized into six districts (*sectoare*) each with their own council and mayor, and the chapter organizes the coordination between the districts and the city level (Law No. 215/2001, Arts. 92-94 and 100). Municipalities are responsible for housing, town planning, environmental protection, waste management, public health, transport infrastructure, water supplies, roads, primary and secondary education, and the management
of cultural heritage and parks (Council of Europe 1999, 2009, 2014). However, the General Council of the Bucharest Municipality exercises these competences under the supervision of a centrally appointed prefect who checks the legality of the acts and oversees deconcentrated state services (C 1991, Art. 122; Council of Europe 1995, 2002, 2011). Municipalities can set the rate of taxes on land, buildings, and means of transport within the boundaries determined by central government (Council of Europe 1999, 2009, 2014; Law No. 27/1994). Municipalities can also borrow domestically and internationally and they may issue bonds but the total debt may not exceed 30 per cent of total revenues and loans need to be approved by the Ministry of Finance (Council of Europe 1999, 2009, 2014; Law No. 189/1998). The General Council of the Bucharest Municipality and the mayor are directly elected (Law No. 67/2004, Art. 1).

Bucharest (București) scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 2 on assembly, and 1 on executive as of 1991. The scores of Bucharest are weighted by its population size (about 2.0 million inhabitants which represents about nine per cent of the total Romanian population). [The scores for Bucharest are dissimilar as compared to the other judete for fiscal autonomy (1991-1993) and borrowing autonomy (1991-1998)]

Primary references


Secondary references


Russia

In 2014, after an internationally contested referendum, Russia included an additional two subjects that formerly belonged to Ukraine: the Crimea Republic and the federal city of Sevastopol (Law No.6/2014). Russia now has eighty-five subyekty federacii: twenty-two respubliki (republics), forty-six oblasti (provinces), nine kraya (territories), four avtonomnyye okruga (autonomous districts), one avtonomnaya oblast (autonomous province), and three federalnyye goroda (federal cities) of Moscow, Sevastopol, and St Petersburg. More detail on federal cities can be found in the original country profile.

In less than ten years of regime transition, Russia has experienced a rapid transformation from an extremely centralized into a highly decentralized Russia in the 1990s and then back to being highly centralized in the 2000s (Obydenkova 2011). By the end of the 1990s the governors of nearly all regions were directly elected but in 2005 the direct gubernatorial elections were abolished (Council of Europe 2010; Decree No. 1603/2004). In May 2012 (Law No. 40/2012), the direct elections for the governor was restored but with a number of limitations (Golosov 2013). First, a candidate needs to collect a number of signatures from a specific number of members in a specific number of regional and/or municipal councils except for candidates from registered parties (Council of Europe 2004, 2010). Subyekty federacii may decide whether independent candidates may run gubernatorial contests (in most regions they are not) and the president of Russia has the right to approve, or not, the eligibility of a candidate in a process of ‘consultations’. In 2013, the law was amended and each region has the right to have direct gubernatorial elections or to elect the governor through the regional legislative assemblies.

Subyekty federacii score 2 on executive from 2013 onwards.

A new federal law on local self-government in 2003 introduced three executive models for localities. They can stick to a directly elected mayor model, the role of the mayor can be reduced to merely ceremonial tasks, or executive powers are exercised by a chief executive or city manager appointed by the council (Drobot 2012). The new law was implemented slowly and by the end of 2006 only 30 of the 89 regions had amended their legislation and 18 of them had introduced the council-manager model (Golosov, Guschina, and Kononenko 2016). In the period 2009 through 2011, when President Dmitry Medvedev drastically abandoned the previous practice of pre-appointing the incumbent governors in favour of making new appointments, many regions replaced the directly elected mayors of their capitals with city managers (Golosov, Guschina, and Kononenko 2016).
Primary references


Secondary references


Serbia

In May 2006, following a referendum, Montenegro left the state union and in the same year Serbia passed its constitution as an independent state. Serbia contains one special autonomous region, Vojvodina, and is subdivided into twenty-four okruzi (districts) plus the district of Belgrade. Since 2009 there is an additional layer of intermediate governance, the regionalni razvojni saveti (regional development councils).

Despite resistance, mainly from nationalistic political parties at state level, the assembly of Vojvodina proclaimed a new autonomy statute on 14 December 2009 which came into force on 1 January 2010 (Law No. 17/2009). This statute has not significantly altered the existing practice with regard to provincial autonomy (Council of Europe 2011). The 2009 autonomy statute was revised in 2014 by the assembly of Vojvodina following a decision of Serbia’s Constitutional Court on the unconstitutionality of 47 out of 70 provisions (Law No. 20/2014). The 2014 autonomy statute does not significantly alter Vojvodina’s autonomy.
The constitution and the autonomy statute of Vojvodina (Law No. 17/2009, Art. 63 and No. 20/2014, Art. 58) prescribe that Vojvodina’s revenues be established by law, but enabling legislation has not been enacted. Vojvodina has a constitutional right to receive “at least 7% in relation to the budget of the Republic of Serbia” (C 2006 Art. 184), however, the exact method of calculating this percentage is interpreted differently by the province and by the central government and is also subject to interpretation by the Constitutional Court (Council of Europe 2017). A Law on Financing of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is under preparation (Council of Europe 2017; Kresoja 2014).

The Vojvodina assembly has a legal right to propose a law to the Serbian parliament (C 2006, Art. 107) however, in practice this right does not mean much. The Vojvodinan assembly put forward forty law proposals between October 2000 and June 2014 out of which only five were put on the agenda and discussed by the Serbian National Assembly (Kresoja 2014).

Five (seven from 2010) regionalni razvojni saveti, including Kosovo and Vojvodina, were established at the NUTS-II level in 2009 (Law No. 51/2009 and 30/2010). The law states that each regionalni razvojni saveti has a council of local government representatives, a national government appointee, and non-voting representatives chiefly from the public sector (Avlijaš and Bartlett 2011; Kresoja 2014; Law No. 51/2009, Art. 32; Takács and Nagy 2013).

Regionalni razvojni saveti score 1 on institutional depth, 0 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 0 on executive for 2009-2016.

The capital city of Belgrade has its own law and statute (C 2006, Art. 189). Belgrade has the same competences as a municipality and the city has some additional responsibilities in water management, roads, municipal police, fire protection (Law No. 129/2007, Art. 8). In addition, Belgrade is divided into seventeen city municipalities (gradske opštine) and the intergovernmental relations between the city and the city municipalities is regulated by the city statute (Law No. 39/2008). Apart from some additional competences and the internal division into seventeen city municipalities, Belgrade has similar competences as other cities (gradovi) and municipalities (opštine) (Council of Europe 2011, 2017).

The capital city of Belgrade does not meet the criteria for regional government.

Reforms have affected the autonomy for the local tier which consists of municipalities (opštine) and cities (gradovi). Before the implementation of the law on financing local self-government (Law No. 62/2006) in 2007, central government transfers were distributed arbitrarily, and often based on political affiliations (Avlijaš and Bartlett 2011). The law assigns a property tax to cities and municipalities for which they can set the rate and the law clearly defines the rates for shared taxes. Another major reform implemented in 2008 is that mayors became indirectly elected through the municipal or city council instead of being directly elected by citizens (Council of Europe 2017; Law No. 129/2007, Art. 42).
Primary references


Secondary references


Slovakia

In 2005 samosprávné kraj (self-governing regions) acquired the power to set the rate of a tax on motor vehicles but this tax was transferred to central government in 2015 (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 361/2014). To compensate for the revenue loss, the tax reform went alongside an increase in the region’s share of the revenues of personal income tax from 23.5 per cent in 2005 to 30 per cent in 2016. In addition, the rules for samosprávné kraj to borrow have become stricter since 2015. Loans can only be used for capital purposes, the total debt stock cannot exceed 60 percent of the budget of the previous year, and the annual debt payments may not exceed 25 percent of the budget of the previous year (Law Nos. 583/2004, Art. 17 and 493/2011, Art. 6; effective in 2015: Law No. 493/2011, Art. 14). Since 2016 the central government can impose fines on regions which exceed the total debt limit (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 493/2011, Art. 6). However, prior approval of central government for

Samosprávné kraje score 0 on fiscal autonomy from 2015 onwards. The score for borrowing autonomy is 2 from 2002 onwards.

The capital Bratislava has its own law which establishes a two-tier system of a mayor and a council at the central level and in 17 districts, and each one is considered a municipality in its own (C 1992, Art. 10; Law No. 377/1990). The specific law does not grant Bratislava additional powers in terms of competences and finances compared to other municipalities except for some responsibilities for fire-fighting, public transport, road maintenance, and water supply (Council of Europe 2016; Law No. 377/1990, Art. 6a). A city statute allocates and coordinates the tasks between the central city level mayor (primátor Bratislavy) and council (mestské zastupitel’stvo) and the district mayors (starosta) and district councils (miestne zastupitel’stvo) (Law Nos. 377/1990, Art. 7b, 444/2008). Similar arrangements exist for Kosice, the second largest city of Slovakia, which is divided into twenty-two districts. Kosice does not have the additional competences which Bratislava has (Council of Europe 1999; Law Nos. 401/1990 and 612/2001).

Bratislava and Kosice do not meet the criteria for regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references

Slovenia

In 2011, the law on balanced regional development was amended to establish regional development councils for the twelve regional development agencies (regionalne razvojne agencije). Regional development agencies were established in 1999 to implement regional development policy (Andreaou and Bache 2010; Law Nos. 60/1999, Arts. 7-8 and 16, and 20/2011, Arts. 12 and 18). Regional development councils (razvojni svet regije) consist of representatives from municipalities, business, and non-governmental organizations who elect their president (predsednika) (Law No. 20/2011, Art. 11). At least half of the total number of representatives should come from the municipalities. Executive tasks are handled by regional development agencies and are supervised by central government (Andreaou and Bache 2010; Law No. 20/2011, Arts. 11 and 20). Regional development councils are fiscally dependent on intergovernmental transfers from municipalities and the central state (Law No. 20/2011, Art. 21). The law on regional development was amended in 2012 to bring in municipal mayors as ex officio members (Law No. 57/2012, Arts. 8-9) and in 2016 to increase the possibilities for national government to provide financial incentives (Law No. 46/2016).

Regionalne razvojne agencije score 1 on assembly as from 2011.

Municipalities which are declared to be urban municipalities (mestna občina) may exercise additional tasks in relation to culture, education, environmental protection and urban transport (Council of Europe 2001, 2007, 2011, 2013; Law No. 72/1993, Art. 22). An urban municipality has at least 20,000 inhabitants and at least 15,000 jobs of which at least half must be in tertiary and quaternary activities (Law No. 72/1993, Art. 16). Apart from Ljubljana there are ten urban municipalities and the largest is Maribor with about 112,000 inhabitants. Since 2004, the capital Lubljana has its own law which does not grant the city special administrative status compared to other (urban) municipalities (Council of Europe 2011). The Capital City Act establishes seventeen neighborhoods with their own councils, regulates cooperation between central government and the capital city, assigns additional tasks in spatial planning and development to the capital city, and allocates a fixed percentage of personal income tax (0.60 per cent in 2017) to the budget of the capital city (Council of Europe 2011; Law No. 22/2004).

Ljubljana and urban municipalities do not meet the criteria for metropolitan/regional government.

Primary references


Secondary references


Spain

The fiscal crisis starting in 2008 has induced several reforms affecting the autonomy of the autonomous communities (comunidades autónomas) and provinces (provincias) in Spain.

In 2011, article 135 of the Constitution was amended and establishes the principle of budgetary stability and prohibits the incurring of structural deficits which exceed the limits established by the European Union. The constitutional reform was enforced by law on budgetary stability and financial sustainability adopted in 2012 (Law No. 2/2012) which increased central government control over the budgets of autonomous communities (Colino, Molina, and Hombrado 2014; Cosano and Peñas 2015; Council of Europe 2013). The law stipulates that no local and regional authority may incur a structural deficit, grants the parliament the right to unilaterally set debt targets for the communities, gives absolute priority to payment of interest and capital of public debt, and, as of the year 2020, sets a limit of debt at 60 percent, 44 percent for the central state, 13 percent for the regions and 3 percent for provinces and municipalities (Law No. 2/2012, Arts. 13 and 16). In addition, the central government must authorise all loans when a region or province does not meet budgetary stability targets or when debt limits are exceeded and in these cases autonomous communities are also required to submit information on debt on a quarterly basis (Law No. 6/2015, Art. 20). In 2013, the 2012 law was amended to include commercial debt and to improve the monitoring and enforcement of budgetary stability (Law No. 9/2013).
Comunidades autónomas and provincias score on borrowing autonomy remains 1.

The law on the finances of autonomous communities was amended in 2009 increased the tax revenues shares for autonomous communities. They now receive 50 percent of the revenues of the income tax, 50 percent of VAT, and 58 percent of alcohol, tobacco, and petrol (Law No. 2/2009).

Comunidades autónomas score on fiscal autonomy remains 3.

The local government law states that municipalities with more than 250,000 inhabitants, provincial capitals with more than 175,000 inhabitants, and the capitals of the comunidades autónomas can establish districts (distritos) within their city (Law No. 7/1985, Art. 121). Once established, these districts should have a council (junta de gobierno local) and a mayor (alcalde) (Law No. 7/1985, Arts. 129-130). Many Spanish cities have established districts but only the capital city of Madrid and Barcelona are governed by specific laws.

The city of Madrid (La Villa de Madrid) is subject to national legislation but the city’s special regime needs to take into account the authority exercised by the Comunidad Madrid over local government as specified in the region’s autonomy statute (Law No. 2/2003, Art. 40). From 1983 until 2005, the city of Madrid fell under the same authority regime as other municipalities in the Comunidad Madrid (Law No. 2/2003, disposiciones transitorias Tercera). After several attempts, the national parliament adopted a law for the capital city (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 22/2006), however this law has not significantly altered the autonomy for the city of Madrid since the national law states that the local government law of the Comunidad Madrid applies to the city (Law No. 22/2006, Arts. 31-34). The national law contains some specific articles in relation to the city of Madrid as the national capital – e.g. local traffic, public building, and public safety– but the law does not significantly enlarge the autonomy of the city of Madrid compared to other municipalities (Council of Europe 2013). The city of Madrid is divided into twenty-one districts (distritos) which are deconcentrated city administrations headed by an assembly councilor from the city assembly appointed by the mayor (Council of Europe 2013; Law No. 22/2006, Art. 22).

The city of Madrid (La Villa de Madrid) does not meet the criteria for regional government.

The city of Barcelona (Barcelona), the second largest city in Spain, also enjoys specific institutional and organizational features laid down in two laws (Law Nos. 22/1998 and 1/2006). The Catalan autonomy statute mentions that Barcelona will have a special regime and that the City Council of Barcelona must be consulted in the preparation of bills that affect its special regime (Law No. 172/2006, Art. 89). Barcelona is also divided into districts (distritos) which are deconcentrated city administrations. Each of the ten districts has its own council (consejo de distrito) and a president (presidente/presidenta) appointed by the city mayor from among the members of the district council (Law No. 22/1998, Arts. 20 and 22). Although the city statute lists some specific provisions in relation to culture, economic activities, educational buildings, environment, public health, public housing, social services, urban planning, urban transport, telecommunication networks, traffic, and youth, the autonomy enjoyed by Barcelona is largely the same as for other Catalan municipalities (Law No. 22/1998, Art. 58).
Barcelona is also subject to a national law which incorporates the 1998 city statute (Law No. 172/2006, Art. 1). As a result, the national law mentions many similar provisions as laid down in the city statute of 1998. Although the national law introduces a special financial regime it does not specify much more fiscal or borrowing autonomy than enjoyed by other municipalities (Law No. 172/2006, Arts. 4, 38-39, 66-69). Barcelona can adjust the rate of taxes on real estate, constructions and installations, and on increases in the value of urban land (Law No. 172/2006, Arts. 49-51) but these are the same as for all Spanish municipalities (Council of Europe 1997). Similarly, the national law establishes a special regime for the city of Barcelona but the specific provisions does not grant the city of Barcelona much more autonomy than for other municipalities. For example, the national law establishes an inter-administrative collaboration commission (Comisión de Colaboración Interadministrativa) with representatives from national government, the Catalan government, and the city council to evaluate the application of the city statute (Law No. 172/2006, Art. 5).

The city of Barcelona (Barcelona) does not meet the criteria for regional government.

Metropolitan areas are established by comunidad law but regions need first to consult the central government before they adopt a law (Council of Europe 1997, 2013; Law No. 7/1985, Art. 43). In January 2018, Spain has one metropolitan area which is a public authority (Council of Europe 2002, 2013). The metropolitan area of Barcelona (Área Metropolitana de Barcelona) is an inter-municipal collaboration with a total of thirty-six municipalities and about 3.2 million inhabitants. It was established in 2010 and it replaced the former metropolitan transport and metropolitan water and waste treatment public authorities created in 1987 (Council of Europe 2002).³⁹

The metropolitan area of Barcelona competences chiefly concerns economic policy and its main tasks are in urban planning, transport and mobility and the city has some responsibilities for water, waste disposal, economic and social development, and social and territorial cohesion (Law No. 31/2010, Art. 14). The main sources of income are a surcharge on a real estate tax, intergovernamental transfers from the central state, the Catalan government and the member municipalities, and user fees (Law No. 31/2010, Arts. 40-42). The metropolitan area of Barcelona is not allowed to borrow (Law No. 31/2010, Art. 40). The mayors of each municipality are ex officio members of the metropolitan council (consejo metropolitano) and they are supplemented by metropolitan councilors who are elected by the councils of the member municipalities on a proportional basis (Law No. 31/2010, Arts. 5-6). The executive board (junta de gobierno) is headed by a president (presidente/presidenta) who needs to be elected by the metropolitan council from among the mayoral members.

The metropolitan area of Barcelona (Área Metropolitana de Barcelona) scores 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 1 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly, and 2 on executive for 2010-2016. The scores for the metropolitan area of Barcelona are weighted by its population size when we derive country scores.

³⁹ Between 1974 and 1987, there was the metropolitan cooperation of Barcelona (Corporación metropolitana de Barcelona) which task was restricted to the coordination, management, and execution of urban planning (Law No. 5/1974; Perdigó i Solà 2009).
Primary references


Secondary references


Sweden

Sweden has one intermediate tier of governance: twenty-one län (counties) which combine self-government and deconcentrated state authority. Landstinge (county councils) main responsibility concerns health and hospitals but they are also responsible for the implementing regional development, cultural activities, and public transport (Council of Europe 2014; Law Nos. 763/1982 and 30/2017; McCallion 2014). Länsstyrelser (deconcentrated government in the län) supervise local governments and implement central legislation in in the fields of health, education, housing, town planning, and social affairs (Law No. 825/2007; Torfing, Lidström, and Røiseland 2015). The head of the länsstyrelser (landshövding) is centrally appointed but the majority of the executive, the länsstyrelser, are selected by the landstinge.

Since the 1990s, reforms have reduced the number of län and have transferred competences from the länsstyrelser to the landstinge. In 1996 and 1997, Kristianstad and Malmö landstinge were merged into Skane landsting, and Göteborgs och Bohus, Skaraborgs, and Älvsborg landstinge were merged into Västra Gotland (Feltenius 2015; Law Nos. 945/1996 and 222/1997). From 1999, these two newly created regions assumed competences in economic development (including EU Structural Funds), regional transport, and cultural institutions, which were previously the responsibility of länsstyrelser (Council of Europe 2002; McCallion 2007; Svensson and Östhol 2001). These reforms have become permanent and were extended to Halland and Götland in 2010, to Gävleborg, Jämtland, Jönköping, Kronoberg, Örebro, Östergötland in 2015, and to, Norrbotten, Uppsala, Västmanland, and Västernorrland in 2017 (Berg and Oscarsson 2013; Council of Europe 2014; Law Nos. 630/2010, 118/2014, 473/2014, and 945/2016; McCallion 2014). These landstinge may decide to adopt the name region instead of landstinge and ten have done so (Law No. 630/2010, Art. 4).

Landstinge (and regioner) score on policy scope remains 2.

Since 2017, the intermediate tier in Sweden is slightly asymmetric with thirteen landstinge/regioner with extended responsibility for regional development and regional transport, Stockholm län where regional coordination is the responsibility of the länsstyrelser and the landstinge is responsible for the regional development plan, and seven län where regional development is handled by regional cooperative councils (kommunförbund or samverkansorgan) consisting of representatives of the landstinge and all municipalities residing within the county (McCallion 2014; OECD 2017; Torfing, Lidström, and Røiseland 2015). Regional cooperative councils were introduced as from 2003 and could be established with the consent of the landstinge and municipalities (Law No. 34/2002). The regional cooperative councils gained competences in regional development and culture from the...
landstinge, funding and coordination of regional development from the länsstyrelser, and resources from the municipalities (Torfing, Lidström, and Røiseland 2015). Up until 2011 thirteen regional cooperative councils had been set up but six were disestablished in the län where regioner were established in 2015 (Council of Europe 2014).

Regional cooperative councils (kommunförbund or samverkansorgan) are not scored separately as it concerns task specific intermediate government.

The capital city of Stockholm does not have a specific autonomy regime (Council of Europe 1999, 2007). The city is subdivided into fourteen districts which have a council appointed by the municipal council. The districts exercise some delegated tasks in primary school, leisure and cultural services. The Stockholm county (Stockholms län) is empowered with competences normally left to municipalities, for example the coordination of regional planning and transport in the metropolitan area (Council of Europe 2014).

A 2007 parliamentary report proposed to amalgamate the counties into six to nine regional authorities by 1 January 2015 (Feltenius 2016). However, this was not achieved and now the aim is to implement the reform by 2023 with some possible intermediate mergers in 2019 (McCallion 2014; OECD 2017).

Primary references


Secondary references

Switzerland

Regional authority for the cantons in Switzerland has not significantly altered since the constitutional reforms of 1999 and 2008 (Cappelletti, Fischer and Sciarini 2014; Council of Europe 2010, 2017; Fleiner 2014). Ticino introduced a debt brake (Schuldenbremse) in 2014 (Law No. 131.229/1997, Art. 34) and electoral terms for the cantonal parliaments changed from four to five years in Geneva (Law No. 131.234/2012, Art. 81), Jura (Law No. 131.235/1977, Art. 65), and Vaud (Law No. 131.231/2003, Art 113).

Beginning in 2012, federal and cantonal governments meet in the Europadialog to coordinate EU policy. The intergovernmental committee consists of the federal ministers for foreign relations and the economic affairs and the president plus some members of the executive committee of the Conference of Cantonal Governments (Konferenz der Kantonsregierungen). Meetings take place at least once every two months and the meetings are chaired by the federal minister for foreign relations.41 In 2016, the total number of conferences of the

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40 The original country profile (Hooghe et al. 2016, p.400, footnote 49) lists Valais having no debt brake but there is one (Law No. 131.232/1907, Art. 25).
41 Vereinbarung zwischen der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft vertreten durch das Eidgenössische Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten (EDA) und das Eidgenössische Volkswirtschaftsdepartement (EVD) sowie den Kantonen, vertreten durch die Konferenz der Kantonsregierungen (KdK) betreffend den politischen Dialog Bund-Kantone zu Europafragen.
cantonal directors has been reduced from 16 to 15 by merging the Konferenz der kantonalen Forstdirektoren with the Konferenz der Jagddirektorinnen und –direktoren.42

The aforementioned reforms do not affect the scores for the cantons.

Significant reform has taken place regarding intermediate governance within the cantons (Council of Europe 2017). Bern abolished its twenty-nine Amtsbezirke and replaced them with ten Verwaltungskreise and five Verwaltungsregionen in 2010 (Law No. 131.212/1993, Art. 3(2)). Thurgau restructured eight into five Bezirke after approval through a referendum held in 2009. There were also plans in Valais to abolish the districts but these plans were struck down by a negative referendum in 2015. In 2011, Luzern abolished its five Ämter (Law No. 131.213/2007). Following up on a referendum held in 2012, Graubünden replaced eleven Bezirke, fourteen Regionalverbänder and thirty-nine Kreise with eleven Regionen in 2016 (Law No. 0136/2013, Art. 1(4)).

Intermediate government within the cantons do not reach the population threshold for regional government (an average of 150,000 inhabitants).

The city of Bern is municipality in the canton of Bern and the city is not subject to any specific legislation (Council of Europe 1998, 2010, 2017). In 2004, the federal government was in the process of drafting federal legislation concerning the status of the capital but abandoned this task in the same year. The costs incurred due to the presence of Confederal institutions and foreign embassies and for particular responsibilities in matters of security and public order are refunded by the Confederation (Council of Europe 2017).

Primary references


Secondary references


Turkey

Turkey had one regional tier consisting of provinces (*iller*) until 2009 when regional development agencies (*kalkunna ajanslari*) were established. In 2014, 30 out of a total of 81 provinces were transformed into metropolitan municipalities.

In 2002, Turkey established NUTS-regions in response to EU accession and, in 2006, the Turkish parliament adopted legislation which created twenty-six *kalkunna ajanslari* at the NUTS-II level (Elicin 2011; Law No. 5449/2006; Sezen 2011; Young-Hyman 2008). After some initial pilots, all twenty-six agencies became operational in 2009 (Ertugal and Dobre 2011; Sobaci 2009). *Kalkunna ajanslari* are responsible for preparing regional development programs, implementation, and monitoring but the programs need approval by the central state planning office (Ertugal 2010; Ertugal and Dobre 2011; Law No. 5449/2006, Arts. 4 and 5). Each region has a development council instructed to represent the provinces “in a balanced way” (Law No. 5449/2006, Art. 4). Its tasks are limited to deliberation and drafting recommendations to the agency which all need to be reported to central state planning (Law No. 5449/2006, Art. 9). The board of directors, which is the decision-making body of the agency, is comprised of the provincial governor, the mayor of the greater city, the chairman of the provincial general assembly, the chairman of the chamber of industry, the chairman of the chamber of commerce and three representatives selected by the board from private sector and/or non-governmental organizations (Sözen 2012). *Kalkunna ajanslari* are dependent on intergovernmental transfers from local and central government and they do not have borrowing autonomy (Law No. 5449/2006, Art. 19). The board of directors is chaired by the governor and most executive and implementing powers lie with a centrally appointed secretary general (Law No. 5449/2006, Arts. 10, 11, and 14).

We code *kalkunna ajanslari* as deconcentrated government—i.e. a score of 1 on institutional depth and a score of 0 on all other dimensions—as of 2009.
The first three metropolitan municipalities (büyükşehir belediyeleri) were established in 1984 and this number gradually increased to seven in 1986, eight in 1988, fifteen in 1993, and sixteen in 2000 (Çelenk 2009; Karagel and Karagel 2014; Oguz and Ozbek Sonmez 2012). Metropolitan municipalities had the same autonomy as other municipalities until a reform in 2004 (effective on 1 January 2005) abolished provincial institutions in the provinces of Istanbul and Kocaeli where from then on metropolitan municipality borders would overlap with provincial borders. (Çetin 2015; Council of Europe 1999, 2009, 2011; Law No. 5216/2004; Oktay 2017). With the 2004 reform, metropolitan municipalities received additional competences in education, roads, water basins and economic and spatial planning. In addition, central government tutelage was drastically reduced and centrally appointed governors had no longer the power to approve the budget of metropolitan municipalities (Council of Europe 1997, 2005). A law of December 2012 (Law No. 6360/2012) extended the regime of Istanbul and Kocaeli to the other metropolitan municipalities (Çiner 2014). Furthermore, the 2012 law transformed all provinces with a population over 750,000 inhabitants into metropolitan municipalities and, as a result, an additional thirteen metropolitan municipalities were established plus Ordu in 2013. The 2012 law came into force with the local elections of March 2014 and, thus since 2014 there is an intermediate tier of governance consisting of fifty-one provinces (iller) and thirty metropolitan municipalities. Collectively, the thirty metropolitan municipalities are subdivided into 519 municipalities and they have almost 60 million inhabitants which is about 85 per cent of the total population.

Metropolitan municipalities (büyükşehir belediyeleri) have similar competences as provinces and they are responsible for economic development, roads, bridges, ports, water management, provision of natural gas, hospitals and other health services, primary and secondary schools, public order, and arts and culture (Law No. 5216/2004, Arts. 7-9). Metropolitan municipalities have no tax autonomy and the law on metropolitan municipalities assigns fifty per cent of the revenues of the entertainment tax and several fees collected by municipalities to the metropolitan municipality (Law No. 5216/2004, Art. 23). Metropolitan municipalities can borrow but loans that exceed ten per cent of the total income of the budget requires the approval of the Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, metropolitan municipalities are required to send financial statements detailing their assets and liabilities to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, State Planning Organization, and Undersecretaries of Treasury on a quarterly basis (Law Nos. 5216/2004, Art. 23 and 5393/2005, Arts. 65 and 68). The members of the metropolitan council (büyükşehir belediye meclisi) consist of at least one-fifth of the councillors of the municipalities from within the metropolitan area and the mayors of these municipalities are ex officio members (Law No. 5216/2004, Art. 12). The executive committee of the metropolitan municipality (büyükşehir belediye encümeni) is chaired by a directly elected mayor (büyükşehir belediye başkanı) who is responsible for implementing the committee’s decisions. The executive committee also has five members elected by the metropolitan council by balloting from among its own members for a term of one year, and five members appointed each year by the mayor from among the heads of units and the secretary general and the head of the fiscal services unit are always included (Law No. 5216/2004, Arts. 16-18).

44 Aydın, Balıkesir, Denizli, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Muğla, Tekirdağ, Trabzon, Şanlıurfa, and Van. In 2013, the province of Ordu was announced as an additional metropolitan municipality.
Metropolitan municipalities (büyükşehir belediyeleri) score 2 on institutional depth, 2 on policy scope, 0 of fiscal autonomy, 1 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on representation, and 2 on executive. The scores for metropolitan municipalities will be weighted by their population sizes when we derive country scores. We score Istanbul and Kocaeli from 2005 and the other metropolitan municipalities from 2014.

Reforms have also affected the provinces. In 2005, a reform stripped off the provincial governor as the president of the provincial general assembly but the governor remains the chairman of the executive committee (Council of Europe 2009, 2011; Law No. 5302/2005, Art. 11). The competences of the governor –as provider of central government policy– has been expanded with functions of the abolished Directorate General of Village Affairs and competences in relation to museums and sport (Council of Europe 2009, 2011). A law introduced in 2008 (Law No. 5779/2008) amended the allocation criteria of central government grants to the provinces but the law did not grant provinces with tax powers (Elicin 2011).

Following up an attempted coup of 15 July 2016, several actions were taken which affect in particular municipal autonomy. An emergency decree (Law No. 674/2016) introduced on 1 September 2016 enables the central government to put a mayor under investigation and to replace the mayor with a central government appointee. Subsequently, at least sixty-five mayors from municipalities in south-east Turkey –most of whom are members of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP)– were placed into detention and they were replaced by central government appointees (Council of Europe 2017).

Primary references


Secondary references


**United Kingdom**

All four devolved government in the United Kingdom have undergone reform since 2010 (Council of Europe 2011). Whereas the autonomy for the four devolved governments has been deepened, the Regional Development Agencies were abolished. In 2011, a new type of local government, the combined authority, was introduced.

The Northern Ireland Assembly and the UK government agreed in the Stormont House Agreement concluded in 2014 to devolve the corporation tax by 2017 under the condition that Northern Ireland achieves a balanced budget (Armstrong and Bowers, 2015: 7; Law No. 21/2015, Sch. 5). In July 2017, the corporation tax was not devolved yet. The Stormont House
Agreement also announced further devolution of the stamp duty and landfill tax. The Northern Ireland Assembly rejected the Welfare Reform Bill which prevented the devolving competences in welfare benefits.

Northern Ireland score on tax autonomy remains 1.

The Scotland Act of 1998 was amended in 2012 and again in 2016 after a referendum on the independence of Scotland which was held in September 2014 and which received a no-vote (55 percent). The Scotland Act 2012 gave the Scottish Parliament the ability to raise the rate on income tax by ten pence in the pound (was three pence) and the law devolved the power to set the base and rate of a land transaction tax and landfill tax (Council of Europe 2014; Law No. 11/2012, Arts. 25, 28, and 31). However, these reforms took effect in 2016. The Scotland Act 2012 also increased legislative control over drug abuse and speed limits and increased the ability to borrow to 2.2 billion a year (Law No. 11/2012, Arts. 19-22 and 32).

The Scotland Act 2016 implemented the reforms introduced in the Scotland Act 2012 but also further increases Scotland’s autonomy. The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government are declared institutions that are permanent parts of the United Kingdom’s constitutional arrangements which cannot be abolished except on the basis of a decision in a referendum (Law No. 11/2016, Art. 1). In addition, the Sewell convention –i.e. the Parliament of the United Kingdom will not normally legislate with regard to devolved matters without the consent of the devolved assemblies– is now codified (Law No. 11/2016, Art. 2). Furthermore, Scotland controls its own electoral system (Law No. 11/2016, Art. 4). Legislative competences in employment, road signs, speed limits, parking, onshore oil and gas extracting, rail franchising, and consumer advocacy were devolved as well as welfare benefits such as allowances for disability, housing, and social security, and Scotland may introduce new benefits (Law No. 11/2016). Finally, fiscal autonomy is deepened by devolving an air passenger duty and by assigning 50 percent of VAT revenues to Scotland and borrowing autonomy is extended by increasing the limit on borrowing to three billion pounds per year (Law No. 11/2016, Arts. 16, 17, and 20).

Despite these reforms, Scotland scores are not affected because Scotland has no authority over immigration and citizenship (policy scope) and Scotland can only borrow with prior approval from central government (borrowing autonomy).

Devolution to Wales was significantly deepened after a referendum on whether the National Assembly for Wales should be given primary legislative powers. The referendum was held in March 2011 and 63 percent voted in favor (Harvey 2011; Law No. 32/2006, Art. 103). The Wales Act 2006 was subsequently revised in December 2014 and in January 2017. The Wales Act 2014 increased the tax autonomy for the Welsh National Assembly which can set the base and rate of a stand duty land tax and landfill tax and it can set the rate of income tax up to ten percent (Law No. 29/2014, Arts. 9, 15 and 18). However, the income tax powers could only come into force after approval by a referendum (Law No. 29/2014, Art. 12) but this requirement was abolished with the Welsh Act 2017 (Law No. 4/2017). The block grant from central government to Wales will be reduced according to the revenues raised by the new taxes. The Wales Act 2014 also increased borrowing autonomy and Wales can now borrow up to 500 million pounds to finance capital expenditure with prior consent of the Treasury.
(Law No. 29/2014, Arts. 20 and 122A). The term of the Welsh National Assembly increased from four to five years (Law No. 29/2014, Art. 1).

Wales scores 2 on fiscal autonomy as of 2015 and the score on borrowing autonomy remains a 1.

The Welsh Act 2017 introduces a similar autonomy arrangement as for Scotland and Wales can legislate on any matter except for exclusive UK matters such as currency, defense, fiscal, economic and monetary policy, foreign affairs, immigration, and the judicial system (Law No. 4/2017, Art. 4). However, the list of reserved matters is larger for Wales than for Scotland (Council of Europe 2014; Law No. 4/2017, Schedule 7A). In addition, the Sewell convention is codified for Wales (Law No. 4/2017, Art. 2) and Wales gained authority over its own institutional set-up including control over the electoral system and local elections (Law No. 4/2017, Arts. 5-8). In addition, the Assembly and Welsh Government are declared institutions that are permanent parts of the United Kingdom’s constitutional arrangements which cannot be abolished except on the basis of a decision in a referendum (Law No. 4/2017, Arts. 92A).

The role of the Welsh Secretary of State has become similar to the role of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Wales also received competences in consenting for new energy projects, fracking, sewerage, teachers’ pay, licensing gaming machines in new premises, speed limits, pedestrian crossings, and traffic signs (Law No. 4/2017).

Reforms have slightly increased the autonomy of the mayor of the Greater London Authority. Under the Localism Act 2011 (Law No. 20/2011) the mayor received competences in land acquisition and social housing, maintaining the economic development strategy, the power to establish mayoral development corporations, and responsibility for the London environment strategy. The London Assembly was given the power to reject mayoral strategies by a two-thirds majority (Council of Europe 2014; Sandford 2017).

The score for the Greater London Authority on policy scope remains a 2.

A regional tier consisting of Regional Development Agencies co-existing alongside Regional Assemblies (later Regional Leader Boards) and the Government Offices for the Regions has been functioning in England since 1999. In March 2012, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government abolished the Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices for the Regions, and Regional Leaders Boards (Council of Europe 2014). Some of the RDA’s functions were transferred to Whitehall while others were taken over by partnerships between local governments and business. Land use planning became essentially a local function (Pearce and Ayres 2012) and local authorities are increasingly exploring ways to pool resources and deliver shared services (Deas and Pugalis 2016).

Regions (in England) are phased out as from 2012.


46 Wales scores 3 on institutional depth, 3 on fiscal autonomy, and 2 on executive as of 2017. The scores for Wales since 2017 are not included because the update runs until and including 2016.
Collaboration between local authorities was enhanced in 2009 with the introduction of the combined authority as a new type of local authority (Law No. 20/2009). Combined authorities must have at least two contiguous local government areas, membership is voluntary, and a local authority may only belong to one combined authority (Law No. 20/2009, Art. 103). The first combined authority was established for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in 2011 followed by an additional four in 2014: ‘Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield’, ‘Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland’, ‘Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral’, and ‘West Yorkshire’ combined authorities. The ‘Tees Valley’ and ‘West Midlands’ combined authorities followed in 2016. Collectively, these seven combined authorities involve forty-four constituent local authorities and a total of about 13.5 million inhabitants which is around twenty-one per cent of the total population. It is foreseen that more devolution deals will be concluded in the near future.47

The two main competences of combined authorities are economic development and transport which were transferred from the constituent local authorities and from the central government. Combined authorities can obtain additional powers and funding as part of ‘city deals’ (Law Nos. 20/2009, Arts. 104-105 and 20/2001, Arts. 15-16; Sandford 2016). A reform in 2016 gave combined authorities a general power of competence and they are now also allowed to have health service functions (Law No. 1/2016, Arts. 10 and 18). Combined authorities are fiscally dependent on intergovernmental transfers from central government and from the constituent local authorities (Law No. 20/2009, Art. 92). A reform in 2016 introduced the possibility to establish direct elections for a mayor and combined authorities with directly elected mayors can increase business rates by 2p in the pound. The 2016 reform also introduced the same borrowing autonomy as for other local governments which means that combined authorities—but only those with a directly elected mayor—can borrow with prior approval from the central government (Local Government Association 2016; Sandford 2017). These 2016 reforms went into effect in six combined authorities when their mayors were elected on 4 May 2017 (Dempsey 2017; Law No. 1/2016, Art. 2).48 The council of a combined authority is elected by and from the constituent county and/or district councils and the council of the combined authority elects its own executive except when a combined authority has opted for a directly elected mayor (Law No. 20/2009, Arts. 89 and 90).

Combined authorities score 2 on institutional depth, 1 on policy scope, 0 on fiscal autonomy, 0 on borrowing autonomy, 1 on assembly and 2 on executive for 2011-2016. We start scoring when a combined authority is established and we weigh the scores by population size when we derive country scores.

Primary


47 Devolution deals were concluded for the ‘Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’ and ‘West of England’ combined authorities in 2017.
48 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands, and West of England.
March 26, 2015.
January 28, 2016.

Secondary


United States

The United States (US) has, for the most part, two regional tiers: states and, in the more populous and older states, counties. Puerto Rico is an Associated Free State and, in 2016, there were 566 federally recognized Indian and Alaskan Tribes. No regional reform has affected the regional authority scores for the states, Puerto Rico, and Indian Tribes.

Eleven states have an intermediate tier of counties which are both general purpose and have an average population of at least 150,000: Arizona (fifteen counties), California (fifty-eight), Delaware (three), Florida (sixty-seven), Maryland (twenty-four), Massachusetts (fourteen, seven since 2000), Nevada (sixteen), New Jersey (twenty-one), New York (fifty-eight), Pennsylvania (sixty-seven), and Washington (thirty-nine). Connecticut had eight counties until 1960 when the state replaced the counties with fourteen planning regions.
Counties fall under Dillon’s rule or under Home rule and both forms of authority regimes may exist in the same state. With Dillon’s rule, counties can only legislate within areas defined and allowed by the state constitution whereas under Home rule, counties can legislate beyond what is specified in the state constitution (Bowman and Kearney 2011). Counties in California, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania fall under either Dillon’s rule or Home rule but counties in Arizona, New York, and Washington all have Home rule.\(^{49}\)

Tax powers for counties vary by state. Most counties can set the rate of a property tax and many can impose an excise tax. Counties in Arizona, California, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, New York, and Washington can set the rate of a sales and use tax, mostly in the form of surtax on the rate set by the state. In Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania counties cannot set the rate of the sales and use tax. Counties in Massachusetts may levy taxes if approved by a budget advisory board of local government officials.\(^{50}\)

The scores of counties are not affected; the discussion above corrects some detail mentioned in the original country profile.

The capital city of Washington DC (or District of Colombia) has its own law and further details are provided in the original country profile. Although some cities in the US have a large number of inhabitants, states do not have special metropolitan government structures. Cities may have their own charter which means that the city is governed by its own charter document than by state law. Large cities are often consolidated city-county governments which means that they merge the city and county into one unified jurisdiction. In addition, many large cities have subdivisions which may have their own directly elected councils but often city councils do not delegate many competences to these sub-city councils.

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