



Ricerca e Sviluppo

Administrative reform in EU countries

Fact sheets:

Basic information

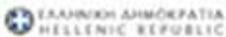
The views expressed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Italian Department for Public Administration, and Formez.

| Austria |  | Belgium |  |
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| <p>Austria has a size of 83 858 sq. km and a population of approximately 8.15 million people. It was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938 and occupied by the Allied Forces until 1955, when it became once again a federal, independent republic; it joined the European Union in 1995.</p> <p>The Head of State is a Federal President, elected by direct suffrage every 6 years. The Federal Chancellor is also elected by direct suffrage. The Austrian parliament has two chambers, the <i>Bundesrat</i> – with 64 state representatives, according to population – and the <i>Nationalrat</i> – with 138 members who are elected directly.</p> <p>Austria is divided into 9 Federal states (<i>Länder</i>) whose administrations depend on their respective governments. The Regional President is the head of government of each Land; in matters that regard the Land, the Regional President, like the Federal Chancellor with regards to the minister, does not occupy a higher place in the hierarchy than those of the other members of the Land government, the councillors. In matters of great importance that regard the Land, the Land government decides as a collegial organ. In the indirect administration of state affairs, the administrative body in charge is the Regional President, who receives instructions from the minister and who has the right to impart instructions to the councillors.</p> <p>The central administration employs 171 000 people, or 2.1 % of Austria's population, while local administrations employ 233 000 people, or 2.9 % of the population. Public spending in 2004 accounted for 50.7 % of the GDP, for a total of 119.530 million euros.</p> | | <p>Size: 30.528 Km² Population: 10.396.000 Population density: 341 people/Km²</p> <p>Form of government: Constitutional monarchy. Capital: Brussels (pop. 141.300., 1.800.000 urban area). Other cities: Antwerp 455.000 (945.000 urban area), Gent 229.300, Charleroi 200.600, Liege 185.500, Bruges 117.000, Schaerbeek 110.300, Namur 106.200. Ethnic groups: Flemish 58%, Walloon 33%, others 9%. Public spending/GDP: 49.3% (Source: Eurostat 2004) Public sector employees: about 3.2% (Source: SCP, Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> <p>Belgium is divided into three communities: French-speaking, Flemish-speaking, and German-speaking, and three regions: Brussels (with a French- and Flemish-speaking population of about 960.000), Flanders (with a mainly Flemish-speaking population of about 6.000.000), and Wallonia (with a mainly French-speaking population of about 3.300.000). The latter two regions are each divided into five provinces (local French, German, and Flemish names in parentheses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flanders (Flemish-speaking; in Flemish, Flandre or Flandres in French, Flandern in German): Antwerp (Antwerpen), Limburg (Limburg), East Flanders (Oost-Vlaanderen), West Flanders (West-Vlaanderen), Flemish Brabant (Vlaams-Brabant) • Wallonia (French-speaking, except for nine municipalities in the eastern part of Liege province that make up Belgium's German-speaking community; <i>Wallonie</i> in French, <i>Wallonië</i> in Flemish, <i>die Wallonie</i> in German): Brabant Wallon, Namur, Liège, Hainaut, Luxembourg • Brussels Capital Region (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale in French, Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest in Dutch, die Region Brüssel-Hauptstadt in German). <p>Each province (including the Brussels Capital Region) is further subdivided in municipalities called <i>gemeenten</i> in Flemish and <i>communes</i> in French.</p> <p>The administration of the country is in the hands of a number of different entities that are autonomously in charge of the matters with which they have been entrusted. Indeed, article 1 of the Constitution states that: "Belgium is a Federal State made up of Communities and Regions". Decision-making power is thus not limited to the Federal Parliament and Government.</p> <p>Responsibilities have been assigned in light of two main factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the concept of 'Community', which refers to the shared characteristics of its members, especially the language, or better yet the 'culture', that characterises them; the communities include the Flemish, French, and German ones; 2. regional histories, in particular the different aspirations to autonomy expressed by each of the 3 Belgian regions: Flanders, Wallonia, and the Brussels Capital Region. <p>From an institutional point of view, the separation of powers, albeit not a rigid one, is ensured by the principle of reciprocal controls. Legislative power is in the hands of the Parliament and the King. The Parliament is bicameral; federal executive power is in the hands of the King and his government, made of ministers and secretaries of state; judicial power is in the hands of the courts. The separation of powers is present at every level of government (Communities and Regions) that has its own legislative and executive powers, while judiciary power is in the hands of the same entities at the federal, regional, and community levels.</p> | |

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| <p>Cyprus</p> |  | <p>Denmark</p> |  |
| <p>Cyprus has a size of 9.251 km² and a population of 730,400 (2004 estimate). Cyprus is a democratic, independent, and sovereign republic with a presidential government regime. The President is Greek while the Vice-President is Turkish, they are chosen respectively by the Greek and Turkish communities. The President of the Republic is both the head of state and the head of government. He is elected by universal suffrage to a five-year term. He holds the executive power and appoints the Council of Ministers and its president. The presidential office is independent and incompatible with the charge of minister, parliamentary representative, mayor, city council member, or member of the security forces. The current Constitution dates back to 1960, and reserves the office of Vice-President to the Turkish-Cypriot community. The Council of Ministers is jointly appointed by the President and the Vice-President, and it is accountable to the President only, who presides over the Council of Ministers and who has veto power over decisions that regard foreign policy, defence, and national security. The parliament is unicameral, and it is made up of the House of Representatives, which includes 80 representatives (56 from the Greek-Cypriot community, and 24 from the Turkish-Cypriot community) who are elected to five-year terms. The current electoral law calls for a simple proportional system. The House of Representatives holds the legislative power. The president of the House of Representatives is a Greek-Cypriot, chosen by the Greek-Cypriot representatives. According to the Constitution, the vice-president is chosen by the House of Representatives. The 1960 Constitution calls for the following judicial institutions: the Supreme Court of the Republic, the Court of Assizes, District Courts, Military Courts, Tribunals for Industrial Disputes, Tribunals for Rent Controls, and Family Law Tribunals. The Supreme Court is the final appeals court, and the final court of judgement for constitutional matters and administrative laws. The Attorney General of the Republic is appointed by the President of the republic and is the Head of the Legislative Office of the Republic, which is an independent office. The Attorney General is the legal counsel of the President and of the Council of Ministers. With regards to local administrations, the Republic of Cyprus is divided in 6 districts, with two distinct types of local bodies: 33 municipalities and 576 communal councils. Cyprus is a member of the United Nations and of the Council of Europe. It is a member of the Commonwealth and of the non-aligned countries and it participates in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Cyprus became a member of the European Union on May 1, 2004. The Greek-Cypriot economy is prosperous by highly susceptible to outside influences. The service sector, especially tourism and financial services, dominates the economy. The Turkish-Cypriot economy has about one-third of the south's per-capita GDP, and economic development tends to be volatile. Turkish-Cypriots depend heavily on fund transfers from the Turkish government, which supplies about 300 million dollars a year from the "TRNC" budget, and regularly supplies additional funds for major infrastructure projects. Agriculture and the public sector employ almost half of the workforce, and tourism potential is very high.</p> | | <p>Size: 43.093 Km² Population: 5.411.000 (1/1/2005) Population density: 126 ab/Km² Capital: Copenhagen (population 502.000., 1.815.000 urban area) Other cities: Århus 228.500., Odense 145.600, Ålborg 121.500 Ethnic groups: Danes 95%, Europeans 3%, Asians 1%, others 1% Public spending/GDP : 56.3% (Source: Eurostat 2004) Public sector employees: about 3.1% (Source: SCP, Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> <p>From an institutional point of view, the hereditary constitutional monarchy, based on the Constitution of June 5, 1953, calls for the separation of powers in keeping with the principle of reciprocal control. The parliament (Folketing) holds the legislative power, the Government holds the executive power, and the courts hold the legislative power. Denmark is divided into 13 counties (<i>amter</i>, singular: <i>amt</i>), and 271 communes (<i>kommuner</i>, singular <i>kommune</i>). The upcoming institutional reform calls for the substitution of the current counties with five new regions, and a reduction in the number of communes to 98. The new communes will assume the responsibilities of the former counties. Most of the new communes will have a population of over 20 000. The reform will be implemented on January 1, 2007.</p> <p>The current Danish counties are: Aarhus, Frederiksborg, Funen (Fyn), Copenhagen (København), North Jutland (Nordjylland), Ribe, Ringkjøbing, Roskilde, South Jutland (Sønderjylland), Storstrøm, Vejle, Viborg, West Zealand (Vestsjælland).</p> <p>Three communes enjoy special status: Bornholm, Copenhagen, Frederiksborg.</p> <p>Greenland and the Faeroe Islands also belong to the Kingdom of Denmark, but they have autonomous statutes and are basically self-ruled. Each one is represented by two seats in the parliament.</p> | |

| Estonia |  | Finland |  |
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| <p>Estonia is a constitutional democracy with a President who is elected to a four-year term, and a single-chamber parliament. The government is the executive branch, and it is made up of the Prime Minister, appointed by the President, and 14 ministers. The Head of State, the Head of Government, and the Cabinet hold the executive power. Legislative power is held by the Parliament (Riigikogu), which is renewed every four years and is made of 101 elected representatives. The parliament is responsible for all the most important state matters.</p> <p>The judiciary power is held by the Supreme Court, made of 19 judges, whose president is appointed by the Parliament to a lifelong term.</p> <p>Estonia has a population of 1.332.893 and a size of 45.226 km². It has 15 administrative divisions (<i>maakonnad</i>) that are closer to provinces than states in terms of size. According to OECD data, the public sector employs 21 000 people, roughly 1.5% of the population. Most of them (19 000) work for the central administration. In 2004 public spending was 3.317 million euros, equal to 37.3 % of PIL, 1.5% more than in 2003 [EU, 2005].</p> | | <p>Finland is a parliamentary democratic republic with a population of 5.223.442 and a size of 338.145 km². The new Finnish constitution came into force on March 1, 2000, making previous constitutional laws void ("Constitution Act" of 1919, "Parliament Act" of 1928 and "Acts on the High Court of Impeachment and on Ministerial Responsibility" of 1922). The new Constitution reunites in a single text all of the state's fundamental laws, and it strengthens the powers of the parliament and of the government.</p> <p>Finland has a single-chamber parliament with 200 representatives. Executive power is held by the President of the Republic and the government. The Constitutional reform of 2000 significantly strengthened the powers of the government both in terms of internal administration and foreign policy. The judiciary system is based on three degrees of appeals, and it is in the hands of 71 District Tribunals, 6 Appeals Courts, and the Supreme Court, along with administrative courts and special courts. At the central level, the Finnish public administration is made up of the government – currently made up of the Prime Minister and 18 ministers – and public sector firms and agencies. Finland is divided in 6 provinces (Aland, Etela-Suomen Laani, Ita-Suomen Laani, Lansi-Suomen Laani, Lappi, Oulun Laani). The island province of Aland has a certain degree of administrative autonomy and can legislate independently on some matters. The following decentralised government offices operate at the provincial level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "State Provincial Offices" • "Employment and Economic Development Centres" (TE-Centres) • "Regional Environment Centres" • "Occupational Health and Safety Inspectorates" • "Road districts under the Finnish Road Administration" • "Traffic management centres" <p>These State Provincial Offices are entrusted with the tasks of 7 ministries in the following areas: social assistance and public health, education and culture, police, civil protection, traffic, competition and consumer protection, judiciary administration.</p> <p>There are also 20 Regional Councils, made up of representatives of the municipal authorities. Although a 1994 reform transferred planning and territorial development powers from the State Provincial Offices to the Regional Councils, the latter's administrative powers remain limited. Recently, the Kainuu Region has been experimenting with strengthening regional competences and autonomy.</p> <p>At an intermediate level there are 82 regional sub-units whose responsibilities are limited to managing employment services and co-operation between municipalities.</p> <p>The municipality is the main unit of local self-government in Finland. The autonomy of the 444 municipalities (source: Eurostat 2004) is traditionally very extensive, as it is responsible for two-thirds of public services.</p> <p>About 125 000 people are employed by the Finnish public administration: 5 000 in the ministries, 24000 in other central administrative agencies and institutions, 55 000 in local and regional administrations. Universities and polytechnic institutes have a staff of approximately 31 000 people. Total public spending accounts for 50.7% of GDP.</p> | |

| France |  <small>Liberté·Égalité·Fraternité REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE</small> | Germany |  |
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| <p>France has a population of 59,900,700 (2004 estimate) and a size of 543.965 km².</p> <p>The political system of the Fifth French Republic has characteristics of both a parliamentary democracy and a strong executive branch, and it is often called a semi-presidential system. The legislative power belongs to the bi-cameral parliament, made up of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly has 577 members, elected to five-year terms by direct universal suffrage. The Senate is made-up of 321 members, elected to a nine-year term by indirect universal suffrage, with renewal possible every three years.</p> <p>The President of the Republic is the Head of State, who is elected to a five year term through direct universal suffrage. According to the French Constitution the President has important powers in foreign policy and defence matters, as well as in internal policy. Constitutionally, the executive power is held by the Council of Ministers, which is co-ordinated by the President.</p> <p>The Prime Minister is the Head of Government, who is appointed and deposed by the President of the Republic. The ministers are appointed and deposed by the President, after consultation with the Prime Minister.</p> <p>France is considered a centralised state, but in the last several years some powers have reverted to the 22 regions and 96 departments. France has over 36 000 municipalities.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Fifth French Republic was adopted by referendum on September 28, 1958, and it has been amended numerous times since then.</p> <p>France was one of the founding members of the European Community in 1957.</p> <p>France is currently in transition from a modern economy – which has a high degree of state intervention as one of its main characteristics – to an economy based mostly on market mechanisms. The state has either partly or totally privatised many large firms, banks, and insurance companies. The state still retains control of many other large firms, such as Air France, France Telecom, Renault and Thales, and it also controls many economic sectors such as the transportation and defence industries.</p> <p>The telecommunications sector is gradually being opened to competition.</p> <p>In 2004 total state revenues were equal to 50.1% of the GDP, while total public spending was equal to 53.8% of GDP. Per capita income was equal to 27 000 euros.</p> <p>The International Monetary Fund forecasts a GDP of 2 216 273 million dollars in 2005.</p> | | <p>Germany is a federal republic of 82.7 million people, with a size of 357.021 km² [UNFPA, 2005]. The Federal President is the Head of State, who is elected by the <i>Bundesversammlung</i> – the federal convention – to a five-year term. The President's role is mostly as a figurehead to promote political cohesion. The Federal Chancellor (<i>Bundeskanzler</i>) is the Head of Government and the head of the executive power, which is also entrusted to the Cabinet of Ministers (<i>Bundeskabinett</i>, <i>Bundesregierung</i>). The Chancellor heads the Cabinet and decides its political strategy, as well as directing the government's administrative affairs.</p> <p>The Bundestag is Germany's Parliament. Along with the <i>Bundesrat</i>, the <i>Bundestag</i> is the legislative body, although a significant portion of legislative activity is initiated by the executive branch. The Bundesrat ("federal council") represents the 16 landers. The Federal Convention (<i>Bundesversammlung</i>) is a special body convoked every 5 years to choose the President. It is a part of Parliament.</p> <p>Within the federal system, the public administration has three different levels: the Federation ("Bund"); 16 federal states known as "<i>Bundesländer</i>"; and the municipalities. The municipalities are grouped in districts, which are administrative units that are intermediate between the landers and the municipalities, of which there are 439.</p> <p>Administrative activities are divided between the three different levels, although – except for a few matters for which the federation is responsible – most administrative activities are in the hands of the landers and the districts, cities, and communities under the supervision of the regional governments. Broadly speaking, the federal states are responsible for the public administration, while the federation is in charge of the legislative branch. The federal states then implement laws as independent administrative bodies at the <i>Länder</i> level, while they implement federal laws under the will of the federation. There are differences among sectors: for example, the Landers are in charge of drafting and administrating legislation regarding culture and education, public order, and security. The Landers are also in charge of regional governmental programming for national cohesion and environmental protection.</p> <p>The federal administration is in the hands of the federal ministries, the office of the federal president, the federal chancellor, the federal press office, and the federal audit court ("<i>Bundesrechnungshof</i>"), which is independent from the federal government. High Authorities: many central authorities and institutions depend on the federation; they deal with specific areas of responsibility and act over the entire national territory; they are typically subordinate to the Chancellor's office and to the federal ministries. Central Authorities: in addition to the high authorities, there are approximately one hundred central authorities, which work closely with smaller authorities and deal with information and service centres.</p> <p>The Lander's authorities are subdivided in the same way as the Federation's. The High Regional Authorities include the President Minister, who holds the State Chancellor's Office, and the Ministers of the Lander (except in Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg where they have different names). The municipalities follow the tasks and resources assigned to them by the Federation and the Landers in order to exercise their administrative functions. They can also autonomously pursue certain activities using their own financial resources. Landers are responsible for identifying and constituting municipalities, as well as supervising their activities.</p> <p>In 2003 about 4.05 million people were employed in the public sector (including temporary units and the armed forces), with 12.1% working for the Federation, 53.1% working for the Federal (<i>Bundesländer</i>) and 34.8% working for local governments [Federal Government, 2005]. Most of the personnel working for Landers works in the public security sector.</p> <p>In 2004 public spending was equal to 1 033 930 million euros, or 47.5% of the 2004 GDP (-1.3% with respect to 2003) [CE, 2005].</p> | |

| Greece |  | Ireland |  |
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| <p>Greece is a parliamentary democratic republic with a population of 10 668 354 and a size of 131 940 km². The Greek Constitution of June 11, 1975 was revised twice, in 1986 and in 2001. The changes made in 1986 reduced the powers of the President of the Republic, thus marking a shift to a parliamentary democracy.</p> <p>The 1975 Constitution is based on the division of the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers, which are held respectively by a 300-member, single-chamber Parliament; by the President of the Republic and the government, made up of the Prime Minister and the other ministers; and by a judiciary system characterised by the distinction between administrative, civil, and penal courts, whose higher authorities are the Supreme Court for penal and civil justice, the State Council, and the State Auditors Departments for administrative matters, and the Special Supreme Court for constitutional questions and cases of conflict between the three highest courts.</p> <p>The central administration is made up of the Cabinet, which includes the Prime Minister and 16 ministers.</p> <p>The lowest level of local self-government underwent extensive reforms in November 1997, when larger, more uniform municipalities were created to replace the multitude of communities that existed previously. There are 900 urban municipalities and 131 rural municipalities with responsibilities in the following sectors: culture, transportation, economic and social promotion, water and gas management, and maintenance of school buildings. The municipalities are completely autonomous in these sectors, without any subordinate relationships with the central government or other local government levels. Greece's 54 provinces represent the intermediate level of local self-government. They enjoy administrative and financial independence, and full responsibility over local development, public service management, public health, construction, parkland, and the construction of school buildings.</p> <p>There are also 13 regions, which are territorial entities of a mixed nature. The regional councils are made up of representatives from the municipalities, the provinces, and social and professional associations, while the secretary general is appointed by the government. The regions help in the vertical coordination of economic policies, since they are responsible for regional economic and social development.</p> <p>The only available data for public sector employees is from 1991-1995, when there were 111 000 at the central level, equal to 1.1% of the population, and 40 000 at the local level, equal to 0.4% of the population (source: World Bank) . Total public spending in 2004 was equal to 52% of the GDP.</p> | <p>The Republic of Ireland has a size of 70.273 km² and a population of 3 917 336. Public spending accounts for 34.3% of GDP (Eurostat data, 2004) and public sector employment accounts for 1.3% of the total (source: Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> <p>Ireland is a parliamentary republic. The President of Ireland (<i>Uachtarán na hÉireann</i>) is the head of state. He or she is elected to a seven-year term, and can be re-elected only once. The Prime Minister (<i>Taoiseach</i>), is nominated by the Parliament and appointed by the President. The Taoiseach is normally the leader of the party or of the coalition that wins more seats in the election. There are 15 government departments, each one headed by a minister nominated by the Taoiseach.</p> <p>The Republic of Ireland is made up of 26 counties, although from an administrative point of view there are 30 counties, since the County Dublin was divided into four administrative units in 1990, and County Tipperary was divided in two. In addition, there are five cities (Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford) and five boroughs (Clonmel, Drogheda, Killkenny, Sligo and Wexford) that are administered independently from their counties.</p> <p>The bicameral parliament (<i>Oireachtas</i>), is made up of the Senate (<i>Seanad Éireann</i>) and the House of Representatives (<i>Dáil Éireann</i>). The Senate has 60 members: 11 are appointed by the Taoiseach, 6 are elected by national universities, and 43 are elected in national elections. The <i>Dáil</i> has 166 members, called <i>Teachtaí Dála</i>. The government (<i>Án Rialtas</i>) is constitutionally limited to 15 members. No more than 2 members of the Senate can join the government, while the Taoiseach, the <i>Tánaiste</i> (Speaker of the House) and the Minister of Finance must be members of the House of Representatives. The Irish electoral system is based on the single transferable vote, with a high degree of proportionality.</p> | | |

| Italy |  | Latvia |  |
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| <p>Italy has a population of approximately 58 million (2005 Sistan estimates), and a population density of almost 196 people per km².</p> <p>Italy is a parliamentary republic, in which the bicameral parliament holds legislative power. The parliament is made up of the House of Representatives (630 members) and the Senate (315 elected senators, plus the senators for life). The parliament is elected by the people through a mixed majoritary-proportional system. The legislature lasts at most five years, but it can be called off earlier. The President of the Republic is the state's highest office, and he represents the country's unity. He is elected every seven years by a joint session of the parliament, along with regional representatives. He has legislative, judicial, and executive responsibilities, although his role is almost entirely as a figurehead.</p> <p>The executive power is in the hands of the government, which is made up of the Council of Ministers; the Prime Minister, who is the head of government, is also the President of the Council of Ministers. On the basis of the results of the legislative elections, the President of the Republic entrusts one of the members of the winning coalition with the tasks of forming the new government, by seeking out parliamentary consensus and proposing a list of ministers. The government takes full powers once it has received a vote of confidence from both branches of parliament.</p> <p>Administrative responsibilities are shared by the state and by local administrations (regions, provinces, municipalities), according to the principles of subsidiarity, differentiation, and adequacy (article 118 of the Constitution). The areas in which the state has exclusive responsibility are identified in the Constitution, as are those for which the state is responsible for setting guidelines and legal limits (while their implementation is in the hands of local administrations); local authorities are responsible for all the matters that are not explicitly in the hands of the central administration. The Constitutional Court is responsible for judging conflicts of competence between the state and local administrations.</p> <p>Italy is divided into 20 regions, of which 5 (Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d'Aosta, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia) have special status. The regions are further subdivided into 110 provinces (including several that are currently being instituted) and 8102 municipalities.</p> <p>The Conference of Autonomous Provinces and Regions (initially called "Conference of the Presidents of the Autonomous Provinces and Regions") was created in 1981, as a way to achieve political coordination between the presidents of the autonomous provinces and regions. It is the official institution in charge of ensuring inter-regional institutional dialogue, and it has often proven itself to be a political and institutional laboratory capable of making sound proposals in the field of institutional reforms. It is here that the documents that are presented to the governments in the meetings of the State-Regional Conference and the Unified Conference are prepared.</p> <p>The public sector employs approximately 3 400 000 people, with about 10 000 administrative institutions, and financial flows of 143 billion euros, equivalent to 11% of the GDP.</p> | | <p>Latvia has a size of 64 689 sq km, with a population of 2.35 million.</p> <p>In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia became independent, along with its two Baltic "sisters", Lithuania and Estonia.</p> <p>Latvia is a parliamentary republic. The President of the Republic is both the Head of State and the Commander in Chief. He or she is appointed by the parliament to a four-year term. Legislative power is held by the Seima (Parliament), and thanks to article 81 of the Constitutions, it is also delegated to the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>The Seima is a single-chamber parliament, whose 100 members are elected by a proportional system every four year. The executive power is held by the government (Council of Ministers), which is made up of the Prime Minister and the ministers appointed by him. There are currently 17 ministers.</p> <p>Latvia has four administrative regions: Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme and Latrale.</p> <p>There are two levels of local administration in Latvia. In 2005 there were 563 local governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 530 municipalities that belong to the lower territorial level; - 33 municipalities that belong to the higher territorial level. <p>Local administrations are governed by councils, which are elected by the citizenry, as prescribed by the Constitution (<i>Satversme</i>). All the functions and activities of local governments are defined by the "Local government law".</p> <p>The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LARG) serves as a bridge between local and regional administrations. It was created on December 15, 1991 in order to link these two levels of government. According to article 96 of the law on local governments, the LARG has the authority to represent local and regional governments in negotiations with the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>Latvia became a member of the European Union on May 1, 2004.</p> <p>Public spending accounts for 36.2% of the GDP (Eurostat data, 2004) and the public administration accounts for 1.9% of total employment (Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> | |

| Lithuania |  | Luxembourg |  |
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| <p>Lithuania achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1990. Its Constitution dates back to October 25, 1992. Lithuania is a parliamentary democracy, and the legislative power is held by the single-chamber parliament (<i>Seimas</i>), which has 141 members, 71 of which are elected directly by the people, and the remaining 70 through a proportional system.</p> <p>The executive power is held by the government, which is the main producer of legislation. It is made up of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister, who is subject to approval by the parliament, is appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic, who also appoints the remaining ministers upon suggestion of the Prime Minister. The judiciary power is in the hands of the court system, which is made up of the Supreme Court, the Appeals Court, 5 County Courts, and 54 District Courts.</p> <p>Lithuania has a size of 65.200 sq km and a population of 3.8 million. From an administrative point of view, Lithuania is divided into 10 counties and 60 municipalities. There are 46 800 central government employees – 1.26% of the population - and 18 000 local government employees.</p> <p>In 2004, public spending amounted to 6.218 million euros, or 34.7% of GDP.</p> | | <p>Size: 2.586 Km² Population: 451.600 Population density: 175 ab/Km²</p> <p>Form of government: Hereditary constitutional monarchy Capital: Luxembourg (pop. 77.300) Other cities: Esch-sur-Alzette 27.900, Differdange 18.900, Dudelange 17.500. Ethnic groups: Luxembourggeois 61.5%, Portuguese 14%, French 5%, Italian 4%, Belgian 3.5%, German 2.5%, others 9.5%</p> <p>Public spending/GDP : 46% (Source: Eurostat 2004)</p> <p>Public sector employees: about 2.1% (Source: SCP, Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> <p>Luxembourg has a parliamentary government with a hereditary constitutional government. According to the 1868 Constitution, the executive power is held by the Grand Duke and the Cabinet, which is made up of a Prime Minister and 19 ministers. Legislative power is held by the House of Representatives, whose members are elected directly by the people to five-year terms. A second body, the "Conseil d'Etat" (State Council) is made up of 21 citizens appointed by the Grand Duke, and it assists the House of Representatives in drafting laws. Judicial power is held by independent courts and tribunals: there are two types of jurisdictions – judiciary and administrative – along with a Constitutional Court.</p> <p>Luxembourg is divided into 116 municipalities which are responsible for all matters of municipal interest: public order, health, transportation, etc. In these fields, they are financially autonomous.</p> | |

| Malta |  | The Netherlands |  |
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| <p>Size: 316 Km² Population: 399 900 Population density: 1 266 people/Km² Type of government: parliamentary republic Capital: Valletta Other cities: Birkirkara 21 900, Qormi 18 100, Mosta 17 600 Ethnic groups: Maltese 97%, English, Italian, and others 3% Public spending/GDP : 48,1% (Source : Eurostat 2004) Public sector employs: about 1.7% (Source: SCP, Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> <p>Malta is a democratic republic founded on work and on respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual (art. 1 Cost.) . Since 1974, Malta is a parliamentary republic that belongs to the Commonwealth. Powers are divided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive power is held by the President, who is elected by the Parliament to a five-year term. The President appoints as Prime Minister the leader of the party that obtained the most seat in the single-chamber Parliament (House of Representatives). The Prime Minister then nominates the other ministers from among the members of Parliament, and they are appointed by the President. • Legislative power is held by the Parliament, which is made up of 65/69 members elected to five-year terms through a proportional system • Judiciary power is held by first-degree courts and appeals courts, as well as by tribunals that are responsible for specific subjects. <p>The 1993 reform divided Malta into 68 "local councils" (in Maltese: <i>Kunsilli Lokali</i>), which are elected for three years through a proportional system: 54 are on Malta, while 14 are on Gozo. There are no intermediate levels between local governments and the national government. A mayor heads each local council. The councils are responsible for all matters related to the management of the local territory as a peripheral administration of the central government.</p> | | <p>The Netherlands are a constitutional monarchy. The king has a largely ceremonial role; his main tasks include choosing the prime minister and appointing judges. The government holds the executive power, and it is headed by the Prime Minister, who also heads the Ministry for General Affairs.</p> <p>Legislative power is held by the Parliament, which is made up of a lower chamber (the most important one, with 150 members) and an upper chamber (with 75 members), which only has veto power over the laws approved by the lower chamber.</p> <p>In addition to the central government, there are two lower administrative levels: provinces and municipalities. The country is divided into 12 provinces (North Brabant, Drenthe, Flevoland, Frisia, Gheldria, Groninga, Limburg, Southern Holland, Northern Holland, Utrecht, Overijssel and Zeeland), which are further subdivided into 483 municipalities; they are governed by provincial and municipal councils. The country is also divided into 37 "water districts", which are responsible for water management; each one is headed by an elected council.</p> <p>In the Netherlands, cooperation between the various levels of government is fundamental: representatives of the central, provincial, and municipal governments meet regularly to discuss themes of shared interest. Within this framework, the Association of Provincial Authorities-IPO and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities-VNG launched a dialogue on inter-administrative relations. In 2004, an administrative consultation presided by the Prime Minister reached an agreement known as the Administrative Relations Code.</p> <p>The Netherlands have a size of 41 864 km² and a population of 15.8 million; public spending accounts for 48.6% of the GDP (Eurostat data, 2004) and the public administration accounts for 2.4% of total employment (Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), Public Sector Performance, 2004).</p> | |

| Poland | eGov.pl | Portugal |  |
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| <p>The Polish Republic is a parliamentary democracy. Its constitution dates back to 1997. The Parliament, which holds the legislative power, is made up of two chambers (<i>Sejm</i> and <i>Senat</i>), which are elected through universal suffrage every four years. The executive power is held by the government: the President of the Council of Ministers and the ministers themselves are nominated by the Head of State, with whom they share responsibilities in terms of national defence and foreign policy. The President of the Republic is elected by direct universal suffrage. Judiciary power is held by the Supreme Court (Sąd Najwyższy), whose judges are nominated by the National Council on Justice and appointed by the President of the Republic, and by the Constitutional Tribunal (Trybunał Konstytucyjny), whose judges are nominated by the Sejm. The Sejm, with the Senate's approval, appoints the Ombudsman, or Commissioner for the Protection of Civil Rights (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich), whose mandate lasts five years.</p> <p>Poland is divided into 16 regions (called wojewodztwa: Dolnośląskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Łódzkie, Lubelskie, Lubuskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Opolskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Pomorskie, Śląskie, Świętokrzyskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Wielkopolskie, Zachodniopomorskie), 380 counties and 2500 municipalities, with the following responsibilities:</p> <p>Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development • High level training • Environment • Employment • Social policies • Management of regional roads <p>Counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road building and maintenance • Secondary education • Civil protection • Environment • Employment <p>Municipalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation • Social services • Public housing • Environment • Culture • Health • Primary and childhood education. | | <p>Portugal has a size of 91.906 km² and a population of 10 474 700 (2004 estimate). Portugal is a parliamentary republic. Legislative power is held by the single-chamber parliament, which is made up of 230 members who are elected to four-year terms. Portugal is divided into 8 regions and 308 municipalities.</p> <p>The executive power is held by the national government, headed by the Prime Minister. The President of the Republic is the Head of State. He is elected by popular suffrage to a maximum of two five-year terms. The President has a mostly representative role, but he has the power to dissolve the parliament.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic was adopted on April 2, 1976, and was amended a number of times, most recently in 2004.</p> <p>On January 1, 1986, Portugal became a member of the European Union. In the last few years, after Portugal's entry into the European Union, many Portuguese governments have privatised public firms and liberalised key areas of the economy, especially in the finance and telecommunications fields. The education system is poor, and this has become a serious obstacle to development and economic growth. In economic terms, Portugal's role has been overtaken by low-cost, large-scale producers in central Europe and Asia. At the same time, Portugal is facing difficulties in achieving a competitive economy.</p> <p>In 2004, total state revenues were equivalent to 45.4% of GDO, while total public spending was equivalent to 48.4% of GDP. Per capita income was 17 000 euros.</p> | |

| <p>United Kingdom</p>  | | <p>Czech Republic</p>  | |
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| <p>The United Kingdom, more precisely called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a nation that includes England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, all located in the British Isles, and other territories, some of which are in a post-colonial regime.</p> <p>Parliament is divided into two Houses: the House of Lords, whose members are not elected, and the House of Commons. In both houses there are representatives from England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Sovereign is the Head of State (currently Queen Elizabeth II); her powers include nominating the Prime Minister and the other ministers who make up the government. The government is the expression of the popular will, which chooses the political majority through elections. Ministers who are also department heads make up the Cabinet (which has about 20 members), and they generally assume the title of Secretary of State, or general titles such as Chancellor. The Secretary of the Cabinet is a public official, who since 1983 also has the title of Head of the Home Civil Service.</p> <p>The country is divided into four territorial entities: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland; administrative decentralisation respects this structure and certain public services and policies are different in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>In Scotland, the Scottish Executive, which answers to the Scottish Parliament, has many responsibilities in the fields of health, education, justice, agriculture, and transportation.</p> <p>The same can be said about Wales, where after devolution the National Assembly for Wales represents the decentralised government; the Welsh Assembly Government develops and implements public policies and answers to the National Assembly.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, the situation is slightly different, since administrative functions were decentralised to the Irish National Assembly in 1998, and in 2002 the Assembly was suspended by the Irish Secretary of State. The Secretary, with the assistance of the Office of Ministers, assumed responsibility for the direction and control of Northern Ireland's departments.</p> <p>England is divided into 8 geographic regions and 44 provinces.</p> <p>There are 231 local councils in England, 17 in Scotland, 15 in Northern Ireland, and 9 in Wales. The United Kingdom has a size of approximately 242 500 square km and a population of 59.8 million (National Statistics, 2004).</p> <p>According to OECD data, in the year 2000, 1.804 million people were employed by the central administration, or about 3% of the population. There are an additional 1.989 million employees in the decentralised administration (about 3.4% of the population); 813 000 employees in the education sector (1.4 % of the population), and 968 000 employees in the health sector (1.6% of the population). Public expenditure in 2004 amounted to 750 million euros, equivalent to 43.9% of the GDP (an increase of 7% compared to 2003); 23.5% of this total was for salaries (CE, 2005).</p> | | <p>The Czech Republic has a size of about 798.860 km² and a population of 10 211 500 (2004 estimate). The Czech Republic was born on January 1, 1993, after the dissolution of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. As early as 1989 a stable democratic society was being created in the Czech Republic. Legislative power is in the hands of the bicameral parliament, which is made up of the House and the Senate.</p> <p>The House has 200 members, who are elected through universal suffrage every four years.</p> <p>The Senate, which is the upper chamber, has 81 members who are elected to six-year terms. One-third of the Senate is up for re-election every two years.</p> <p>The Senate must approve constitutional amendments, electoral laws, and the election of the President chosen by the parliament. The Senate and the President have veto power.</p> <p>The President is the Head of State, and is appointed by the Parliament to a five-year term. The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and is elected to a five-year term. The President is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The government holds the executive power.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Czech Republic was adopted on December 16, 1992, and amended in 1997, 2000, 2001 and 2002. The country thus has a solidly liberal Constitution which established a system of democratic institutions. The Czech Constitution calls for a bi-cameral parliament.</p> <p>The Czech republic has 13 administrative regions (<i>kraj</i>) .</p> <p>The Czech Republic became a member of NATO in 1999 and it joined the European Union on May 1, 2004.</p> <p>The Czech Republic is one of the most stable and prosperous of the ex-communist central and eastern European countries. Internal demand, now more than ever, plays a very important role in stimulating development. Inflation is under control.</p> <p>European Union membership provided a further impetus for development and helped orient structural reform.</p> <p>In 2004, the government raised the tax on added value. Health care and social security reforms remain difficult.</p> <p>Other measures include the privatisation of Czech Telecom, scheduled for 2005, improvements in the financial sector, and the efficient use of EU development funds.</p> <p>In 2004, total state revenues accounted for 41.5% of GDO, while total public spending accounted for 44.5% of GDP. Per capita income was 15 700 euros.</p> <p>The Czech Republic GDP in 2005 (IMF estimate): \$125,709 million</p> | |

| Slovakia |  | Slovenia |  |
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| <p>Slovakia is a democratic parliamentary republic, which arose out of the pacific secession from Czechoslovakia in 1993. The country has a population of 5 431 363 and a size of 48.845 km². The Constitution, adopted on September 1, 1992, was amended in 1998 in order to introduce the direct election of the President, and in 2001 in order to allow the country to join NATO and the European Union.</p> <p>Legislative power is held by a single body, the National Council. The government holds the executive power, and it answers to the National Council. The members of the government are appointed by the President of the Republic after being nominated by the Prime Minister. Judiciary power is exercised by 55 district courts, 8 regional courts, and the Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the nation. The Constitutional Court is in charge of matters regarding constitutionality.</p> <p>The main bodies of the central administration include the Government Office, which answers to the Prime Minister, and 14 ministers. The central government exercises its functions at the local level through 8 regional offices, which are responsible for 79 district offices.</p> <p>The administrative decentralisation process, which began in 1990, has been implemented slowly and is still ongoing. This is due in part to the abundance of municipalities, which number 2 891, many of which have less than 1000 inhabitants. There are also 136 cities, including the capital, Bratislava, and the city of Košice, whose organisation is regulated with special laws; these cities enjoy a high degree of autonomy and are subdivided into municipalities.</p> <p>In 1996 Slovakia was divided into 8 different regions, while in 2002 a second level of local government was instituted, while 2004 saw the beginning of an effective decentralisation of power towards regional authorities.</p> <p>The central government employs 25 000 people, or 0.5% of the population, while local administrations employ 18 000 people, or 0.3% of the population. Total public spending accounts for 48% of GDP.</p> | | <p>Slovenia is a democratic parliamentary republic, whose constitution was adopted on December 23, 1991, right after independence from Yugoslavia. It has a population of 2 011 070 and a size of 20.273 km². In May 2004 Slovenia became a member of the European Union.</p> <p>Legislative power is held by the National Assembly (<i>Državni Zbor</i>), made up of 90 representatives, and by the National Council (<i>Državni Svet</i>), which has mostly consultative responsibilities and limited legislative power, and is made up of 40 representatives of social, economic, professional, and local interests. Executive power is held by the President of the Republic, elected by direct popular suffrage, and by the government. The Prime Minister is the head of government and is elected by the National Assembly after being nominated by the Prime Minister. The judiciary system is based on three degrees of judgement. The Supreme Court is the court of last instance with general jurisdiction, while the Constitutional Court is responsible for protecting constitutional principles and fundamental freedoms.</p> <p>The central public administration is made up of 15 ministers, 58 decentralised administrative units – coordinated by their own General Directorate in the Ministry for the Public Administration – and by the regional offices of certain ministries. There are also institutions specialised in public law, such as insurance institutes and agencies.</p> <p>The basic units of local self-governments are the municipalities, which can create and be responsible for even smaller units (towns and villages). Although the 1993 Constitution calls for a double level of local autonomy (municipalities and regions), the regional level has not yet been created. Nevertheless, the municipalities can independently decide to unite and create larger municipalities or regions. The administrative elections of October 2002 included 193 municipalities, 11 of which, including the capital Ljubljana, are classified as urban centres, with broader responsibilities.</p> <p>The central government employs 28 060 people, equal to 1.42% of the population, while local administrations employ 3 400 people, equal to 0.17% of the population. Total public spending accounts for 47.8% of GDP.</p> | |

| Spain |  | Sweden |  |
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| <p>Spain, or the Kingdom of Spain, has a size of 505 955 km² and a population of 43 700 000.</p> <p>The Spanish Constitution, which came into force on December 29, 1978, enshrines the separation of the three state powers: legislative, executive, and judiciary. Spain is a parliamentary monarchy.</p> <p>The Parliament holds the legislative power. It represents the Spanish people and watches over government action. It is made up of two chambers: the Congress of Representatives and the Senate. This parliamentary system is known as an “imperfect bi-cameral system”, since the two chambers have unequal powers. Senators and representatives serve four-year terms. The President of the Government can dissolve Parliament ahead of time.</p> <p>The government exercises the executive function and has regulatory powers. It is in charge of internal and foreign policy, civil and military administration, and national defence. The Government is headed by a President, who is appointed by the King after obtaining the approval of a majority of the Congress of Representatives.</p> <p>Spain is divided into 17 Autonomous Communities, which are further divided into 50 provinces and a little over 8 000 municipalities, in addition to two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla).</p> <p>The central administration employs 906 000 people – or 2.3% of the population, while local administrations employ 1.103 million people – or 2.8% of the population. Public spending in 2004 amounted to 323.619 million euros, or 40.5% of the GDP .</p> | | <p>Sweden has a size of 450 000 sq km and a population of 9 million.</p> <p>It is a constitutional monarchy, in which the King is the Head of State, but whose power is relegated to official and ceremonial duties. According to the Constitution, supreme authority lies with the single-chamber, 349-member Parliament (<i>Riksdag</i>). It has the power to amend the Constitution, and its acts are not subjects to judicial revision. New laws can be promulgated either by the cabinet or by members of Parliament. The latter are elected through the proportional system and serve four-year terms.</p> <p>The judiciary system is made up of civil and criminal courts, and special courts with responsibility over disputes between the public and the government or municipal authorities. Swedish law is codified, and the judicial system also includes local courts, regional appeals courts, and a supreme court.</p> <p>Sweden is divided into 21 regions (<i>län</i>), which in turn include 289 municipalities.</p> <p>The central administration employs 204 000 people (2.3 % of the population), while local administrations employ 832 000 people (9.4 % of the population) . In 2004, public spending amounted to 159.357 million euros, or 57.2% of the GDP.</p> | |

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| <h2>Hungary</h2> |  |
| <p>Hungary has a population of 10 197 119 and a size of 93 030 km².</p> <p>The National Assembly is a single-chamber body, with 386 members. It holds legislative power and remains in charge for four years. The assembly elects the Prime Minister and approves the government's programme.</p> <p>The President of the Republic is elected by secret ballot by two-thirds of the National Assembly. Judiciary power is held by the Supreme Court along with Appeals Courts, Provincial Courts (metropolitan) and Local Courts (metropolitan districts).</p> <p>The government is headed by the Prime Ministers. It holds the executive power and controls the public administration. The ministers make up the government and head their respective ministries. The highest ranking functionaries are the political and administrative under-secretary.</p> <p>There are two levels of local government: 19 provinces, and the municipalities, with the exclusion of Budapest, the capital, which enjoys special status. There are 6 geographic regions.</p> <p>According to the OECD, about 306 000 people work in the public sector, accounting for 3.1% of the population (excluding the armed forces), of which 48% work for the central administrations. In addition, there are 237 000 people employed in public education, and 225 000 working in public health [OECD, 2005].</p> <p>In 2004 total public expenditures amounted to 39.484 million euros, equal to 49.2% of that year's GDP, 6 percentage points less than in the previous year [UE, 2005].</p> | |