



# National Associations of Local and Regional Governments in Europe

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## **Local and Regional Europe A study on the CEMR and its members**

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

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

1. Influencing European policy and legislation in all areas that impact on municipalities and regions,
2. Providing a forum for debate between local and regional governments via their national representative associations. nCEMR is the oldest and broadest European association of local and regional governments. We are the only organisation that brings together the national associations of local and regional governments<sup>3</sup> from 41 European countries<sup>4</sup> and represents, through them, all levels of government local, intermediate and regional.

This study is an introduction to the world of CEMR's members, national associations of local and regional governments. CEMR unites 60 member associations from 41 of the 47 Council of Europe member countries, including all 28 member states of the European Union (EU). Organised in five chapters, this report analyses how CEMR associations are empowered to defend local and regional interests. It compares the representativeness of national Local and Regional Government Associations (LRGAs), their nature, whether their membership is compulsory or voluntary, their human resources, etc. This study also highlights the role of CEMR and its members as legitimate representatives of local and regional governments at the national, European, and international level.

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

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

1. Who CEMR member associations represent, who are their members ;
2. How associations of towns and regions are structured, their nature, their organisation, their staff, etc. ;

3. What they do, how they organise their advocacy towards the central government, the exchange of knowledge between their members, or provide training for elected representatives or civil servants ;
4. Their role in the legislative process ;
5. And their voice at the European or even international level.

In the second part of the study, you will be provided with an overview of all the local and regional government associations that are CEMR members, country by country, on the basis of identity cards. We hope that reading this publication will help you to realise how your area, city, town or region, is connected to others, both nationally and beyond frontiers. National associations are not as well-known as they should be, even by the citizens of their own country. And yet they play a crucial role in linking governments and facilitating governance in partnership. The importance of their role is such that in some cases, these associations are even recognised in the national Constitution. They contribute, directly or indirectly, to local and territorial development, and to our quality of life, as individuals. So, who are they ?