

ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONALISATION IN THE ADRIATIC SPACE

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with 12 figures and 2 tables in the text

CONTENT

<i>Summary</i>	57
1 Introduction	58
2 Italy.....	60
3 Slovenia	62
4 Croatia	66
5 Bosnia and Herzegovina.....	73
6 Montenegro	82
7 Albania	85
8 Conclusions	89
9 References	91

Summary

The paper highlights the current administrative structure as well as administrative developments and decentralisation processes of the countries of the Adriatic space (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania) on the background of cultural and administrative traditions. Focal research questions are: How far is administrative decentralisation, especially at the regional level, advanced? Does regionalisation correspond to functional units and cultural-historical regional identities? What are the reasons for shortcomings?

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1 Introduction

In the period since the fall of Communism and the dissolution of Yugoslavia the administrative structure in the Adriatic space has changed significantly: four new states have emerged, and most of the transformation countries have adopted a new subnational administrative structure.

The following contribution concentrates on (1) identifying the developments that have taken place since the political turn-around in 1989/90, (2) presenting the current organisational structure of the administration together with its institutions, competencies and financing methods and (3) illustrating the successes as well as the difficulties of the decentralisation process. Furthermore, it appears of importance to (4) briefly highlight the cultural and administrative traditions, in order to promote a better understanding of the current situation.

It will focus on the transformation countries of the Adriatic space, i.e. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania, while the situation in Italy, which had decentralized its administrative structures already earlier, will only briefly be outlined.

For a better understanding, the following definitions of terms shall provide a preface.

The term **territorial-administrative unit** describes a juridical person of the public administration with a territorially defined sphere of operation. This definition does not include planning regions, development regions or statistical regions, which – as a rule – do not have their own legal personality and are merely regional or local institutions that are combined for a particular purpose. They are dependent either on the constitutive territorial-administrative units, or on the central offices at state level. Territorial-administrative units are always endowed with executive authority, and in some cases they also have legislative (law-making) authority.

Executive authority is understood to mean the mandate to implement laws within their own territorial sphere of operation as well as the freedom to act within the framework of the operational sphere designated by law and within the available budget.

Legislative authority is understood as the mandate to pass laws. Where subordinated territorial-administrative units are endowed with this mandate, it is usually attached to the condition that laws passed by this territorial-administrative unit shall not contravene the legislation of superordinate territorial-administrative units.

The principle of **subsidiarity** is understood to be a political guideline that allows those duties, which can be carried out by a subordinate territorial-administrative unit, to actually be performed by these, by bestowing the required powers.

This requires a process of (administrative) **decentralisation** in the sense of a transfer of administrative competencies from superordinate to subordinate territorial-administrative units. As a rule, the competencies are shifted from the state level to territorial-administrative units located at the regional and local level. So that the term „decentralisation“ can be properly applied, these territorial-administrative units must be self-governing and are therefore politically accountable for wielding this authority.

Self-government exists when the citizens of an administrative unit govern themselves through the institutions they directly elected. In other words, as a precondition, the policy-makers within the territorial-administrative units must be eligible for direct election, upon which they accept the political responsibility towards the local electorate. Depending on the size of the territorial-administrative unit concerned, it is referred to as regional or local self-government.

In the relatively rare instances of **delegated self-government** the functionaries of a superordinate administrative institution are not elected directly, but are instead provided by directly elected institutions of a subordinate territorial-administrative unit.

Self-government must be distinguished from deconcentrated and delegated state administration. Neither corresponds to the principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation.

Deconcentrated state administration signifies that territorial-administrative units assume state competencies on a regional or local level, doing so on behalf of the state and with accountability towards state institutions. In this case, territorial-administrative units act as outposts of central state administration. On the one hand, they provide state administration services that are spatially deconcentrated and therefore more accessible to citizens. On the other hand, on behalf of the state, they can also have the function of controlling and monitoring those territorial-administrative units acting as subsidiaries.

In the case of **delegated state administration**, self-governing territorial-administrative units assume public competencies on behalf of the state and with accountability towards state institutions. Frequently only one institution belonging to a territorial-administrative unit that otherwise acts as a subsidiary, will take on these competencies.

Regionalisation in the administrative sense is understood to mean the subdivision of a state into larger territorial-administrative units that are not attributable to the local level. It always applies across the entire national territory. The functional mode of the territorial-administrative unit plays no part here (self-government, deconcentrated state administration, delegated state administration).

This is to be distinguished from **regionalism** in the sense of efforts that use the means of political organisation and exertion of influence in order to obtain special privileges for a specific administrative region vis-à-vis the central authority of the state. The objective here is to achieve a privileged status compared with the rest of the state.

Regionalism is usually justified by citing historical, cultural, linguistic, religious or national/ethnic characteristics.

2 Italy [Italia]¹

Italy is at the first administrative level below the state divided into 20 **regions** [regione], of which 15 have an ordinary statute and 5 are autonomous regions with a special statute (see Figure 1). They correspond to the NUTS-2 level and were

Figure 1: Northern section of Italy’s Adriatic façade. Regions and provinces



Source: JORDAN 2010

¹ In rectangular brackets with the first mentioning of a name its official endonymic version in the first case singular is given.

established in 1970. Since the constitutional reform of 2001 they have not only executive, but also legislative powers. Their financial autonomy, however, is rather restricted and confined to levying taxes for the maintenance of the health system. Regions correspond – as a rule – to the historical components of Italy having enjoyed sovereign statehood or some kind of autonomy in various periods before Italy's unification between 1860 and 1870 or – in the case of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol//Trentino-Südtirol, to some extent also Friuli-Venezia Giulia/Friül-Vignesie Julie – to later acquisitions after World War I. They also coincide roughly with the catchment areas of macro-regional centres.

Autonomous regions with a special statute (Friuli-Venezia Giulia/Friül-Vignesie Julie, Sardinia [Sardegna/Sardigna], Sicily [Sicilia], Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol//Trentino-Südtirol, Aosta Valley [Valle d'Aosta/Val d'Aost]) have a much higher financial autonomy and are entitled to keep between 60% (Friuli-Venezia Giulia) and 100% (Sicily) of all levied taxes. In return they have to finance the health-care system, the school system and most public infrastructures. Autonomous regions are based on linguistic and other cultural specifics, e.g. Friuli-Venezia Giulia on the large Friulian and several smaller ethnic and linguistic minorities, Trentino-Alto Adige on the German minority dominant in South Tyrol [Alto Adige/Südtirol] and the smaller minority of the Ladinians. Trentino-Alto Adige constitutes a special case among autonomous regions, since administrative powers rest mainly with the two autonomous provinces of the region, i.e. Trentino and South Tyrol, while the region plays more or less just a coordinating role.

Each region has an elected parliament called *regional council* [consiglio regionale] or *regional assembly* [assemblea regionale] and a government [giunta regionale], headed by the regional president [presidente]. The latter is directly elected by the citizens of each region, with the exceptions of the Aosta Valley and Trentino-Alto Adige, where he/she is chosen by the regional council. The president chairs the government, nominates and dismisses its members [assessori].

In Trentino-Alto Adige, the regional council is composed of the joint session of the two provincial councils of Trentino and South Tyrol, and the regional president is one of the two provincial presidents.

The 110 **provinces** [provincia] of Italy (see Figure 1) correspond to the NUTS-3 level as well as – in general – to the catchment area of meso-regional centres and have three main functions: local planning and zoning, provision of local police and fire services, transportation regulation (car registration, maintenance of local roads, etc.). Each province is headed by an elected president [presidente], assisted by the elected provincial council [consiglio provinciale] and an executive body, the provincial executive [giunta provinciale]. The executive is chaired by the president, who appoints its other members [assessori]. These representatives of regional self-government are balanced by a prefect [prefetto], who is appointed by the central government and heads the prefecture [prefettura] as an outpost of the central government. Thus, unlike the exclusively self-governing level of regions, at the level of provinces self-government and deconcentrated state administration are combined.

Trentino and South Tyrol are **autonomous provinces** with the legislative powers of regions. They are not subordinated to their region, but constituent parts of it.

The roughly 8,100 Italian **communes** [comune] correspond to the NUTS-5 level and are headed by a mayor [sindaco] assisted by a legislative body, the communal council [consiglio comunale], and an executive body, the *giunta comunale*. Mayor and the members of the communal council are elected by public vote. The *giunta comunale* is chaired by the mayor, who appoints other members [assessori]. Thus, communes enjoy exclusive self-government.

A commune usually consists of a principal town or village and other areas called **fractions** [frazione]. Only recently, fractions have been administratively upgraded by the implementation of fraction councils [consiglio di frazione], a local government representing the inhabitants of a fraction at the communal level.

So it may be justified to say that Italy has from the 1970s developed from a unitarian centralised state into a decentralised country with self-government at all three (including fractions even four) subnational administrative levels, of which only the provincial level has deconcentrated state administration in addition. Both regional administrative levels coincide very well with historical-cultural as well as gravitational units.

3 Slovenia [Slovenija]

3.1 *Cultural and administrative traditions*

Slovenia first emerged as a political entity in 1945, when it became a constituent republic of the federal Communist state of Yugoslavia. Prior to this, Slovenes only existed as an ethnic and linguistic category, which was dispersed across several countries and administrative units and which was dominated by majority populations or elites that belonged to other ethnic and cultural groups (with the limited exception of Yugoslavia during the inter-war years). The dominance by a variety of other cultures moulded Slovenian culture in different ways and left its traces in the cultural landscape, in regional identities and in the regional consciousness.

The most pronounced and diverse impressions were left by the Republic of Venice [Serenissima Repubblica di San Marco] in the Adriatic façade of modern Slovenia, and the Habsburg Empire in the remaining areas of the country. While the influence of Venice found its expression in the Mediterranean architecture and the Mediterranean lifestyle in parts of Slovenia, the Habsburg Empire left its mark in terms of Central European (Alpine, Pannonian) traditions. Looking beyond this cultural-historical bisection, the

individual crownlands of the Habsburg Empire also left traces behind, producing a lively regional consciousness that exists to this day: the Slovenian Littoral [Primorska] that was Venetian until 1797, then became Austrian; the medieval Habsburg crownlands of Carniola [Kranjska], Styria [Štajerska] and Carinthia [Koroška], as well as Prekmurje [Prekmurje], which was ceded by Hungary after World War I.

None of the administrative-territorial structures implemented after 1918 reflected these historical and cultural identities. Instead, the area of present-day Slovenia was always subdivided in numerous smaller entities, varying in number between 20 and 62, and fluctuating in name between district [okraj, srez] and commune [občina]. Only for the time between 1922 and 1929, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, SHS] did the subdivision of the Slovene territory belonging to this state (the western areas belonged to Italy) into the regions [oblast] Ljubljana and Maribor correspond to the historical division between Carniola and Styria.

Between 1945 and 1991, Slovenia was one of the six constituent republics of Yugoslavia. This status, and particularly the degree of autonomy that was further deepened through the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, can retrospectively be regarded as a necessary preliminary stage for the independence, which was gained in 1991. During this time, Slovenia was divided into greater communes [občina], numbering 62 in the end, which were self-governing. No further administrative level existed between these communes and the constituent republic.

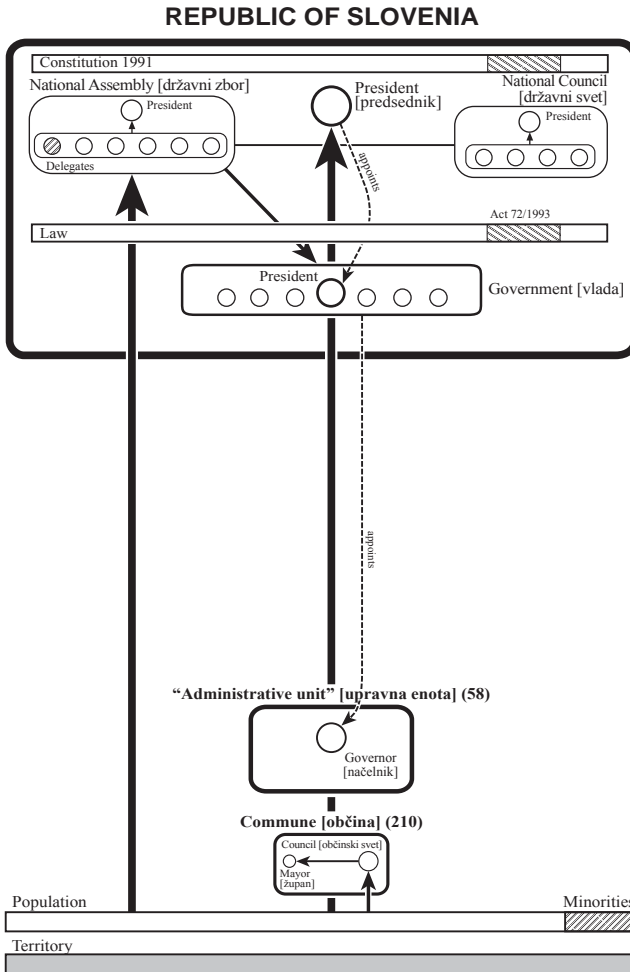
3.2 Developments after 1991 and the current administrative-territorial system

The first administrative reform to take place in independent Slovenia on 3.10.1994 replaced the 62 communes with an average area of 336 sq.km and an average population of 28,000 with 147 communes [občina] with an average of 138 sq.km and 13,000 inhabitants. Consequently, they no longer corresponded to the NUTS-4 level (as the former greater communes had done), but to the NUTS-5 level instead. They too, were self-governing. By 1.1.2007 their number had been augmented in several stages (8.8.1998: 192, 15.6.2002: 193, 14.3.2006: 205, 14.6.2006: 210) to reach 210, gradually reducing the average area to 96 sq.km and the average population to 9,400. 11 of these are urban communes [mestna občina], these being Celje, Koper/Capodistria, Kranj, Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Nova Gorica, Novo Mesto, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec and Velenje. Urban and other kinds of communes are each endowed with the same competencies.

The **communes** are defined as the basic local self-governing units according to the Constitution of 1991 and in the Local Government Act (72/1993). Following the

Constitution their number can only be increased up to a total of 300. The institutions of the communes (see Figure 2) are the communal council [občinski svet] elected for a four-year term and the mayor [župan], who is elected by the communal council and also serves for a term of four years. There can be up to three deputy mayors [podžupan]. The communal council also elects the communal government [občinska uprava].

Figure 2: Slovenia’s current administrative system

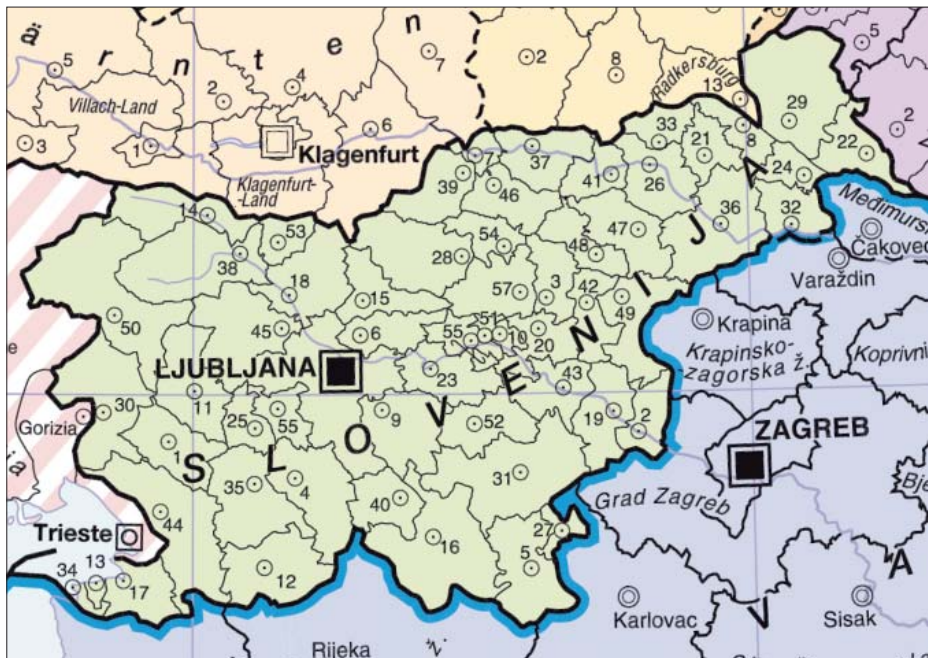


Source: JORDAN 2010

Communal revenues are sourced primarily from taxes and rates. Communes in peripheral areas, which are not able to finance themselves exclusively with self-generated revenues, receive state transfer payments in the way of disparity equalisation.

Simultaneously more or less with the new communes (4.10.1994), 50 so-called „**administrative units**“ [upravna enota] were also established (see Figure 2 and 3). To a large extent they correspond to the territories of the former larger communes, and thus also to the NUTS-4 level, and they represent deconcentrated state administration by offering spatially dispersed governmental administrative services. They are led by a governor [načelnik], who is a civil servant.

Figure 3: Slovenia's subdivision into „administrative units“ [upravna enota]



Source: JORDAN 2010

To date, self-government has not been established at the regional level, even though the Constitution allows for this option and related discussions began as early as 1991. One possibility, which is repeatedly mentioned, would be the elevation of the 12 existing statistical regions [statistična regija] (see Table 1) to administrative regions [pokrajina]. They correspond to the NUTS-3 level, are largely well matched to the previously mentioned cultural landscapes and their respective subdivisions (e.g. the division of Carniola into Upper Carniola [Gorenško], Inner Carniola [Notransko])

and Lower Carniola [Dolensko]) and also align with the functional territorial units (VRIŠER 1998). However, the political parties have been unable to agree upon a solution so far. There is also support for the widely held opinion that a small country such as Slovenia does not require an additional and costly administrative level. A further argument, mentioned less openly, suggests that self-governing regions could release centrifugal forces, if one considers that pronounced regional identities supported by self-government gain gravitas and could pose a threat to the statehood and national unity, which are still young and vulnerable.

Table 1: **Statistical regions [statistična regija] of Slovenia**

1	Pomurska regija	7	Jugovzhodna Slovenija
2	Podravska regija	8	Osrednjeslovenska regija
3	Koroška regija	9	Gorenjska regija
4	Savinjska regija	10	Notranjsko-kraška regija
5	Zasavska regija	11	Goriška regija
6	Spodnjeposavska regija	12	Obalno-kraška regija

Source: STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA 2010

It was not until January 1, 2008, that Slovenia was divided into two statistical and funding regions at the NUTS-2 level, i.e. Eastern Slovenia [Vzhodna Slovenija] and Western Slovenia [Zahodna Slovenija] (see the contribution of LORBER to this book). They can, however, not be regarded as administrative regions.

4 Croatia [Hrvatska]

4.1 *Cultural and administrative traditions*

Similar to Slovenia, Croatia was first established as an administrative unit in the current shape in 1945. Very much in contrast to Slovenia, however, Croatian statehood can be traced back very far into history, in fact to the 9th century (852). However, this statehood was subject to several interruptions (the last one from 1919 to 1939), referred to shifting territories with shifting heartlands and varied in sovereignty from fully sovereign to a kind of autonomy. What is Croatia today was dominated for long periods by Venice along the Adriatic façade and by Hungary in the interior of the country, and later by Austria (1797-1805, 1813/15-1867) and Austria-Hungary (1867-1918) in both regions. Long-term territorial fragmentation and divergent rulers, each bringing

with them their elites and cultural traditions, as well as late unification resulted, again very similar to Slovenia, in very distinct patterns of historical and cultural regional identities, even though the main dividing line runs between the former countries of the Hungarian Crown and the former “Austrian lands”, the latter being successors of the Venetian possessions, which lasted until 1797.

The formerly Hungarian lands were composed of Slavonia [Slavonija] and Croatia Proper, both with a high level of autonomy until 1918, as well as Baranya, Međimurje and Fiume [Rijeka] (a *corpus separatum* of the Hungarian Crown), all of which were integrated parts of the Kingdom of Hungary until 1918. Croatia Proper is in turn composed of several smaller cultural regions like Hrvatsko zagorje, Banja, Kordun, Lika and the Croatian Coastland [Hrvatsko primorje]. With the exception of Hrvatsko zagorje and the Croatian Coastland, the cultural and socio-economic milieu of these subregions is mainly the result of the Austrian Military Frontier [Vojna krajina] against the Ottoman Empire. For several centuries this functioned as a military glacis, was directly subordinated to the Court Council of War in Vienna and in this way was excluded from Croatian-Slavonian self-government.

The former Austrian lands also enjoyed considerable self-governance. With regard to the territory of modern Croatia, they were composed of the Croatian share in the former Austrian Littoral, i.e. Istria [Istra] and the Kvarner, as well as of Dalmatia [Dalmacija].

While the former Hungarian lands, except Rijeka and the Croatian Coastland, have a rather Pannonian or Central European character, the former Austrian provinces skirting the Adriatic Sea (as well as Rijeka and the Croatian Coastland) feature the results of a pronounced Mediterranean and Venetian influence.

In recent times, apart from Serbian separatism, which lead to a *de facto* secession of areas with a Serbian majority coinciding to a large extent with the former Military Frontier between 1992 and 1995, Istria has displayed the strongest signs of a regional consciousness. This culminated in some endeavours towards autonomy in the early 1990s. In the population census of 1991, for example, 45% of the Istrian population declared ethnic affiliations other than Croatian, while 16% declared a “regional” rather than a national affiliation (see also HEILBORN 1995). Istria had indeed never been part of any Croatian state before 1945.

With the exception of the years 1939-1941, when a Croatian Banate [Hrvatska banovina] was established, neither inter-war Yugoslavia, nor Tito-Yugoslavia after World War II reflected these historical regions in their administrative-territorial structures. From 1967 onward the communes [općina] were enlarged to the size of districts and endowed with considerable powers of self-government, functioning as the only administrative units below the republican level. Ultimately, their number had reached 102. With an average population of 40,000, however, they were too small to function as regions. Mainly for purposes of regional planning, communes joined associations [zajednica

općina]. The entire territory of Croatia was covered by a total of 11 of these communal associations. They were very well aligned with the central place system, though they were not administrative-territorial units in their own right, but merely associations of independent communes for certain purposes.

4.2 Developments after 1991 and the current administrative-territorial system

Croatia had declared independence from Yugoslavia together with Slovenia on 25.6.1991, but continued to be troubled by violent conflicts until August 1995 and was burdened with significant refugee, political and economic problems for longer still.

In somewhat of a hurry and presumably also to prevent discussions, in 1993 Croatia completely reorganised its administrative-territorial system based on a Law dated 29.12.1992. It now consisted of 20 **counties** [županija] at the regional NUTS-3 level, plus the City of Zagreb [Grad Zagreb], which was equated to a county. This was achieved mainly by agglomerating existing communes. At that time, roughly a third of the country was not yet under the control of the Croatian state, but was occupied by the “Republic of Serbian Krajina” [“Republika Srpska Krajina”], neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina was still in a situation of war and Croatia as such was certainly still in danger of being involved into this war. This may go some way to explain why such a swift and centralistic approach was chosen.

In two counties (the Sisak-Moslavina County [Sisačko-moslavačka županija] and the Zadar-Knin County [Zadarsko-kninska županija]), subordinate self-governing districts [kotar] were established. These were territories with a majority Serbian population. These districts were conceived as an offer to give Serbs in Croatia self-organisation and representation vis-à-vis county and state on the one hand, and on the other hand, because they were subordinated to counties with a Croatian majority population, they were presumably intended as a mechanism for controlling the Serbs.

After war and violent conflict had come to an end in Croatia (August 1995), the county system was modified in shape in 1996 and on 7.2.1997. These boundary alterations applied particularly to the territory of the former „Serbian Republic“ and the areas around Zagreb. The total number of counties remained the same. Only the two districts conceived for Serbian self-government were abandoned, as the majority of Serbs had been expelled from these areas in 1995, and returned later in much smaller numbers. There have been no further changes to the system of counties. Figure 4 shows the county system in its current form.

The counties are self-governing territorial administrative units. Their institutions (see Figure 5) are the elected county assembly [županijska skupština], the county government [županijsko poglavarstvo] with the count [župan] at its head, who is elected

Figure 4: Croatia's subdivision into counties [županija]

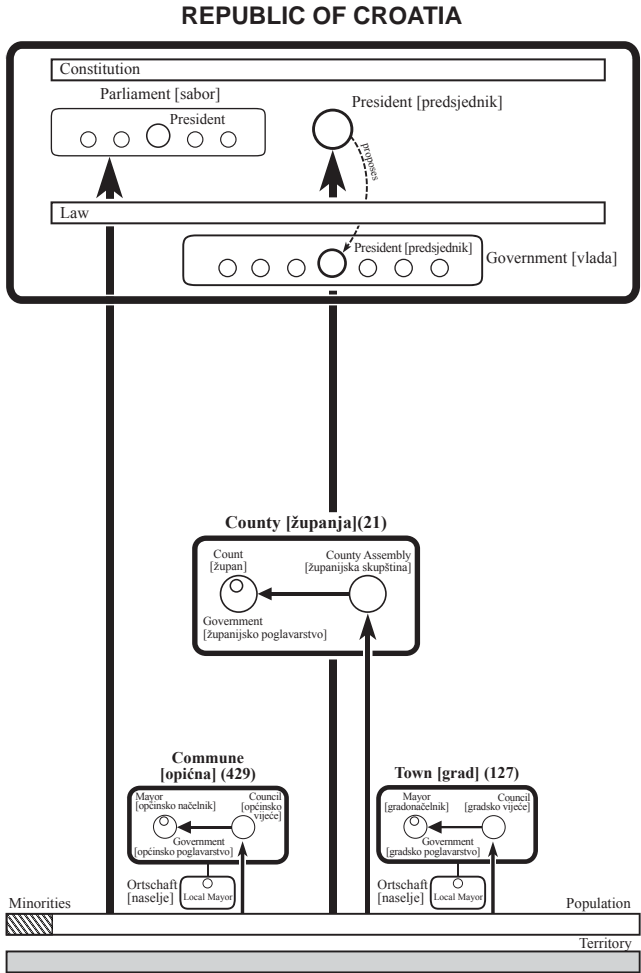


Source: JORDAN 2010

by the assembly. The competencies of the counties comprise all regional matters that are not explicitly assigned to state authorities, in other words

- education,
- health care,
- communal planning,
- economic development,
- transportation and infrastructure,
- social and cultural facilities,
- construction permits,
- land management plans outside of larger cities.

Figure 5: Croatia’s current administrative system



Source: JORDAN 2010

In addition, some state functions are also transferred to the counties.

The counties procure their financing by levying taxes or (in the case of delegated state competencies) in the form of transfer payments from the state. Transfer payments from the state are also made available for the purpose of socio-economic disparity equalisation, should peripheral and economically weak counties not be able to finance their statutory functions through self-generated revenues.

Self-government at the county as well as at the local level was substantially reinforced in 2001, when centralistic attitudes prevailing in the Tuđman era (the 1990s) began to make way for other stances.

Although the county system split up the larger historical and cultural regions mentioned above, and only corresponds to smaller historical and cultural identities in three cases (the Istria County [Istarska županija] corresponds to Istria in the sense of the cultural region, not as a peninsula; the Dubrovnik-Neretva County [Dubrovačko-neretvanska županija] corresponds to the territory of the former city republic Ragusa [Dubrovnik]; Međimurje County [Međimurska županija] corresponds to the Međimurje region acquired from Hungary in 1919), it has established a kind of regional identity pattern itself in the meantime. It is, in general, well aligned with the central place system at the meso-level (meso-regions).

For these reasons it has so far been able to withstand wider public discussions, which evolved in a more liberal political climate after the end of the Tuđman era (2000) and circled around the replacement of the county system by “real” regions along the lines of historical and cultural units and in the dimensional range of NUTS-2. The most popular proposal brought forward encompassed five regions, i.e. Slavonia and Baranya [Slavonija i Baranja], Dalmatia [Dalmacija], Central Croatia [Središnja Hrvatska], Littoral and Lika [Primorsko-lička regija] and the City of Zagreb [Grad Zagreb] (SLOBODNA DALMACIJA 23/8/2000, p. 7).

At the local level, the 102 large “Yugoslavian-type” communes [općina] were replaced by 70 **towns** [grad] and 419 **communes** [općina] in 1992 (see Figure 5). By the time of the population census in 2001, numbers had grown to 122 towns and 423 communes. As of 1.1.2007, the local administrative level comprised 127 towns and 429 communes, with an average of 100 sq.km and 8,000 inhabitants (NUTS-5). They are further subdivided into 6,751 settlements [naselje] at NUTS-6 level.

The significant reduction in size was motivated, amongst other things, by the experiences gained previously, i.e. that the former large communes had mainly favoured their centres, while other towns and larger settlements had lost economic activities and inhabitants. Another motive for the reduction in size was, to bring the administration closer to the local population and local interests.

Any settlement with more than 10,000 inhabitants qualifies as a town in the legal sense. Smaller settlements can also be declared towns for specific historical and economic reasons. A town has an elected council [gradsko vijeće] and a government [gradsko poglavarstvo] headed by the president of the council or the mayor [gradonačelnik], respectively. A commune also has an elected council [općinsko vijeće] and a government [općinsko poglavarstvo] headed by the president of the council or the mayor [općinski načelnik], respectively. In settlements, the population is usually represented by a local mayor.

Communes and towns do not differ with regard to competencies. Both are responsible for

- construction,
- regional planning,
- public services,
- childcare,
- social services,
- local health care,
- primary and secondary schools,
- culture,
- sport,
- consumer protection,
- protection of the environment,
- fire protection,
- civil defence.

In order to fulfil these functions they can levy their own taxes. National transfer payments support communes and towns that are financially weaker.

In 2007, three statistical regions were defined at the NUTS-2 level: Northwest Croatia [Sjeverozapadna Hrvatska], Central and East (Pannonian) Croatia [Središnja i istočna (Panonska) Hrvatska] and Adriatic Croatia [Jadranska Hrvatska]. They each combine several counties and replaced an earlier proposal for 4 statistical units, which, however, was rejected by the EU, because the regions did not have sufficient inhabitants. These statistical regions do not have the status of territorial-administrative units within the administrative system.

Despite a wealth of predictions to the contrary, the regional level of counties, which was hastily implemented under difficult external conditions and previously had no tradition in this form, has proved to be surprisingly stable in Croatia. Even though their competencies of self-government have been steadily expanded, they continue to correspond to the centralist concept, which formed the foundation for their implementation. This is because they are too small to effectively oppose central government, and they are unable to tap into the regional consciousness, which is oriented along the lines of the large cultural and historical units.

But it is precisely this regional consciousness combined with the highly varied cultural traditions that drive this state that is still young in years and has a very fragile national identity to push regionalisation forward at this level, rather than at the level of the large cultural-historical units. In this context, the small remaining group of Serbs (2001: 4.5%) that is widely scattered, no longer plays a part.

5 Bosnia and Herzegovina [Bosna i Hercegovina]

5.1 Cultural and administrative traditions

Bosnia and Herzegovina first achieved statehood in the High Middle Ages. However, they usually had to acknowledge the supremacy of greater powers, first those of Byzantium, then mainly those of Hungary and finally those of the Ottoman Empire. In 1463 the last territorial remnants of Bosnia and Herzegovina fell under direct Ottoman rule. Even under the rule of the Ottoman central state, Bosnia and Herzegovina remained an administrative unit, first as *eyalet* then, from 1845 as *vilayet*, in other words: one of the provinces and top-tier administrative units of the Empire. Unlike the territory inhabited by Albanians, it was not split between several units and can therefore be seen as a political entity with a strong historical identity among the successor states of Yugoslavia.

After long-lasting violent conflicts, which the weakening Ottoman Empire had been unable to settle, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 with the consent of the Congress of Berlin. The Monarchy turned Bosnia and Herzegovina into a condominium of the Austrian and of the Hungarian half of the Monarchy and placed it under the control of the joint Ministry of Finance. In 1908, Bosnia and Herzegovina was formally annexed and received the status of an autonomous country with legislative and executive administrative competencies. It was divided into eight districts [*Kreis/megye/kotar*] (two urban, six rural), which followed the Austro-Hungarian model and were institutions of deconcentrated state administration. They were also closely aligned to the historical subregions such as Herzegovina [Hercegovina]. At the local level there were communes.

In this form, after World War I, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the first Yugoslavian state (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*], called Yugoslavia from 1929 onwards [*Jugoslavija*]). However, this country was organised along centralist lines and the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina were not reflected in any administrative unit.

Not until the second, Communist, Yugoslavia with a federalist structure did Bosnia and Herzegovina arise again as constituent republic more or less in the borders of 1918. Compared to 1918, the only small alteration to the border was carried out in the Bay of Kotor [*Boka Kotorska*] near Herceg Novi, where the country had to hand over a narrow access corridor to Montenegro. Like the other constituent republics, during the period of the second Yugoslavian state, Bosnia and Herzegovina was merely divided into communes [*opština/općina*]. Ultimately, there were 104 of these, and they enjoyed far reaching rights of self-government.

5.2 *Developments after 1991 and the current administrative-territorial system*

When the multinational (Muslim, Serbian, Croatian)² Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence from Yugoslavia on 5.4.1992, this declaration was followed by a declaration of independence by the “Serbian Republic” [“Republika Srpska”] on 7.4.1992, comprising the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had a Serbian ethnic majority. The “Serbian Republic” also declared war against the Bosnian state with its Muslim ethnic majority, supported by Belgrade, the Yugoslav National Army [Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija, JNA] and paramilitary forces from Serbia. The war ended with the Dayton Accord signed on 14.12.1995, following first the diplomatic, then the military intervention of the United States and NATO, as well as successful military operations of Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) and Croatian forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Dayton Accord re-established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united state. It also installed a Peace Implementation Council (PIC) executing the international community’s governance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Figure 6). This Council is composed of 55 countries and agencies and is to last until the country is deemed politically and democratically stable. It controls all levels of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and intervenes if this is found necessary. The executive bodies of PIC are a Steering Board and the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina as the main actor on behalf of the international community.

Based on the Dayton Accord and the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina, published as Annex 4 of the Accord, as well as subsequent national legislation, Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed of two “entities” (see Figure 6 and 7): the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina [Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine, FBiH]³ and the Serbian Republic [Republika Srpska, RS]⁴. This was later complemented by the neutralized District of Brčko [distrikt Brčko]⁵, which is subject to direct jurisdiction of the state and comprises territories of both entities. The District is not a third entity and is therefore indicated in Figure 7 by a hatched area, which extends beyond the border between the two entities.

At Annex 4, Article I, Paragraph 3, under item “Composition [of the state]” the Dayton Accord states: “Bosnia and Herzegovina shall consist of the two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska.” This suggests that the two entities are not constituent republics of a confederation, but rather subdivisions of a federation, although this is not explicitly expressed.

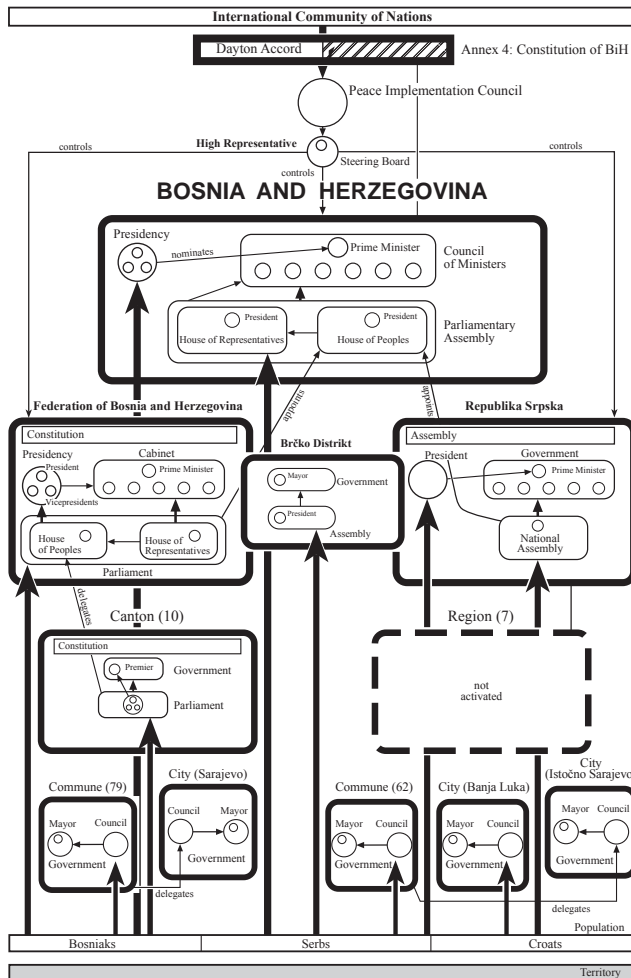
² According to the census of 1991 the proportion was 43.5% Muslims, 31.2% Serbs and 17.4% Croats.

³ Area 26,110 sq.km, 2,325,018 inhabitants (2006).

⁴ Area 25,019 sq.km, 1,479,634 inhabitants (2005).

⁵ Area 208 sq.km, 80,000 inhabitants (2006).

Figure 6: Bosnia-Herzegovina’s current administrative system



Source: JORDAN 2010

The Constitution, on the other hand, specifically establishes the three nations as constituent elements of the state. According to estimates related to the years 2004 and 2005 (no population census has been carried out since 1991), the proportions between the Bosniaks (Muslims), Serbs and Croats at state level are 48:38:14%.⁶ They are

⁶ Calculations based on an estimate for the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, published by Federal Office for Statistics [Federalni zavod za statistiku] 2004, an estimate for the Serbian Republic by JOSIPOVIĆ 2005 and an extrapolation for the whole state published by the Statistics Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina [Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine] 2005.

proportionally represented in all state authorities and every single nation is endowed with veto rights. Since 2001 all three nations are also constituent nations of each of the two entities.

Figure 7: Entities, cantons and communes in Bosnia-Herzegovina



Source: JORDAN 2010

The Constitution assigns the (confederate) state competencies in the following areas (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, HUMAN RIGHTS LIBRARY 2008):

- foreign policy;
- foreign trade policy;
- customs policy;

- monetary policy;
- international financial obligations of governmental institutions;
- immigration;
- refugee and asylum policy;
- criminal law enforcement in cases affecting both entities and several nations;
- relations with Interpol, establishment and operation of common and international transportation systems;
- regulation of inter-entity transportation;
- air traffic control.

The Constitution defines the competencies of the entities as follows (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, HUMAN RIGHTS LIBRARY 2008):

- external relations with neighbouring states consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- national security,
- civil justice,
- agreements with states and international organizations with the consent of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Every citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina also has an entity citizenship and vice versa. The borders between the entities are clearly marked, but not controlled. A customs authority as well as a separate postal system exists in each of the two entities. The armed forces of both entities, the Army of the Federation [Vojska Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine] and the Army of the Serbian Republic [Vojska Republike Srpske], were officially merged in 2005.

The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina establishes the following institutions at state level (see Figure 6)⁷:

The Presidency [predsjedništvo Bosne i Hercegovine] is composed of three members, each belonging to one of the three nations. They alternate in chairing the Presidency every 8 months. They are elected for a four-year term by the electorate of their respective national group. The Presidency represents the state at the international level, is responsible for foreign policy, nominates the Prime Minister [predsjedatelj vijeće ministara] and also proposes the annual budget to the Parliamentary Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers [vijeće ministara].

The Council of Ministers [vijeće ministara] is confirmed by and answers to the House of Representatives [predstavnički dom/zastupnički dom], the larger of the two

⁷ In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the administrative structure of the state level is discussed here by way of exception, because it is precisely this, which helps to illustrate the special features of the sub-national administrative structure.

chambers of the Parliamentary Assembly. Its chair is the Prime Minister, who appoints the ministers. The Council of Ministers conducts the business in all the affairs mentioned as state competencies above.

The Parliamentary Assembly [parlamentarna skupština Bosne i Hercegovine] is a bicameral legislative body composed of the House of Representatives [predstavnički dom/zastupnički dom] and the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina [dom naroda Bosne i Hercegovine]. The House of Representatives has 42 members elected by universal, secret and equal vote. 28 members come from the Federation and 14 from the Serbian Republic. The House of Peoples has 15 members who are not elected, but appointed by the parliaments of the entities. They are composed of 5 Bosniaks, 5 Serbs and 5 Croats. Their main task is to ensure that no law is passed by the House of Representatives unless all three nations agree on it. In practice this regulation has proved to be an obstacle to efficiency at the state level and it is certainly a major reason why real power only rests with the state level to a minor extent.

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina [Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine, FBiH], which is predominantly bi-national (Bosniak/Croatian) by population structure, but (since 2001) formally also tri-national⁸, is based on the Constitution as of 30.3.1994 (with several amendments). This Constitution defines an institutional pattern for the Federation level that very much reflects the state level, i.e., it has also a presidency, a cabinet and a bi-cameral parliament.

The Presidency [predsjedništvo], the supreme representation of the Federation, is composed of a President [predsjednik] and two Vice-Presidents [potpredsjednik], who must belong to different national groups and are elected for a four-year term by the House of Peoples [dom naroda].

The Cabinet [vlada] is appointed by the Presidency and approved by the House of Representatives [predstavnički dom]. It consists of 16 ministers, who are appointed by the Prime Minister [premijer] according to national quotas (8 Bosniaks, 5 Croats, 3 Serbs). The Prime Minister tends to be a Bosniak.

The Parliament's [parlament Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine] first chamber is the House of Representatives [predstavnički dom] with 98 members elected for four years by universal popular vote. The second chamber is the House of Peoples [dom naroda] composed of 57 members, of which 17 are Bosniaks, 17 Croats, 16 Serbs and 7 "Others". They are delegated for four years by the cantonal parliaments [skupština kantona]. Their national delegate clubs elect the three members of the Presidency (the Bosniak club the Bosniak member, etc.).

⁸ According to an estimate related to 31.12.2003, the proportion between the national groups in the Federation is 72.6% Bosniaks, 21.8% Croats, 4.6% Serbs and 1.0% others (FEDERALI ZAVOD ZA STATISTIKU 2004).

The Federation is administratively subdivided into 10 self-governing **cantons** [kanton/županija], which correspond to the NUTS-3 level of the EU classification (see Figure 6, 7 and Table 2). Each of these cantons has its own constitution, courts of justice, police forces, and legislative as well as executive competencies. In addition, they execute tasks on behalf of the Federation (delegated competencies). They collect taxes, supervise and co-ordinate the activities of their communes [opština/općina] and cities [grad].

Table 2: **Cantons of the Federation and their national majorities (31.12.2003)**

Bosansko-podrinjski kanton	99% Bosniaks	Zapadno-hercegovački kanton/ Zapadno-hercegovačka županija	99% Croats
Unsko-sanski kanton	94% Bosniaks	Posavskikanton/Posavska županija	83% Croats
Tuzlanski kanton	91% Bosniaks	Hercegbosanska županija/Livanjski kanton/ Zapadnobosanski kanton	79% Croats
Zeničko-dobojski kanton	84% Bosniaks	Srednjobosanski kanton/ Srednjobosanska županija	58% Bosniaks, 39% Croats
Sarajevski kanton	80% Bosniaks	Hercegovačko-neretvljanski kanton	50% Croats, 46% Bosniaks

Source: FEDERALNI ZAVOD ZA STATISTIKU FBiH 2004

In practice, the cantons are the most powerful administrative layer in the Federation. They exceed the state as well as the federation level. This is partly due to their predominantly mono-national structure, which means blocs are rarely formed for national reasons. While five cantons have a distinct Bosniak and three a distinct Croat population majority, only two are close to having an ethnic equilibrium (Central Bosnian Canton [Srednjobosanski kanton/Srednjobosanska županija], Herzegovian-Neretvan Canton [Hercegovačko-neretvljanski kanton]) (FEDERALNI ZAVOD ZA STATISTIKU FBiH 2004). Only in the latter two cantons, do cantonal laws and decisions have to be approved by the delegates of both national groups (see Table 2).

The guiding principle for the definition of cantons was obviously the ethnic structure, while aspects of historical identities and functional coherence only played a secondary role.

Self-government in the cantons is executed by the one-cameral cantonal parliament [skupština kantona], which is elected for a four-year term by universal popular vote. A president [predsjednik] and two vice-presidents [potpredsjednik] are elected from among its members, who have to belong to different national groups. If a canton is practically mono-national, only one vice-president is appointed. The delegates do not only establish parties, but also form national clubs. The presidency proposes the prime

minister of the cantonal government to the cantonal parliament, which, in turn, appoints the ministers of his government and nominates them for approval by the parliament.

The cantons are again subdivided into 3 to 13 self-governing **communes** [opština/općina], in total 79 (see Figure 6 and 7). In size (NUTS-4) and function they do not differ very much from the large communes in Communist Yugoslavia. However, boundaries have frequently been redrawn. Some new communes have emerged and communes that are split by a border that runs between two entities are governed in two parts.

The communes have a communal council [opštinsko vijeće/općinsko vijeće] elected for a term of four years. The council in turn elects the communal government [opštinska uprava/općinska uprava] and the mayor [načelnik].

By Federation law it is possible that at least two communes agglomerate to a city [grad] under the precondition that one commune has at least 30,000 inhabitants or a central settlement has at least 10,000 inhabitants. So far, only four communes (Stari Grad, Centar, Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo) in the urban region of Sarajevo have used this opportunity by joining to form the City of Sarajevo [Grad Sarajevo]. This means that they maintain all their communal functions and authorities, but delegate 7 members each into the city council [gradsko vijeće] of Sarajevo, which in turn elects a city government [gradska uprava] and a lord mayor [gradonačelnik]. The city exercises coordinating functions and operates facilities, which are in the common interest of its constituent communes.

According to estimates, the **Serbian Republic** [Republika Srpska, SR] is 91% Serbian by nationality (JOSIPOVIĆ 2005), but since 2001 it acknowledges Serbs, Bosniaks as well as Croats as its constituent nations. It is based on the Constitution as of 28.2.1992 with several amendments. This Constitution defines Sarajevo as the capital, but since 1998 *de facto* all supreme authorities of the Republic are located in Banja Luka.

First of all, this is the uni-cameral National Assembly [narodna skupština] as the principal instrument of self-government (see Figure 6). It is composed of 83 delegates elected by universal popular vote for a term of four years. A President [predsjednik] and two vice-presidents [potpredsjednik] are elected from amongst the delegates. The Government [vlada] answers to the National Assembly.

The President of the Republic [predsjednik republike] and his deputy are also elected by direct popular vote, and, in this case, for a term of five years. They have to stand together on the same ticket. The President is the supreme representative of the Republic, nominates the Prime Minister [predsjednik vlade] and the President [predsjednik] of the Supreme Court [ustavni sud], calls elections of the National Assembly and has the right to pass emergency decrees in special circumstances. Not only the direct democratic legitimacy, but also the fact that he is not part of a collective body combining several nations, places the President of the Serbian Republic in a much stronger position than the President of the Federation.

The Republican Law on Territorial Organization and Local Self-Government adopted in 1994 and amended in 1999 (No. 35/99) defines 7 regions [regija], into which the whole territory of the Republic is subdivided. So far they have not been activated, i.e. they have no active authorities and no functions and are consequently not depicted in Figure 7. These regions are Banja Luka, Doboј, Bijeljina, Vlasenica, Sarajevo-Romanija (Sokolac), Foča and Trebinje.

The local administrative level (NUTS-4) is subdivided into 63 self-governing communes [opština/općina], two of which are cities [grad]. One city (Istočno Sarajevo), is composed of several communes (Kasindo, Lukavica, Istočni Stari Grad, Pale, Sokolac and Trnovo), while the city of Banja Luka consists of just one commune and has the same competencies as “normal” communes. Istočno Sarajevo, on the other hand, functions in the same way as the City of Sarajevo on the other side of the entity border.

As is the case in the Federation, the local administrative level of the Serbian Republic corresponds very much to the communal structure of federal Yugoslavia. The small number of changes compared to the Yugoslavian period also took place more or less in parallel in the two entities.

Communes have a communal council [skupština opštine/skupština općine] elected for a term of four years, a communal government [opštinska uprava/općinska uprava] and a mayor [načelnik opštine/načelnik općine]. In a city [grad], these bodies are named *skupština grada*, *gradska uprava*, and *gradonačelnik*, respectively.

The **District of Brčko** [distrikt Brčko], has the status of a neutralised zone within the territory of both entities, and is directly subordinated to the state. As institution of self-government it has an Assembly [skupština distrikta Brčko BiH], which is composed of 29 delegates elected for a term of four years. The Assembly elects the Government [vlada] and a Mayor [gradonačelnik].

It is obvious that this four-tier administrative system (with a fifth tier in Sarajevo) is extremely complicated and also expensive. As it is also strictly based on national proportionality including veto rights for individual national groups making it possible to obstruct and block any decision, it favours mono-national situations and thus promotes national segregation, which is already far advanced due to war and flight. The confederate state level is particularly affected by obstruction, while – with the exception of the local level – the mostly mono-national Serbian Republic as one of the entities works best in relative terms, as do those cantons within the Federation, which are also largely mono-national.

6 Montenegro [Crna Gora]

6.1 *Cultural and administrative traditions*

Montenegro's statehood can be traced back to Serbian principalities in the Early and High Middle Ages (Doclea, Zeta), when the territory of modern Montenegro was in fact a cornerstone of Serbian culture and state-building. From the 13th century onward its Adriatic coast was at least influenced, partly also controlled by Venice. During the 15th century the Ottoman Empire acquired supremacy over the Montenegrin hinterland, without extending the military occupation across the entire territory.

The Venetian presence along the coast and the Byzantine/Serbian/Ottoman shaping of the hinterland have had a strong and lasting impact on cultural identities. This division was not lessened by subsequent developments, but instead it was accentuated: When Austria took over most of the coastal fringe from Venice in 1797 and kept it (with a short interruption) until 1918, it conserved the prevailing cultural and social climate. In the mountainous hinterland a small Montenegrin principality with Cetinje as its capital achieved formal autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1852. The Berlin Congress of 1878 enlarged it considerably, also awarding it the southern section of the coast and made it formally independent. In 1910 Montenegro acquired the status of a Kingdom, after the Balkan Wars (1912/1913) it shared the Sandjak of Novi Pazar [Novipazarski sandžak] with Serbia, and acquired southwestern parts of Metohija (including Pejë/Peć and Gjakovë/Đakovica) as well as narrow strips along the Albanian border.

Montenegro's full integration into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after World War I was not a problem, since, in the 19th century, Montenegro had developed the identity of a second Serbian state populated by the same ethnic majority group and sharing the same denomination.

Tito-lead Second Yugoslavia which, unlike the First Yugoslavia, did pay heed to the equilibrium between the Southern Slavonic nations, adopted, for this very purpose, a federal structure consisting of autonomous constituent republics with the corresponding Southern Slavonic titular nations. Montenegro was given the position of one of six constituent republics with the state nation "Montenegrins". Just like the other constituent nations it was subdivided at the local level into large self-governing communes [opština]. Montenegro had 20 of these at the time of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

6.2 *Developments after 1991 and the current administrative-territorial system*

During the time of the Second Yugoslavia, the Montenegrins had also merely perceived themselves as a separate state nation, but not as a separate cultural nation. Their Serbian national identity proved itself after the disintegration of Communist Yugoslavia, when they alone remained loyal to Serbia, continued to exist as federative constituent republic of rump-Yugoslavia and participated in all of its military and political activities.

A more distanced attitude did not take hold until the late 1990s, encouraged by the government of Milo Đukanović, when it consolidated to a quest for independence and ultimately found expression, amongst others, in a separate unit of currency, in a position of neutrality during the Kosovo conflict and in the friendly reception offered to Albanian refugees from the Kosovo.

At the instigation of and through the mediation offered by the EU, which initially took a sceptical stance towards Montenegro's independence, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (merely consisting of Serbia and Montenegro) was converted to the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro [Srbija i Crna Gora] on 4.2.2003. Union institutions would only have been responsible for foreign policy, legislation and defence. However, even these functions could not be executed, because joint institutions were either never installed, or not filled with appointed officials. *De facto*, Montenegro acted like an independent state. Following a referendum, Montenegro achieved independence formally on 3.6.2006.

The new Constitution dated 22.10.2007 designates Montenegro [Crna Gora] as the official state name without the prefix "Republic" and Montenegrin [Crnogorski], both in Cyrillic and in Latin script, as the official language, though Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian and Albanian can also be used in official matters. Podgorica is named as capital city [glavni grad], and Cetinje, the historical capital, is defined as residence [prijestonica].

Few changes have been made to the subdivision of the country into **communes** [opština] compared to the Yugoslavian era. Only the former commune Ivangrad was split into two in 1991 (Andrijevica and Berane), augmenting the number of communes from 20 to 21, with an average size of 658 sq.km and an average of 29,000 inhabitants (NUTS-4) (see Figure 8).

The new Constitution defines the communes as the basic units of the administrative-territorial system, and allows for the possibility to establish additional levels of administration. The Constitution further concedes that the communes can define their

own statutes, but states that its communal authorities are to be the assembly [skupština] and the president [predsjednik], and that they are to be financed through self-generated revenues as well as by transfers from the state budget.

Figure 8: **Montenegro's subdivision into communes [opština]**



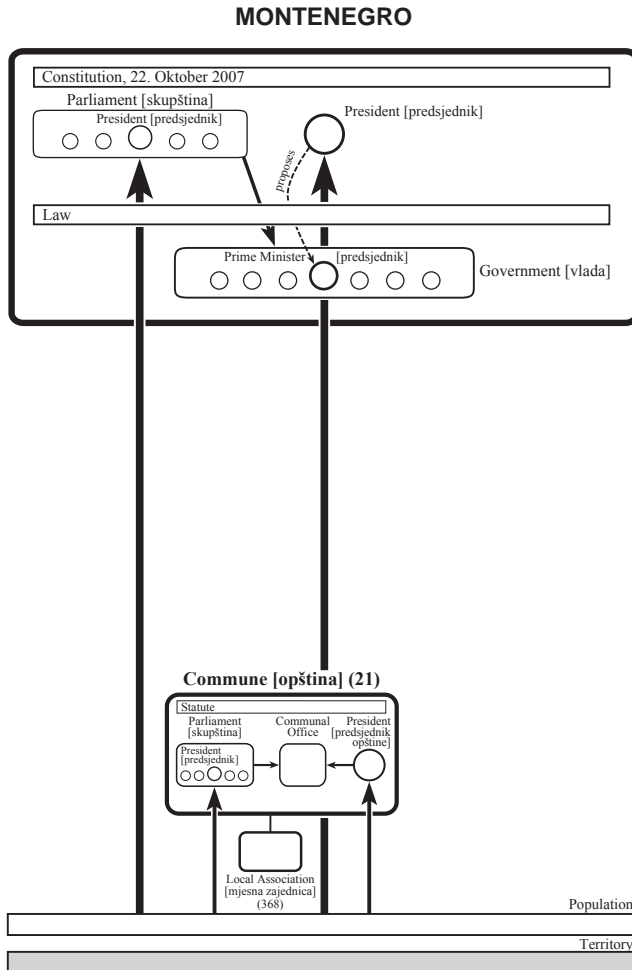
Source: JORDAN 2010

The Law on Local Self-Government as of 2003 (No. 42/2003) with its amendments (Nos. 28/2004, 75/2005, 13/2006), defines the tasks of the communes and their individual bodies in greater detail. According this law the assembly is elected for a term of four years and it elects a president [predsjednik] from among its ranks (see Figure 9). The president of the commune [predsjednik opštine] is also elected by direct popular vote, and he serves for a term of five years. He can have one or more vice-presidents [potpredsjednik] and he represents the commune. A communal office [opštinska uprava] headed by a civil servant [glavni administrator] functions as an executive board.

The communes are further subdivided into 368 **local associations** [mjesna zajednica, MZ], which help to channel local interests, but have no elected bodies (see Figure 9).

There is no regional level of administration in Montenegro. This is mainly due to the large communes and the small size of the country. No other significant reasons can be determined. Considering this, the territorial administrative system of Montenegro is decentralized to an appropriate extent.

Figure 9: Montenegro's current administrative system



Source: JORDAN 2010

7 Albania [Shqipëri]

7.1 Cultural and administrative traditions

Most of the territory of modern Albania stood under the centralist system of Ottoman rule from the 15th century until 1912. During this time, however, it never

belonged to one common administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire, but was always distributed across several administrative units. After the First Balkan War (1912), when the Ottoman Empire was forced to make a significant retreat from Europe, and nation states emerged in the territories of its former dominion, the Albanians succeeded in establishing their own state, with the support of several of the great powers. Along the lines of unitarian nation states and of the French model of central government, from the very beginning, this state only featured units of deconcentrated state administration at the subnational administrative levels.

This did not change after World War II, even though the Communist regime in Albania had emerged from a partisan movement – just as in Yugoslavia, but in contrast to all other European Communist states – and initially followed a grass-roots democratic orientation. But in the dispute between Tito and Stalin (1948), the Albanian Communist Party chose to side with Moscow. This meant that, in contrast to the Self-Governing Socialism of Yugoslavia, Albania continued to follow a Stalinist and thus centralist path and it consequently remained one of the most rigid political systems in the Communist bloc until the end.

During this time, the country was structured into 26 districts [rrethi] at the regional level and small communes [komuna] at the local level. Neither of these had self-government.

7.2 Developments after 1991 and the current administrative-territorial system

Following the political turmoil during the years up until 1997 and a period of domestic calming, the Albanian administrative system was not completed until 2000. Since then, it has been a three-tier system with 12 regions [prefekturë or qark] at the upper regional level (NUTS-3), 36 districts [rrethi] at the lower regional level (NUTS-4) since 1995, and 309 (rural) communes [komuna] and 65 towns [bashkia] at the local level (NUTS-5) (see Figure 10). Towns and communes are further subdivided into a large number (approx. 2,900) of villages or urban wards.

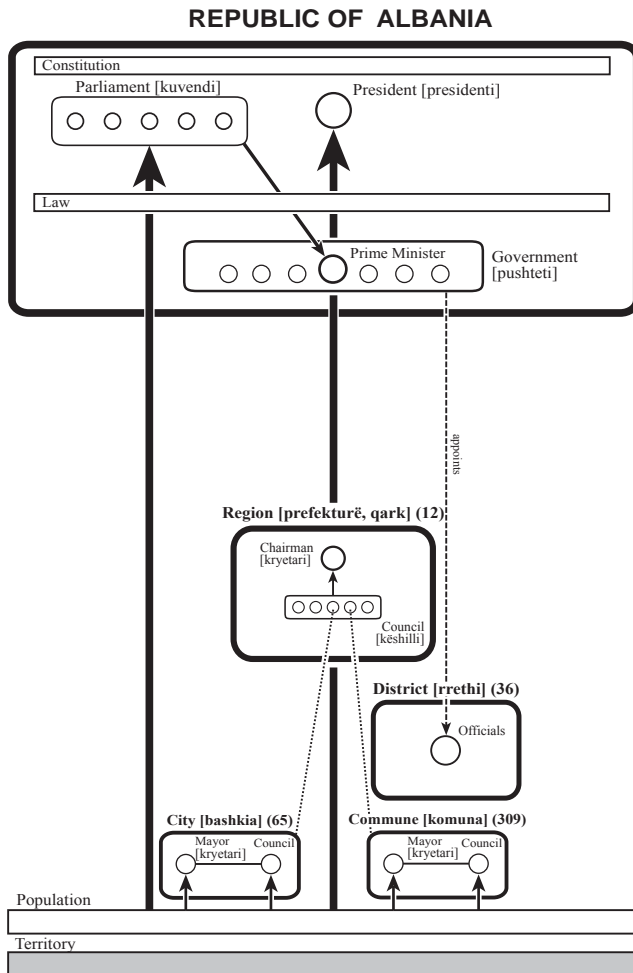
The 12 **regions** (see Figure 11) are endowed with indirect or delegated self-government. Their councils are not elected by the region's population, but rather consist of delegates of the communes and towns (who are, in fact, elected).

The 36 **districts** (see Figure 11) represent deconcentrated state administration. They implement the directives issued by the state and by the regions in their respective territories (HOXHA 2007).

Only the **local level** (communes and towns) is self-governing. Both the councils and the mayors are elected directly by the population.

The lack of self-government at both regional levels can be led back to reasons that are generally applicable to Southeast Europe. Additionally, it can be explained above

Figure 10: Albania's current administrative system

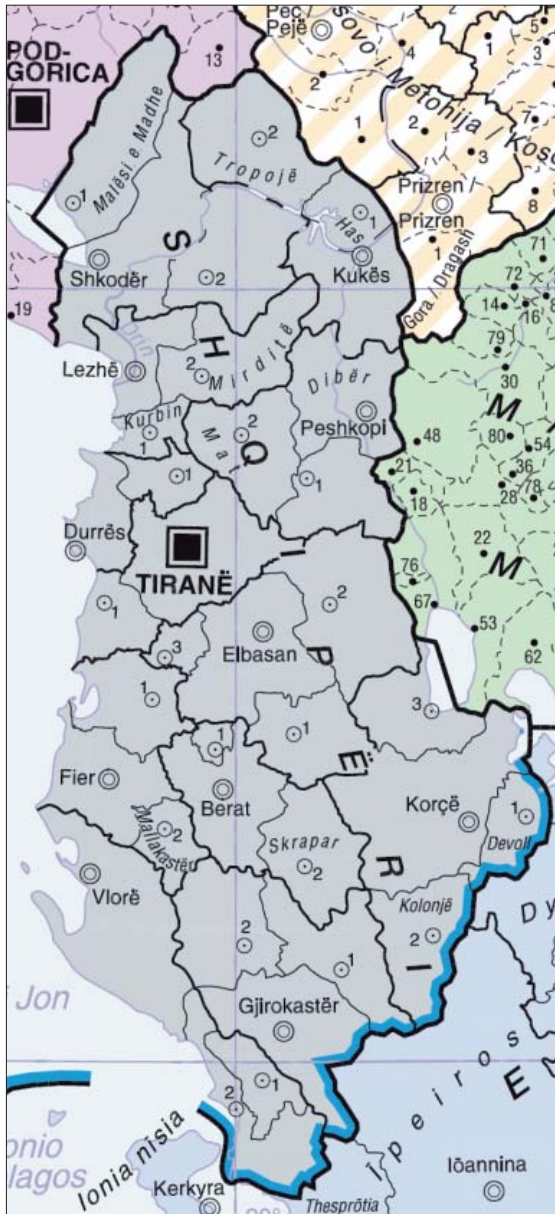


Source: JORDAN 2010

all by the fact that the state does not wish to support the prevailing and pronounced clan structure, which has its own legal systems, by allowing self-government.

Respect for ethnic minorities presumably also plays a part. While these are small according to official figures (1989: 2%, INSTITUTI I STATISTIKËS 1991), experts estimate that they may account for approximately 10% (BËRKHOLI et al. 2003) and suggest that they would affirm their identity in greater numbers in a minority-friendly climate (particularly Aromunians, Roma, Greeks).

Figure 11: Albania's subdivision into regions [prefekturë or qark] and districts [rrethi]

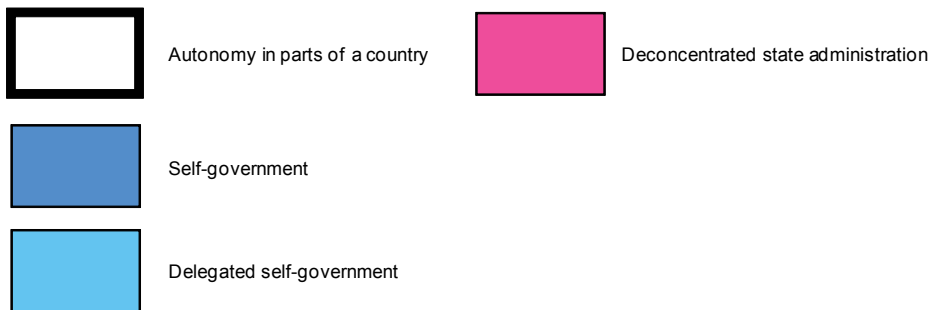


Source: JORDAN 2010

8 Conclusions

Figure 12: Synopsis

	I	SI	HR	BiH	CG	AL
NUTS-1						
NUTS-2						
NUTS-3	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 50%; height: 50%; background-color: #e91e63;"></div>					
NUTS-4						
NUTS-5						



The findings mentioned above as well as the synopsis shown in Figure 12, suggest the following conclusions:

- The **local administrative level** (NUTS-5; in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro NUTS-4) is endowed with self-government. This self-government has a longer tradition in Italy, has in the successor states of Yugoslavia been established already during the Communist years, and was adopted by Albania very soon after the political turn-around. This expresses the early quest for democratisation “from the grass roots”, but with the small size of the local units it only embraces political dimensions that do not pose a threat to the central government.

- The **regional administrative levels** (NUTS-2 to NUTS-4), on the other hand, are exclusively self-governed only in exceptional cases. Italy introduced self-governing regions at the NUTS-2 level in 1970. Where, as in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, this is the case in transformation countries, self-government is either endowed only with moderate competencies (Croatia) or it does not correspond to the ideal type of administrative regionalisation, but is rather a form of administratively supported and therefore solidified ethnic segregation (Bosnia-Herzegovina: entities on the NUTS-2 level and cantons at the NUTS-3 level in the federation). Slovenia and Montenegro have no regions.

This deficit in the decentralisation process at the regional levels, in other words – with regard to a “real” administrative regionalisation – can be explained by administrative traditions, but beyond that also primarily by the poorly consolidated national identity and statehood. Against this background, different central administrations are keen to interpret various signs (ethnic and other minorities, pronounced regional identities, gravitational pull of foreign centres, socio-economic spatial disparities, etc.) as good reasons for demonstrating restraint in this matter.

- **Autonomies**, in the sense of partial territories of a state that are endowed with special competencies of self-government exist in the Italian share of the Adriatic space (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige), but could not be established in the transformation countries of the Adriatic space, although regionalist movements (especially on Istria) were striving for them.
- **Administrative traditions** display some impact. In Slovenia, deconcentrated state administration at the lower regional administrative level (NUTS-4) follows (like in other East-Central European countries) the pattern of the Political Districts during the end phase of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. The different approaches chosen by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina can be partially (Croatia) or fully (Bosnia-Herzegovina) explained by the circumstances of war that prevailed in the 1990s. With the exception of Slovenia and Croatia, by the successor states of Communist Yugoslavia the self-governing large communes were retained at the lower regional level (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro). Slovenia and Croatia returned to small communes immediately after gaining independence, this being the structure that had existed there prior to the years of Communist Yugoslavia.

9 References

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